

# Women play an increased influential role in buying a home

In the Western Cape metro area, more women than in the past are signing the transfer documents to their new homes bought together with their spouses or partners.



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Many of them are also undertaking to pay at least part of the monthly bond repayments from their own income.

"Things have changed radically," says Laurie Wener, MD of Pam Golding Properties (PGP) Western Cape Metro Region. "Women now undoubtedly represent a more influential market force than many of their mothers, and certainly the majority of their grandmothers. In less than two generations, the emphasis has swung away from male domination of women in a partnership or marriage.

"Part of this is economic, with women continuing their careers even through and after pregnancies; so the decision to buy a joint property with a partner or spouse factors in both incomes. It generally also means that women cast an equal vote on the choice of a house, and the influence is probably weighted in their favour right now," she says.

## Traditional version

"The traditional, stereotypical, rather sexist version goes like this: Men want lots of garaging - for more than the obligatory two cars - with the argument that teenager vehicles, bicycles, motorcycles, trailers, boats, garden equipment, tools and pottering around space is needed for him.

"He also needs a study, wine cellar, indoor and outdoor showers, a bar with counter and bar stools, giant TV screens, lots of space for extra length beds, fast internet connectivity; solar power, and, teenager accommodation on 'the other side of the house' - specially when there are his and her offspring.

"Then there's what women want, according to the priorities established somewhere in the middle of the last century, pretty bedrooms with space for an extra wide bed; his and her bathrooms, each with their own toilet, his and her walk in dressing areas with lots of built-in storage, her own study, or at least part of his for her exclusive use," she continues.

"Designer fully fitted kitchen with separate scullery and laundry area, partly or totally open plan to the dining room and family room. Good interior flow for easy cleaning; direct, level access from the garage to kitchen; close access to schools and shopping. Self-contained staff quarters. And all at a fanciful price tag also established somewhere in the 1980s.

## **Practicalities have merged**

"Then," says Wener, "there's security, low maintenance, level gardens, swimming pools with pleasing outdoor living facilities and views, and most important, access to good schools. But currently, for the most part, with joint incomes and blurred lines of responsibility, needs and practicalities have merged to a large extent. So, aside from the few for whom price is no object, partners mostly share the prime priorities of security, affordability and conservative utility costs."

What about the same-sex home owning partnership?

"Everyone's an individual with particular likes and dislikes, so there will always be differences of opinion on what is an absolute must in a house, but generally the same rules apply. The house might not be ideal for either partner but may have enough positive aspects to swing the deal, and price and position will always be a major deciding factor.

"In reality, it's probably a miracle that homes are generally bought as the result of an ultimate joint decision. Probably says a lot about most couples' capacity to compromise."

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