

The Landlord

For Landlords and Sectional Title Owners



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PLATINUM GLOBAL TO MANAGE SARATOGO

Platinum Global has been appointed as the managing agents for the new Saratoga scheme in Wilgehof. Saratoga consists 96 mainly two bedroom flats with a sprinkling of single storey townhouses. Constructed by well known Master Builder Gys Botes, this is one of the best built developments I have seen in Bloemfontein. A tile roof and light face brick exterior bodes a low monthly levy. Each unit is fitted with high quality oak veneer cupboards in both the kitchen and bedrooms which gives a light appearance. An spacious bathroom allows for a bath and shower. Great thought has been given to the layout with each room having at least two sets of double plugs. Each unit is fitted with a satellite dish and has a double carport. Ground floor units have a large private walled garden. Saratoga is a very low density scheme with large public gardens giving an exceptionally pleasant atmosphere. The complex has wrought iron boundary fencing with electric security fencing on top. "An exceptionally well built scheme," says Mike Spencer. The complex has almost sold out with only a small number of units available in the last phase. The first owners will be moving in at the end of April. About half of the buyers are owner buyers with remainder being landlords.

SELLERS AND CLEARANCE CERTIFICATES - NOTE THE 2-YEAR LIMIT ON RATES!

A sold property cannot be transferred to the buyer thereof unless and until the local authority issues a "clearance certificate", being its confirmation that it has received full payment of all amounts due in connection with the property in respect of "municipal service fees, surcharges on fees, property rates and other municipal taxes, levies and duties during the two years preceding the date of application for the certificate.."

The danger here for sellers of course is that these debts could include substantial service fees, run up by tenants without your knowledge. If the outstanding amounts relate to the property and fall within the 2-year period, you have no option but to pay them in full, regardless of whose debts they actually are.

But at least this danger is limited to the 2 years. In a recent case before the Supreme Court of Appeal, a municipality had attempted to force the seller to pay older debts by allocating all payments to the oldest debts, and then refusing to advise the seller how much of the debt fell within the 2-year period.

However, ruled the Court, a municipality cannot do that. It is required to:

1. Advise you what part of the debt relates to the 2-year period, and
2. Issue a clearance certificate to you against payment of no more than that part of the debt.

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Owners Cannot Rely on Debt Counselling!

Owners who are unwilling or unable to pay their monthly body corporate levies cannot rely on debt counselling to get them out of the problem.

In a recent high court case it was confirmed that no credit agreement comes into force as a result of an owner owing levies to a body corporate as it arose as a result of a legal obligation in terms of the sectional titles act. This means that the body corporate is entitled to sue for unpaid levies and if necessary attach the unit. We have previously advised Trustees that it is always preferable to keep tight control over the payment of levies and to take early action against non-payers. Owners should receive reminders for non payment of the first unpaid levy and be handed over immediately when an owner is more than 60 days overdue. "it is far easier to attach small items to cover one or two months unpaid levy says Mike Spencer of Platinum Global. Taking this positive action usually result in all owners making a special effort always to be up to date. In almost all our body corporates we have virtually a nil arrear problem. If owners are allowed to get into the habit of not paying then it spreads rapidly like a disease and a body corporate can experience serious non-payment problems. Owners are encouraged to be one month in advance to avoid any difficulties.

Jill Spencer, who handles body corporate management at Platinum said, "It is also important to chose the right attorney to handle your handed overs. All attorneys are trained to do collections but attorneys that specialise in collections are often far more effective than those that don't. Because they concentrate on what they do they tend to be efficient and quick but managing agents must still push them to get results as quickly as possible" says Jill.

The new ruling that owners cannot rely on debt management is really good news for body corporates but trustees and managing agents must continually monitor the state of owners accounts. Managing agents and trustees are encouraged to phone all new owners as soon as they are aware that they have bought their units to meet and greet the new owners. Explaining how the body corporate is run, how and where accounts are paid and who to talk to when there are problems will make new owners feel welcome and cooperative. New owners should be encouraged to become trustees if there are openings and asked what special skills they may be able to offer. It often amazes me what a wide range of talents are available from owners but which are seldom used by body corporates.

Have You Got the Right Tools?

It was very interesting to discuss with the Trustees of a new development about buying gardening and other equipment and what was the best things to buy.

With a really large garden it was time to buy a lawnmower and a decision had to be made whether to buy a good quality domestic model or an industrial one. The domestic one was obviously much cheaper but the industrial one would be able to cut twice the amount of grass in the same time. Spares for the domestic version were much more difficult to come by while the industrial models were easy to find. Despite the additional cost it was decided that the industrial model would last much longer and be far more reliable than the domestic model and that was what was bought.

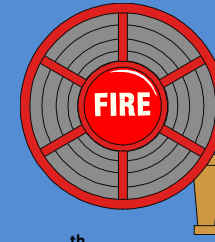
Trustees can look at other equipment where there is a choice between industrial and domestic option. Dustbins can be bought as simple household bins or large commercial wheelie bins or smaller plastic bins on wheels. Weed eaters, edge cutters, wheel barrows, also come in industrial versions.

Gate motors especially should be heavy duty models as they have to cope with far more opening and closing than a typical home. If you have a double gate it might be better to cut your gates in half and have one in and one out gate with separate motors. This allows them to open and close far quicker and reduce wear and tear. Slow opening gates are an added security risk as unwanted guest can easily slip in behind vehicles moving in or out. Never have a self opening gate on the inside as this makes it easy for thieves to drive stolen cars out. Make sure that any gate motors have anti-theft brackets fitted or they won't be covered by your insurance policy.

