

HD Tough prising bids - let alone sales - amid overloaded old and nouveau Portsea Australia Day ...

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Portsea's highest **sale** last year was when John Halstead, the Singapore based former partner of Simone Semmens, **sold** Noorah at 3688 Point Nepean Road Portsea to **company** director Neville Bertalli for \$8.3 **million**.

There was not even 1% annual price growth for Noorah (pictured below) over the decade having previously traded at \$7.51 **million** on Australia Day 2003 when Semmens bought it from the old Portsea family, the Dickinsons, who'd often entertain guests through the decades including Nettlefold and Lempriere family members.

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Oldtimers remember Jack Baillieu lived there before he moved to Colwyn, one of Portsea's premier properties now owned by developer, Becton's Max Beck. Colwyn was built in 1909 for Henry Bellingham Howard Smith.

The Age once rashly reported the nouveau riche arrived at Portsea with developer David Deague, son of a bricklayer and the first to pay more than \$1 **million** when he bought Colwyn in 1980. For a Sydney comparison, it was 1981 when the late Kerry Packer bought his Palm Beach oceanfront, breaking the suburb's **million**-dollar threshold with his \$1 **million purchase** from the MacCormick family.

Not far behind, and last year's runner up, was Brighton socialite Coral Knowles' \$8 **million purchase** of the old Ballantyne Chocolates house. The whisper is that the vendor, motorcycle enthusiast Steven Chiodo threw in some vendor finance to sweeten the deal. They say it was \$1 **million** interest free for a year which would reduce its price by around \$100,000.

It's 33 years since [James Reyne's lyrics](#), but it's still the Mount Buller ski lodge in winter and the Portsea backbeach in summer for many among monied Melbourne. Through the years, both (but Buller more so than Portsea), have been Title Tattle's infrequent playground too.

The Australia Day weekend offered the chance of a trip back to witness an overloaded dozen or more **property** auctions. Such was the volume of offerings over Saturday and Sunday, even Title Tattle found it impossible to be at the competing auctions held at the same time. It seems prices too have turned the clock back, up to a decade in one case. Ilze Moran of RT Edgar says 2014 prices were consistent with 2013 sales.

Barramunga, the classic two storied home set well back off Point Nepean Road at Sorrento with upstairs views of Camerons Bight, kicked off the weekend auctions with Liz Jensen, who has spearheaded Kay & Burton's Portsea office since its 1994 launch.

The auction of the six bedroom cottage on [its 3,474 square metre holding](#) (pictured below) opened and closed on its \$1.9 **million** vendor bid by the auctioneer Gerald Delany, who'd told the crowd that the **site** had been the choicest of selections in the 1920s by the stockbroker John Hindsen. The contract revealed it was being offered after three plus decades of ownership by Toorak dentist Geoffrey Wymond and his wife Diane, who Title Tattle recalls cut their wedding cake at the Menzies **Hotel** in 1960.

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It is the former publishing boss Robert Ungar who is selling the only clifftop mansion listing in Portsea this season. Perched above Fisherman's Beach, it comes with expectations of more than \$10 **million** by Ungar who founded Hinkler Books with his son Stephen.

Ungar bought Mandurah, the then five-year-old Wayne Gillespie-designed house at 3820 Point Nepean Road (pictured below), about two decades ago with his wife Rosemary who are looking to downsize to a **property** they plan on building in Blairgowrie. Ilze Moran, of RT Edgar, opened the envelopes with the expressions of interest campaign mid-week, with no word yet to emerge on any **sale**.

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The former CEO of the International Cricket Council, Malcolm Speed and wife, Alison paid \$1.2 **million** in 2008 for their Portsea offering that first came up for **sale** last October through Jellis Craig Bennison Mackinnon agent Emil Fowler.

The four bedroom, three bathroom [Shelly Court house](#) (pictured below) is set on a 1,369 square metre cul de sac block. Speed, who was inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame in 2012, has an office with plenty of sports memorabilia. There was no bid at the weekend auction with offers being sought apparently of around \$1.8 **million**.

