

Some Real Estate Markets Warming Up

by Sara Clemence
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When Carole and Jim Gourley started looking at vacation properties in [Florida](#) last December, they weren't all that serious. The retired couple, who live in Ontario, had rented in [Panama City Beach](#) for five winters. Stuck at home with a sick pet this year, Jim Gourley started browsing for foreclosures down south for fun.

"One thing led to another and we found a condo we liked the look of and decided to pursue it," Carole Gourley says. "We could not believe the prices that some of the properties were being listed for, especially since the one we liked is only four years old."

They ended up buying a three-bedroom condo in Bellasol, a development in [Fort Myers](#), where prices currently range from \$39,000 to \$170,000. "We paid 25% of the original selling price," she says. "We feel that we got an extremely good deal."

The Gourleys are part of a new surge of buyer interest along Florida's Gulf Coast, where real estate websites are seeing a dramatic increase in traffic and local brokers are experiencing an uptick in inquiries and sales.

In housing markets around the country, there are signs that perhaps the bottom has been reached, and sales are beginning to come back up -- with prices hopefully to follow.

To get a handle on these rebounding markets, we asked real estate search firm [Trulia](#) to tell us the cities in which they have seen the greatest rise in searches -- a proxy for buyer interest -- over the last year

The result: Seven of the ten cities were in Florida, a poster state for the real estate boom and bust, and five were on the Gulf Coast side of the state.

Obviously, this isn't boom buying, wherein people are investing their money because prices are rising dramatically.

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