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FRIDAY APRIL 26, 2013 50p

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HOUSE PRICES TO RISE £10,000

Biggest increase for 3 years

CONFIDENCE in the housing market has soared to its highest level in three years with prices forecast to rise by £10,000 this summer.

Almost three-quarters of homeowners expect values in their area to increase by an average of 4.5 per cent, according to a survey. That would put an extra £10,152 on the average home worth £225,601, property experts say.

The good news comes as official figures showed

By Sarah O'Grady Property Correspondent

higher than expected growth in the economy for the first three months of the year.

Mark Dyason, director at mortgage broker Edinburgh Mortgage Advice, said: "The results of this survey are yet more proof of the deep-seated appeal of bricks and mortar. There's no doubt the property

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**'WORLD'S
MOST
BEAUTIFUL'
GWYNETH
IS VERY
CHEEKY**

SEE PAGE 3

PAMPERED PETS



Our vet David Grant works his animal magic

Q OUR nine-year-old Westie Hamish has lung disease. Do you think if we start him on a steroid inhaler it may delay his condition deteriorating and would anything else help?

A THIS disease is called idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. The lung tissue is gradually replaced by fibrous tissue similar to that seen in scarring. This results in the lung being unable to absorb oxygen producing the typical signs of struggling with exercise, panting and later a persistent cough.

The problem is seen most often in West Highland white dogs and is often diagnosed at around nine years of age. There is a very similar disease in people and as a result there is considerable research going on with the aim of finding solutions to benefit both.

Diagnosis is made clinically with the aid of radiography. Biopsy is more specific but usually undertaken in specialist centres only. There is no cure, though dogs often survive for 18 months, perhaps more.

Steroids are often tried initially but there is no evidence that they slow progression of the disease. Bronchial dilators and diuretics in the later stages improve quality of life.

David Grant MBE was a vet at the RSPCA Harlow Hospital for Animals. Write to him at Express Yourself, 10 Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6EN. He is unable to enter into individual correspondence.



Picture: ALAMY

BE HAPPY

Crash course: Collecting art

Our expert guide puts you firmly in the picture

A PIECE of original artwork will not only look beautiful in your home but can be a wise investment too. Whether it's a modern sculpture or historical portrait, the appeal of a unique design is that it won't have been mass produced.

Nicky Wheeler, managing director of the Affordable Art Fair, believes there is an artwork to suit every budget and taste.

"It's not as expensive as people imagine. You could spend £40 on a small original artist-made screenprint, £500 on an oil sketch or £4,000 on a large oil painting by an established artist. It all depends on what money you have and more importantly, what you fall in love with."

Should you want to splash out, many galleries offer finance packages. "One I would recommend is called Own Art which helps you buy a work interest-free over a period of 10 months. If you save up you could afford something that will last a lifetime," says Nicky.

The value may fluctuate, so it's important to buy pieces you love. Spotting the Vincent van Gogh of the future isn't easy and trends come and go.

Mieka Sywak, fair director for LAPADA (The Association of Art and Antiques Dealers), explains: "Once you start going



IN THE FRAME: Ask an expert for advice before you make a choice

Picture: ALAMY

to art shows you become more aware of emerging artists as you can see at a glance whose works are performing well and are most sought after.

In order to ensure you are buying the real deal, make sure you go to a reputable dealer or fair. Contemporary artists will often choose to work with particular galleries and offer a certificate of authenticity.

"The LAPADA works to a strict code of practice and provides fallback for consumers should anything go wrong," says Mieka. Good questions to ask include whether the artist has won any prizes or been a part of any collections.

"I browse on ArtNet.com, which lists auction sales, to get an idea of prices. I'd ask a dealer about provenance, as where a piece has been or comes from can affect its price and this helps to reassure me of what I am buying," advises Mieka.

While it is possible to pick up screenprints, etchings and linocuts by household names such as David Hockney and Damien Hirst, Nicky advocates investing in emerging artists.

who are out to make a name. "You may well end up with a piece that goes on to make a small fortune. If you bought work at one of our previous fairs by Antony Micallef, Sacha Jafri or Stella Vine, you are likely to have made a profit," Nicky says. Make sure your work is hung where it won't deteriorate. Avoid damp bathrooms, direct sunlight and areas above or in front of radiators. "If it's framed and behind glass or plexi, it will be fairly robust. Oil and acrylic paintings can usually take a damp cloth but are unlikely to need cleaning while a sculpture needs just a flick of the duster.

"Always ask the gallerist for advice on your chosen piece," Nicky adds.

"You can put contemporary art in a traditional home or next to antiques. You can hang work in the loo, your office, even consider putting sculpture in the garden."

The Affordable Art Fair is in Bristol from today until Sunday. To find the next event visit affordableartfair.com

Laura Jackson

DID YOU KNOW?
In April 2011 Paul Cezanne's *The Card Players* became the most expensive painting ever. It sold for £158million to the royal family of Qatar.

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