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Cruffel, high on Hemston Avenue was put to auction, but passed in at its RT Edgar auction on a \$3.25 **million** vendor bid. It was listed by Neville Bertalli, the chief of the Patterson Cheney Automotive family owned car retailing **firm**, and his wife, Di. The couple bought it in 2001 from the former amateur golf champion, turned US-based Cobra golf-clubs boss Tom Crow for \$2.25 **million**, having had previous Portsea **property**, as The Grange was their's until its \$2.23 **million sale** in 2001 to Joseph Marne.

David Horgan's offering on Tranquility Court, Portsea was passed in on a \$3.45 **million** offer. But its subsequent **sale** was the highest price paid over the weekend.

The modern five-bedroom house opposite the 10th fairway on the Sorrento Golf Course was acquired post-auction by a Melbourne buyer for a tad over \$3.5 **million** through Ilze Moran of RT Edgar Portsea. The house on 2,392 square metres last traded in 2006 for \$2.95 **million**.

The RT Edgar auctioneer Warwick Anderson noted the subsequently extended home's original builder was present at the onsite auction. What he didn't say was that Dean Andary had **sold** it for \$3.4 **million** in 2003 through Gerald Delany, indicating poor price direction over the past decade. The grounds came with heated pool and north/south tennis court. There were television cameras at the onsite auction. Apparently ABC News, and sadly not for the upcoming The Real Housewives of Melbourne series on Foxtel Arena, although Andrea Moss, wife of the plastic surgeon, Christopher does have a weekender at Portsea, completely nanny and cleaner free. The Moss home actually looks deceptively ordinary on its laneway location, but apparently is terrific once inside. Another of the Housewives, Janet Roach-Forshaw lives at Red Hill on the peninsula where she is a novice truffle farmer. Her **property** development project is an over-55s lifestyle village in Mildura.

Within the gated compound off Franklin Road, the Nairana Court offering was passed in no bid by Kay & Burton. Lots of yapping from the neighbouring collie. It was designed by Wayne Gillespie on the cul-de-sac among moonah trees and manicured lawns. The single storey house will be bought by old money who will live their most of the year. The offering and location reminded Title Tattle of the data from the most recent census which found 81% of those at home in Portsea on census night were aged 55 or over. Portsea had an overall vacancy rate of 88% on census night. There was a RT Edgar post-auction **sale** of a five-bedroom house on Franklin Road for \$2.5 **million** with the seller off to Point Leo acreage.

There was a time when big sales occurred on the big day - be it Australia Day or the Easter weekend. Indeed Title Tattle recalls attending the 1995 auction of the \$5.15 **million** Matear family's 10,660 square metre clifftop mansion, Ilyuka to developer David Deague.

The 1927 Moorish-style mansion - something like Elizabeth Bay's Boomerang though then without heritage listing - edged out the prior summer's \$4.5 **million** top **sale** when Rupert Murdoch's sister Janet Calvert-Jones and her husband, John, bought Harrodene, the classic 1920s clifftop house.

Ilyuka sits on Port King Road, which takes its name from Governor King, who granted the locality's lime-burning licence in 1839. Deague almost bulldozed it, but for the vigilance of near neighbour Kate Baillieu. Built for **oil** executive Harry Conforth, it last **sold** for the record Victorian price of \$26 **million** in 2010 when Computershare director Michele O'Halloran **sold** to businessman John Higgins.

Title Tattle also recalls the 2008 Easter auction of The Anchorage, built with limestone on the Sorrento hillside in 1873 for pioneer thespian and entrepreneur George Coppin, when it fetched \$8.06 **million**. Coppin was a seaside spruiker who shipped wealthy Melburnians to the Mornington Peninsula on his paddle steamers, and then put them on his tramway to stay at his **Hotel** Continental. It has been on the toss of a coin - a choice between Australia and America - that Coppin sailed from Sussex on the Templar,

arriving in Sydney in 1843 with his partner, Maria Watkins Burroughs, where he was to perform at the Royal Victoria Theatre on Pitt Street. Coppin briefly owned the Clown **Hotel**, directly opposite the theatre, which failed as Sydney's first permanent musical entertainment venue, before he moved south. The Anchorage, a classic Italianate residence, was held by the Coppin family until 1959, 53 years after George's death.