A policy of buying quality equipment should be applied to all areas of a body corporate. It definitely pay in the medium term. Buying a cheap sprinkler system for example can often be an expensive mistake. Good, professionally installed systems should last for many years, cover all the required areas, be expandable and regularly serviced by the supplier. Whether it is tools or services strive for the best. The better the quality, the lower the maintenance and the fewer the problems.

Don't Forget To Book

Bookings are going well for the Platinum Global/Centra OFS fire fighting.



When: Saturday 24th April 2010

Where: Centa OFS offices N8 (Haldon Rd Ext)

Time: 0900 to 1100

Cost: Free!

RSVP: E-Mail mikehome@telkomsa.net

Fax 086 504 4505

Who should attend;

Trustees, Owners and Cleaning Staff

You will be shown what and what to do in case of a fire – and this could be life saving should a fire break out in your complex. There is no cost involved. Email mikehome@telkomsa.net to book your places.

Fire Fighting Tips;

Call the fire brigade immediately however small the fire. Make sure that nobody is trapped inside. Do not enter a burning building unless you have properly trained how to do so. Warn people living in nearby units. Units either side of townhouses. For flats clear flats on either side and above and below. Make everyone in the building aware of what is happening in case the fire spreads – inflammable items in the garage can cause this. Many gates have bars across them to prevent trucks coming into the complex. Unlock and remove the bar to allow their fire truck in. (A copy of the key should be with a trustee and the cleaner). Move any pets that you find to a safe, quiet and comfortable location – pets will panic if not safely looked after. Keep sightseers well away so that they cannot interfere.



Bargain Time

Especially well priced properties that are seen as good value for money. They may be investment or own use properties.

Willow Glen only R150,000. Owned by World Record Holder. Give away price below market value. Fully let R1950 for a bachelor..

Heuwelsig R1,090,000. Spotless 3 bedroom 2 bathroom double garage townhouse with own private garden. Situated in security complex. Excellent place to stay.

Saratoga R795,000 Splinter new simplex townhouses of the highest quality. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 carports (optional garages), private garden. Lovely little units with super high quality finishes.

Naval View R50,000. New on the market Private owners unit with high quality finishes. An opportunity to own a home in this well loved building..

#0 ha small farm western side of town.. Lovely piece of ground for fun weekends, permanent living or small scale farming. Easy access but off the main road. Only 10 minutes from town. R870,000. Owner left town.

Universitas R970,000. Lovely little house with big garden. Serious seller moving out of town. Worth seeing if you like quiet areas.

Constantia Park 3 bedroom R1,033,000.. Really large 3 bedroom 2 bathroom unit with lots of extras including big double garage and 2 carports. Something rather special Includes thatch entertainment room. Well managed complex in Langenhoven Park

Contact Mike Spencer (082 881 4711) or John Searle (072 140 5753) for all your property requirements.

HEUWELSIG – RENOVATION PROJECT PRE-BANK APPROVED VALUE

Great solid Heuwelsig home requiring attention. Price only R1,300,000 value of which has been approved by leading bank. Currently 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, large kitchen with dining room, laundry, double garage sized TV room, lounge, maids room, store room and shed. Must be sold owner has left town. Double carport. 380 volt electricity.

Large garden with special features

Must be renovated from end to end. Price very good for size of property and upper class suburb that it is situated. Most properties sell for R1,800,000 to R2,500,000 in this area. Bargain price for substantial home. Spend a little, worth a lot!

Call Mike Spencer 082 881 4711



BECOME YOUR OWN DEVELOPER

Why not become a partner in a new development? By grouping together investors can join together to develop their own properties. Imagine the saving on interest if a group of investors together with a developer could build for cash. Talk to us about becoming a real property investor.

With interest at current rates you should save 105 or more and have a say in design and finishes.

Opportunities arise from time to time to become part of the solution. From residential to commercial, we have a range of investment opportunities

For all enquiries contact Mike Spencer Platinum Global 082 881 4711 or mikehome@telkomsa.net

BEWARE THE NEW ROBOTS

At last the municipality have installed traffic lights on the corner of du Plessis Ave and the old Kimberley Rd at Langenhoven Park (Pretty Gardens crossing). The speed limit is 80 kph on this stretch though traffic travels far faster on this stretch. Don't get caught out when the lights come into action. Watch out for accidents. This much needed set of traffic lights will be a god send for those living on the Western side of Langenhoven Park. Numerous accidents have happened at this crossing and a number of people including cyclists have been killed here.

Also take care at the previous lights when travelling towards town as illegal orange cones are placed out causing traffic to swerve to miss them!

PLATINUM DOES IT BEST CHANGE YOUR AGENT NOW!

Why be dissatisfied with your current letting agents. Talk to the professionals about also receiving easy to understand monthly statement. Platinum Global lets your units so you don't have to. We find the tenants, recommend the rental, sort out the repairs, send you monthly reports and much much more. There really is no other choice.

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COMPETITION TIME!

Congratulations to

Johan Grobbelaar

Who has won a bottle of Bell's! Courtesy of **Bergen's** fridge, stoves and washing machine repairs, Caltex Building, Nelson Mandela Drive, Westdene