



TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY? INSIDE OTTAWA'S RENTAL RENAISSANCE

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To buy or not to buy? That is the question we tackle in our editorial series “For Rent/Live for Today.” It’s a quandary that comes up everywhere from the dinner table to the business page. For years, experts (and parents) told us that paying rent was akin to flushing money down the toilet. The smart choice was to invest in real estate, right? Not so fast, argue some. After all, resale prices aren’t soaring the way they once were. Plus, as happy renters will attest (“Why I Rent,” pages 39–43), there are many perks to renting. People who are content to rent are quick to note the freedom — financial and otherwise — from keeping up with tasks like mowing the grass and fixing faulty plumbing.

Plus, Ottawa’s downtown is flourishing. Just last year we explored the downtown core and revealed a thriving arts, culinary, and nightlife scene. For some, the value of living close to that

action cannot be measured by interest and resale rates. As detached houses reach the million-dollar mark, renting is becoming a more viable option for committed urban dwellers. Of course, one of the reasons neighbourhoods such as Little Italy and Centretown are booming is the condo developments. When big projects promise to revitalize main streets, clean up bedraggled parks, and build community facilities, new shops pop up and restaurant investors open their wallets, willing to bet on “in transition” areas. Renters are reaping the benefits, but it takes a mix of tenants and owners to keep these neighbourhoods bustling.

After all, renting isn’t for everyone. After more than a decade of temporary residences (17 addresses in as many years!), I decided it was time to put down my roots. I wasn’t as lucky as my colleague Jane Corbett, who learned the fine art of renting — and avoiding the packing/moving cycle — by living at just five addresses over 34 years (“Tips From a Long-Time Renter,” page 46). While home ownership doesn’t come naturally to me — I still spend more time visiting downtown

and planning trips outside the city than fixing up my digs — I’m constantly finding new pleasures in my fixed-address status.

Speaking of a thriving arts and culinary scene, this issue offers plenty of indicators that Ottawa is on the rise. Poet William Hawkins (“Reason to Love,” page 17) has come out of the woodwork (and retired from his job driving for Blue Line) to launch a definitive volume of his work. In the Glebe, a video store acts as a community hangout spot (“Found,” page 18). And Opera Lyra, one of the city’s largest independent arts organizations, just announced an exciting new artistic director — and celebrated him at a sold-out fundraiser (“Camera,” page 22). Bravo!

Coming Up: Our October issue offers a peek inside the wardrobes of the city’s most fashionable people. From bureaucrats who wear colourful clothing to their cubicles to gala-goers dressed to the nines to artists whose work reflects their personal palettes, it’s sure to inspire readers to inject individuality into their attire.