

# No certainties, but B.C.'s real estate future looks good



## Ozzie Jurock

The facts of the Lower Mainland real estate market speak for themselves, and in every area the words can be considered encouraging

**W**e are contrary creatures. We say one thing and then promptly do the opposite.

We bemoan lack of service and then blithely drive past the local friendly corner store and into Costco or Canadian Superstore.

"But gee, I'm saving money," we argue. So we load up 27 years' supply of toilet paper, into our hulking Rambo-approved off-road vehicle (which will never see a mud splatter in its life but does cost more than a Cadillac) and then, to celebrate our frugality, we'll pull up to Starbucks and drop six bucks on a no-fat, double decaffeinated latte with an almond biscotti on the side. (In other words, six bucks for coffee and a cookie.)

Little wonder the marketers are going mad.

Yep, we are different, we pre-, post- and current baby boomers. What actions we will take, where, how and in what type of home will we likely strive to live are the questions to which today's savvy real estate investor must have answers — before making that investment. Yet, the longer I am in this real estate advice business the more the questions stay the same:

In a down market: Will the

market ever recover?

In a flat market: When will the market recover?

In a good market: When will it turn down?

Every year for 30 years: I wish I had bought 10 years ago.

The one comment I also get often, that makes me chuckle: "Next time you see a great deal where I can make a quick dollar, call me."

In life you do not get what you want, you get what you negotiate.

Good deals are not advertised, they're created between a willing seller and a willing buyer, usually with an innovative professional realtor. And that means

work. Alas, that's what we do not want to hear.

We want certainty, guarantees, the easy buck. The guaranteed forecast. Well, here is not a guarantee but a promise: Values will rise in many areas of the Lower Mainland and fall in other areas. Values rise where people will want to live, in an area of low vacancies and good future growth.

Let's look at some facts.

**Fact:** The industrial vacancy rate in Vancouver is still at a 20 year low — two per cent.

**Fact:** Office vacancy rates are under six per cent (and yes, even with part of Yaletown suffering from the effects of the dot-com crunch), but still, of 50 North American markets, Vancouver sports the ninth lowest rate and the 47th lowest per-square-foot rental value.

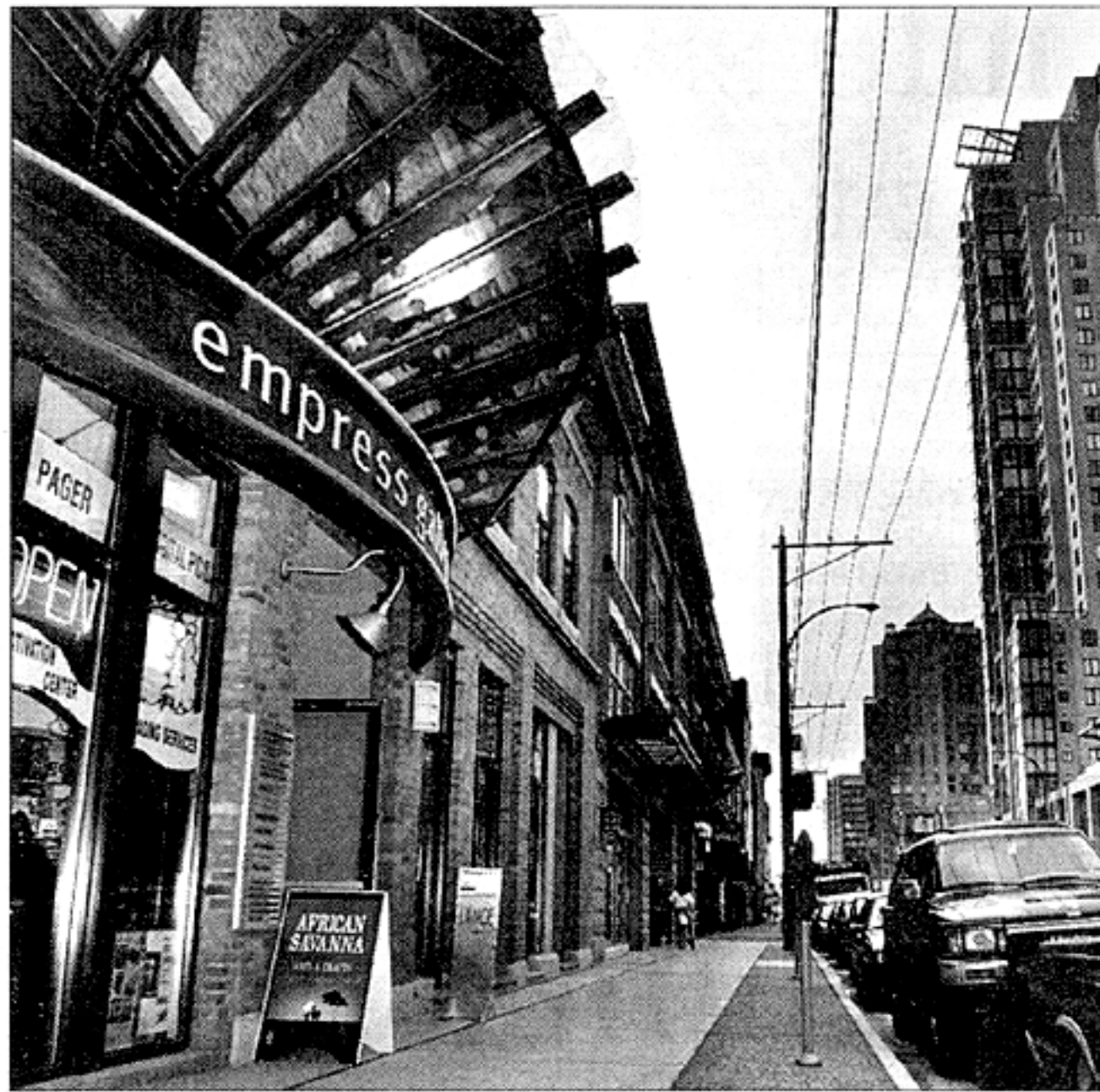
**Fact:** Residential vacancy rates are under one per cent for most areas.

**Fact:** The unemployment rate hovers around a 23 year low.

**Fact:** According to master demographer David Baxter (who will speak at next week's Jurock Landrush conference entitled *What To Do in 2002*: "In the next 10 years, the population of Vancouver will increase by 457,000 people. In order to accommodate them, Vancouver will require about 218,000 more dwellings."

Add to this the fact that the New Consumer (me and thee) is most concerned with living longer and healthier, we are likely to stay longer in our homes.

Thus, with Vancouver's real estate sales up in August by some 47 per cent, all our ducks are in a row. Buy carefully, buy within your means, but don't worry. Real estate will do well in your future, particularly in the Lower Mainland.



PETER BATTISTONI/VANCOUVER SUN FILES

**Office vacancy rates are under six per cent in Vancouver, even though parts of Yaletown (above) felt the dot-com crunch.**

*Ozzie Jurock is the publisher of jurock.com, B.C.'s Real Estate Marketplace, an independent real estate advisory service. His eighth annual fall conference will be held Sept. 15 at the Renaissance hotel. For information or tickets, call him at 604-683-3870 or e-mail him at [ozzie@jurock.com](mailto:ozzie@jurock.com)*