

The Ebb and the Flow

by Andi Peterson Brown

While most people are aware that our real estate market is part of the broader economic cycle, many people do not realize that there is also a seasonal influence affecting market activity throughout the year. And when it comes to this annual cycle, all months are not created equal. Sleepy August cannot hold a candle to lively May and bubbly June. And poor January. It tends to get lost in the shuffle.

Why is there an annual real estate cycle? The answer is actually quite logical. The spring and early summer weather is the perfect backdrop for selling a home. Gardens are blooming, the sun is shining, and it's easy for buyers to get out and see what's available. Many of those buyers want to be in their new home before the start of the next school year. Thus, market activity is almost always at its highest during April, May, and June. We tend to see activity drop off around the beginning of August as both buyers and sellers take their vacations and enjoy their summer days. Here in Lamorinda, once the school year kicks in and routines are established, there tends to be a second surge in market activity. This "mini-spring" lasts through the beginning of November, but once Thanksgiving hits, market activity usually drops off. Most people are in holiday mode, and buying or selling real estate slides onto the backburner if it is not a necessity.

By keeping this annual cycle in mind, both buyers and sellers can make the seasonal market work in their favor.



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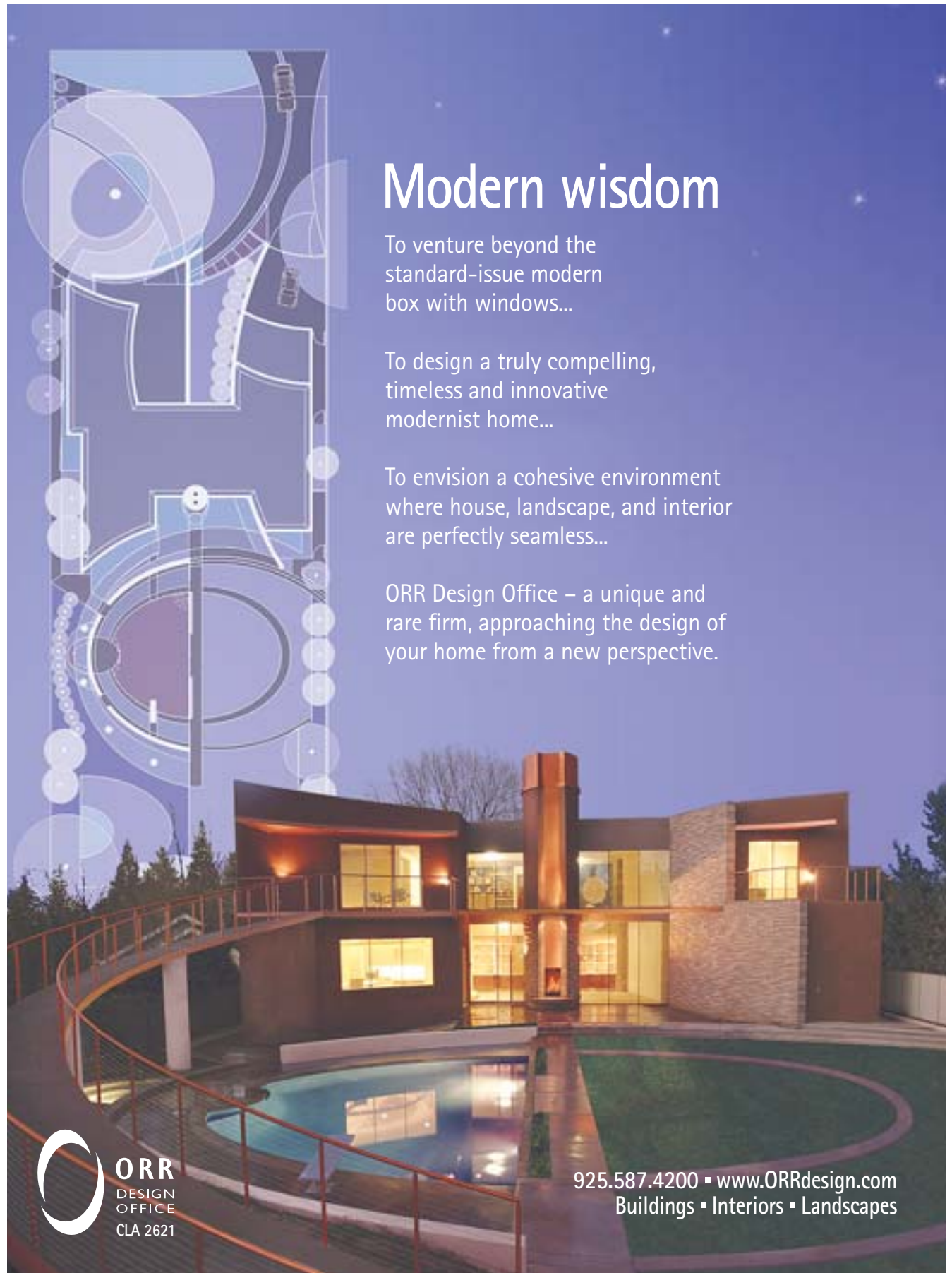
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