The leading local agent Gerald Delany, chairman of Kay & Burton, is already rethinking the Australia Day auction weekend tradition that dates back several decades. Gerald Delany told Title Tattle the now overloaded auction schedule would be best spread well into February.

For many summers **estate** agent Jonno Edgar held his traditional Australia Day weekend Battlers Cup tennis comp. No where to be seen amid the auction attendees this year, though Title Tattle gathers he's soon to have his 70th birthday. Edgar's former clifftop house, Corsair, had been willed to him by his parents, who had bought one of the eight subdivided Weroona building blocks in 1961 for 4,000 from carnation grower Winton Gillespie and his wife, Marjorie, nee Matear. Harold and Zara Holt were also neighbours.

Indeed Edgar had fished for crayfish with Holt the weekend before that fateful 1967 day on Cheviot Beach. That morning, Jonno, then a 23-year-old **estate** agent, had made a 4pm spearfishing appointment with the Prime Minister who drowned. Title Tattle recalls the safe at Holt's house had a combination incorporating January 26, 1788, but despite the conspiracy theories there was nothing in there when it was opened. The Holt's **sold** on Weeroona Avenue in 1991 with the stockbroker Simon Fraser paying \$1 **million**.

Lucient, the Blair Court house designed by architect, Peter Carmichael of Cocks Carmichael, was passed in on a \$3.5 **million** vendor bid. Comprising, four bedrooms, three bathrooms, study, gym, cellar, and four car garage, it was a very modern home with CBus, Sonos music system and zoned ducted heating and cooling. And the 1960s peace sign built into the ceiling above the bed in the master bedroom. The grounds has a suspended glass mosaic tiled pool and spa with infinite edge, self cleaning system and waterfall. The home was built in 2008. Title Tattle recalls Richard and Alison Bouris, the former owners of JB Hi-Fi, owned it briefly a decade or so ago.

Dreamweaver, the Portsea back beach holiday home of management consultant Chris Livitsanis was passed in at weekend auction on a \$3.5 **million** vendor bid. Its been on and off the market over the past two years with an asking price of \$3.5 **million**. The two-storey house at 14 Cheviot Road (pictured below) is a sleek, contemporary design that has living areas on the ground floor and bedrooms upstairs. The grounds comes with gas and **solar**-heated lap pool and spa plus championship Modgrass tennis court. Much of the Cheviot Road was part of the old Brockhoff **estate** where the Mantello family undertook the subdivision.

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Liz Jensen, of Kay & Burton, had the listing which auctioneer Gerald Delany suggested couldn't be put back for its \$3.5 **million** vendor bid. Livitsanis was back on his pushbike Sunday morning, regardless of the result. He'd previously had a home close by on Back Beach Road.

Even the cheapies didn't necessarily sell. The Portsea village's old fishermans cottage - and cheapest price buying opportunity if you don't count bathing boxes - failed to attract any bidders. On Back Beach Road, there was a \$750,000 vendor bid when the [Sterling fishing family's former home](#) (pictured below) went to auction through Lloyd Robinson of RT Edgar.

The Gaynor family had paid \$600,000 for the 724 square metre **property** with three bedroom cottage in 2007, and they want \$850,000 plus. Title Tattle noted the sales contract have its official bi-annual 2012 land value as \$873,000 and its capital improved value given as \$885,000. It's a popular rental on the recently **sold** [Stazy](#) website which would assist with the \$2300 annual land tax.

Strong bidding was evident however at 3037 Point Nepean Road, Sorrento located opposite Camerons Bight beach which was a knockdown brick veneer on its elevated private 943 square metre block, with potential two storey replacement for views towards Blairgowrie Yacht Squadron. It didn't really deserve a name, but let's still call it Willunga. After a dozen section 32s had been issued by Fletchers agent John Callaghan, bidding opened at \$800,000, it was called on the market at \$852,500, and finally knocked down at \$981,000.

Remarkably another of the weekend's most sought-after offerings was the house diagonally opposite the Portsea Pub at 3737 Point Nepean Road. There were five bidders, the underbidders a **Chinese** couple who'd been staying at the pub, with it called on the market at \$1.44 **million** and **sold** at \$1.585 **million** through RT Edgar. Apparently the buyer's daughters were very keen on mum and dad's **purchase**.

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