

Focus | IN DEPTH

Lower prices open doors

Residential sales pick up as homes throughout most of the county cost less than in 2007.

By **JONATHAN LANSNER, MATHEW PADILLA and JEFF COLLINS**
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Orange County homes are on sale. And bargain hunters are taking advantage of the price drop. Wednesday's price of an average home — or midpoint — of last month. That's a record price drop before and the price in since November.

Meanwhile, the U.S. market reported.

While the price below average, it's a more than a year ago. August 2007, and straight gains after declining trading.

"Sales down from a lot of low moving quarters," Readinger, Orange County Realtors.

DataQuick price plummeted number of under the "sure and shine" in with jumbo until received \$417,000.

Getting more expensive credit crunch.

Jumbo sales of Southern home sales it crunch but just last sales last.

Quick report. "When market hit tentative sales not prices tom," DataJohn Wals.

"History few of us v tom (for p he added. tivity remains tight mains straight and the job. Our take r of buyers don't have just sittin out for a make their

Orange County home prices and sales

The median selling price for all residences was \$440,000 in August.

Prices Changes from a year ago



Sales volume Changes from a year ago



City	ZIP code	Median sale price		Sales volume	
		Aug.	% change from '07	Aug.	% change from '07
Aliso Viejo	92656	\$434,000	-27.1%	94	62.1%
Anaheim	92801	\$295,000	-44.3%	32	128.6%
Anaheim	92802	\$340,000	-35.7%	29	52.6%
Anaheim	92804	\$350,000	-30.0%	68	83.8%

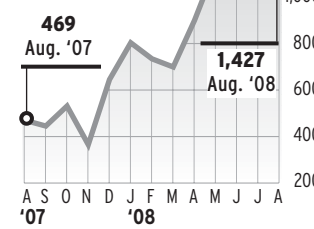
City	ZIP code	Median sale price		Sales volume	
		Aug.	% change from '07	Aug.	% change from '07
Laguna Beach	92651	\$1,662,500	14.8%	25	-19.4%
Laguna Hills	92653	\$365,000	-31.4%	42	50.0%
Laguna Niguel	92677	\$545,000	-27.3%	68	-15.0%
Laguna Woods	92637	\$260,000	-11.9%	35	-18.6%
	92630	\$405,000	-31.1%	71	57.8%
	90720	\$837,500	2.1%	14	-30.0%
	92655	\$365,500	-25.6%	2	-33.3%
	92691	\$488,500	-22.0%	62	26.5%
	92692	\$552,500	-7.9%	49	-7.5%
	92660	\$1,219,000	-23.8%	22	-31.3%
	92661	\$2,085,000	-5.2%	2	-71.4%
	92662	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	92663	\$1,780,000	30.5%	14	-41.7%
	92657	\$1,810,000	-33.3%	10	-56.5%
	92865	\$440,000	-23.7%	16	-11.1%
	92866	\$464,000	-25.2%	7	-36.4%
	92867	\$486,000	-13.4%	31	40.9%
	92868	\$349,000	-19.8%	12	33.3%
	92869	\$425,000	-32.0%	42	20.0%
	92870	\$350,000	-42.4%	38	-11.6%
Margarita	92688	\$423,750	-25.0%	64	0.0%
	92672	\$745,000	-23.9%	17	-26.1%
	92673	\$800,000	-11.1%	48	-17.2%
Trano	92675	\$355,000	-57.1%	43	30.3%
	92701	\$175,000	-50.9%	28	133.3%
	92703	\$287,500	-39.8%	48	380.0%
	92704	\$296,250	-45.1%	54	116.0%
	92705	\$679,000	-16.2%	41	41.4%
	92706	\$400,000	-36.0%	28	100.0%
	92707	\$235,000	-47.5%	64	204.8%
	90740	\$681,000	-27.9%	10	25.0%
	90680	\$315,500	-22.5%	32	68.4%
	92679	\$811,500	-10.8%	38	-24.0%
	92780	\$329,000	-43.0%	43	138.9%
	92782	\$735,000	-9.0%	27	-38.6%
	92861	\$1,180,000	-7.7%	7	40.0%
	92683	\$455,000	-21.9%	59	90.3%
	92886	\$665,000	-11.3%	53	26.2%
	92887	\$675,000	0.0%	21	10.5%
uses		\$500,000	-29.6%	1,848	34.4%
iums		\$310,000	-31.0%	731	24.7%
s		\$456,500	-25.5%	134	-58.6%
		\$440,000	-31.5%	2,713	18.7%



BRUCE CHAMBERS, THE REGISTER
SELLING FOR LESS: Sellers of an Anaheim Hills home say they've chopped the price.

A year of foreclosures

Foreclosures have more than tripled since the credit crunch began a year ago.



Source: DataQuick The Register

Coldwell Banker agent Mac Mackenzie said short sales pull down prices for all the homes around them. As a distressed homeowner continues to drop his price, others must drop their prices to compete.

"They are the kiss of death in the marketplace," Mackenzie said. "Many homeowners are figuring out that they've got to be priced aggressively to make sure they're ahead of the curve."

Meanwhile, others are giving up and walking away from their homes rather than try for even a short sale, which requires lender approval before the unpaid portion of the mortgage can be forgiven.

"There's a lot of give-up. A lot of people say, 'I'm through with it,' " Mackenzie said. "You hate to see that in people."

Buyers shopping for bargains need to be aggressive, too. Bidding wars still are common on homes that are "priced right," he said. Jim Hergenreter, 54, a Long Beach pool contractor looking to invest in real estate, said he's made three offers to buy homes — two of them in Orange County — but was rebuffed on all.

His newly married niece and nephew, who are looking to buy a starter home here with good incomes and a good down payment, have been rebuffed at least 15 times, he said.

Both are looking to buy homes for less than \$500,000, the level at which competition among buyers is greatest.

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vs. 2007
-7.7%
18.7%
43.9%
16.4%
1.4%
7.7%
9.1%

Source: DataQuick

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Forty-eight of 82 Orange County ZIP codes saw sales rise from the year before. But just five of those 82 had higher median selling prices than a year ago: Dana Point's 92629, Los Alamitos' 90720, Corona del Mar's 92625, Laguna Beach's 92651 and Newport Beach's 92663.

Prices fell in 76 of the ZIP codes.

"That's great for home buyers," Readinger said. "It may not be good for sellers, but it's great for buyers."

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