

## **Joburg's old village suburbs offer a vibrant lifestyle**

Some of Johannesburg's oldest village suburbs are today delivering a truly new-age café society lifestyle to their residents and visitors, says Ronald Ennik, founder and principal of higher end Gauteng homes marketer Ennik Estates.

"It is an ongoing phenomenon that is gaining traction as time passes. And it is adding value by attracting residential property buyer interest from those who seek to participate in, and benefit from, the process."

The stand-out suburbs that are driving this trend, adds Ennik, are Parkhurst and Parktown North – followed closely by Norwood and Melville.

"Their common denominator is that they all date back to the early 1900s. Furthermore, they are collectively home to an abundance of world class pavement restaurants, coffee bars, pubs, fashion boutiques, beauty salons, antique shops, art galleries – and tattoo studios," says Ennik.

He notes that these 'oldie' suburbs are traditionally the haunts of young, first-time buyers with lower bond thresholds – and those seeking a compact, more manageable lifestyle.

"These, and other, village suburbs still have many homes with the pressed steel ceilings and strip floors of their period still intact.

"Characterised by their European-type pavement culture and high street ambience, they often provide good value to discerning property investors.

"They are also popular territory for 'buy-and-renovate' speculators, who are now even more active in the current climate of rising home rentals," adds Ennik.

"Parkhurst was the last of the three suburbs to become a village-type area, because the title deeds to the original farm on which the suburb was developed prohibited the consumption of alcohol in public places, such as restaurants.

"Subsequent adjustments to the title deeds removed the ban and opened the way for Parkhurst to become more user-friendly and to develop a similar hip 'persona'.

"Today it leads the field in this sense." says Ennik

## **Norwood Uplift**

A welcome new development on this trendy and vibey village landscape is a Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) initiative to redevelop and rejuvenate the once socially lively business and restaurant precinct along the Grant Avenue high street of Norwood.

"Features of this proposed project will include traffic calming measures; improved pedestrian walkways and crossings; new-look landscaping; outdoor furniture; and an upgrade of the adjacent community park," says Ennik.

Apart from the obvious lifestyle enrichment and property value-adding potential that this project could deliver to the local community, it would also provide opportunities for 'buy-to-renovate' investors, he notes.

"This Norwood initiative could be the ideal template for a similar JDA project along 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Melville – the once trend-setting hub of Johannesburg's bohemian life.

“Now the domain of a large community of university students, the street was then home to a wide range of funky cafes, top restaurants, coffee shops and night clubs,” Ennik concludes.

(Melville was proclaimed in 1896).

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