

# Domain HOME BASE KATE ROBERTSON

## Reality resides outside the box

Property market players have a love-hate relationship with television's take on the industry.

**A**LTHOUGH buyer's advocate Peter Rogozik is critical of the impact of property programs in general, he does admit to having a soft spot for *Hot Property*, having featured in it about eight years ago. "I was amazed how many people saw it and I got some business from the program; it launched my business, to a degree," he says.

However, Mr Rogozik is concerned that people who watch any of the countless property programs on free-to-air and pay TV can end up getting into trouble by thinking they know more than they do.

"The renovation shows are probably the most detrimental," he says. "They can give buyers and sellers a false sense of their own renovation ability. They don't show the real difficulties involved, and people don't realise they [people on the shows] have expert tradesmen and advice that you don't see on the screen."

"They offer a limited source of genuine real estate knowledge. It's mainly about ratings and entertainment value."

And the programs don't make it

clear that it is difficult for inexperienced people to undertake renovations, he says. "They are not a substitute for professional advice and just because you have watched lots of these shows doesn't make you an expert."

DIY can lead to novice renovators being injured by falling off ladders or injuring themselves with dangerous tools, Mr Rogozik says.

**[TV shows] don't show the real difficulties involved.**

PETER ROGOZIK, buyer's agent

The other issue is that unsuspecting buyers can be left to deal with the repercussions of unprofessional home handiwork, with some problems taking years to become evident, such as concrete not being properly cured, or the lack of a waterproof membrane behind tiling in a bathroom. "It may appear up to five years later," Mr Rogozik says. "You can't see behind the tiles."



For some, watching *Hot Property* — hosted by Michael Caton — is like "a plumber watching someone fix a tap".

As one of the stars of the Real Estate Institute of Victoria's weekly show *Melbourne Property TV* (MPTV), Robert Larocca doesn't have to think too hard when asked what he considers to be the best real estate program on television.

The success of MPTV, which airs on the digital channel TV4ME and is available on the REIV's website, has outstripped Mr Larocca's expectations, with about 260,000 people watching it live around Australia every week.

The program is also viewed another 30,000 times a week online. "We started on Channel 31 in May last year and we thought if we got 50,000 per week it would be great. To reach that level nationally — we are very happy," Mr Larocca says.

"The reason we do it is there is no other show on TV where there can be a rational debate about real estate; the other shows are entertainment. Shows like *The Block* are in TV reality style and they don't have the space to discuss what has

happened in the market on the weekend, and what will happen, or how to best market your property or choose a property manager," Mr Larocca says.

When not watching or starring in MPTV, Mr Larocca does admit to a soft spot for the English program *Grand Designs*, which follows the progress of people building an architecturally designed home.

"I have always been attracted to *Grand Designs* for the dreaming aspect of it and there's an English

### FAVOURITE PROPERTY PROGRAMS

**Peter Rogozik — buyer's advocate**  
*Hot Property*  
Channel Nine, Thursday, 8pm  
A reality TV program that details the experiences of people wanting to buy, sell, renovate or rent property.

**Robert Larocca — REIV spokesman**  
*MPTV*  
TV4ME, Tuesday, 7.30pm  
The Real Estate Institute of Victoria's program airs nationally; it includes a market wrap of the weekend's auction results and clearance rates, and discussion of property topics.

**Escape to the Country**  
TV2, Friday, 8.30  
An English program that matches couples or families that want to move from the city with two homes in the country that meet their criteria and also

shows them a third "mystery" property to get them to think outside the box.

**Michael Chan — real estate agent**  
*The Block*  
Channel Nine (the 2013 All Stars series will bring back participants from previous years)  
A reality TV series in which four couples compete to see who can do the best renovation, with the winners being the ones who achieve the highest price at auction for their property.

**Adam Dettrick — architect**  
*Grand Designs*  
ABC1, Friday, 6pm  
British reality TV program (there is an Australian version on the LifeStyle Channel) that follows the journey of couples as they set about building their architecturally designed dream home.

show, *Escape to the Country*, that I really enjoy. It deals with real people making real choices and weighing up their options."

Michael Chan, director of Ray White Real Estate, avoids watching programs such as *Hot Property*, which feature auctioneers selling houses. "I guess it's like a plumber watching someone fix a tap. It's not how I want to spend my evening when I've done it all day."

However, when popular reality TV show *The Block* is on, he and his team feel the need to watch it to stay in the loop with their vendors and buyers, who inevitably want to talk about the latest episode.

Mr Chan says he's seen a change in buyer behaviour in the past 10 years that he is sure is, at least in part, due to the plethora of real estate television. "I think it's certainly opened up people's ideas of looking at a property and thinking about what they could do to make it suit their lifestyle," he says.

"We are having a lot of buyers bring their builders to a second or third inspection and seeing a lot of interest with couples considering doing a renovation on a property that's on a 'bulldoze' level."

"It's opened up a new discussion out there, where people are considering doing renovations. People are

more educated to a degree; they understand what's involved."

Architect Adam Dettrick also says property programs have opened home owners' eyes about what's possible when it comes to creating their own home.

Unsurprisingly, if Mr Dettrick sits down to watch a property program, it will be *Grand Designs*. "I have never seen a project unravel as badly as the ones on that show seem to. It's good TV," Mr Dettrick says. He says the designs are always interesting, if at times, "slightly architecturally misguided."

"I think, overall, its function is to see people trying to realise a dream. I think it raises people's awareness of the possibilities architecture in their home presents, and the role architecture can play in improving the quality of their life."

Mr Dettrick says the program has encouraged some people to think about having an architect involved in designing their house, rather than settling for a project home.

"I don't think they come expecting more for their dollar; it's more they come in pre-primed expecting surprises and expecting to be taken on a journey — hopefully a journey that is not as fraught as the ones you see on the show."