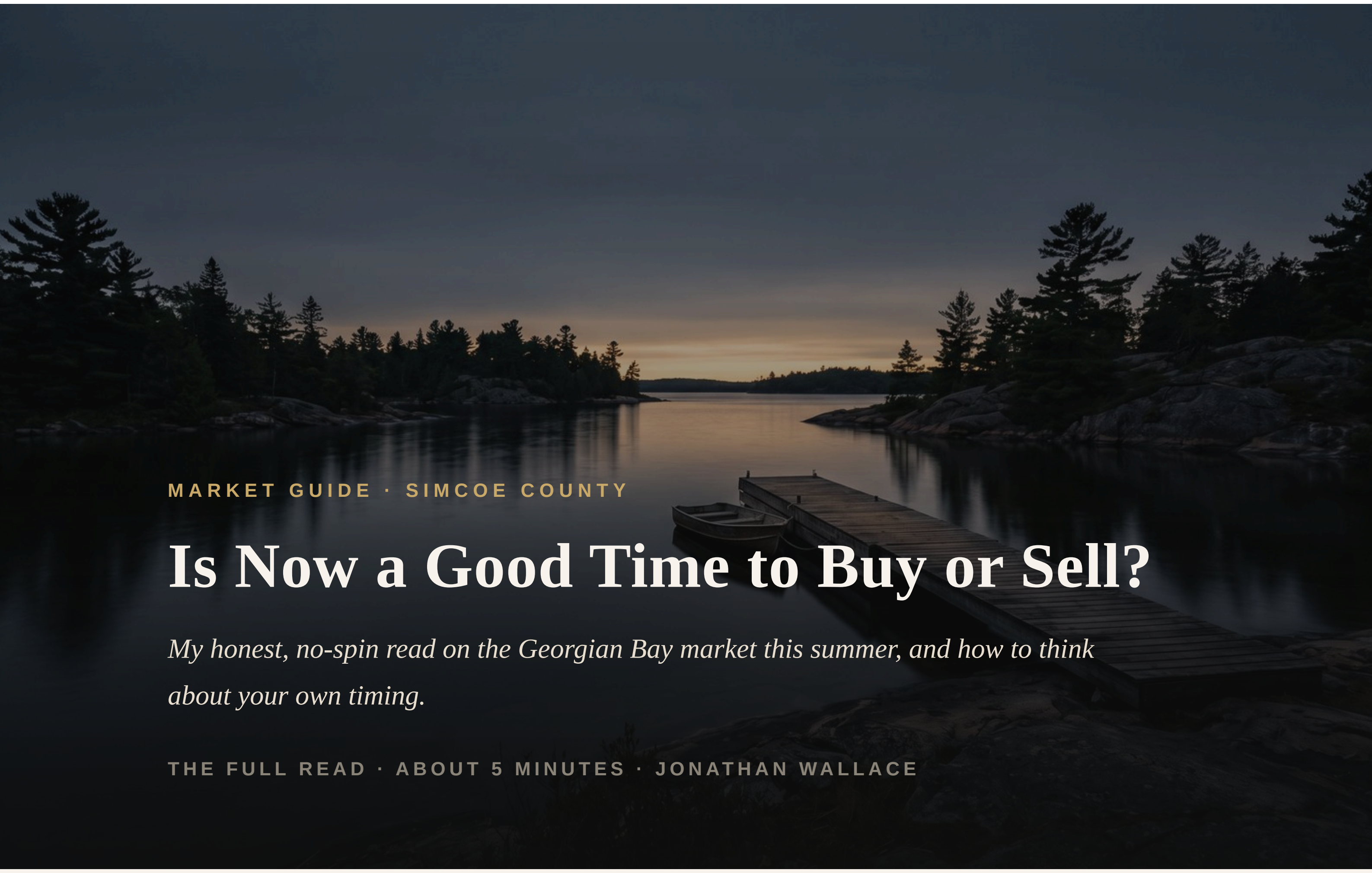


MARKET GUIDE · SIMCOE COUNTY

Is Now a Good Time to Buy or Sell?

My honest, no-spin read on the Georgian Bay market this summer, and how to think about your own timing.

THE FULL READ · ABOUT 5 MINUTES · JONATHAN WALLACE

There is no perfect time to buy or sell. It has far less to do with the calendar than it does with your own life, your timeline, and where you are trying to go next. What I can do is tell you exactly what I am seeing on the ground in Simcoe County right now, and let you make the call that is right for you.

First, what summer actually looks like here

July always has a seasonal slowdown. People are on vacation and a home purchase takes a back seat for the first couple of weeks. Then, almost every year, we see a surge in the back half of August as people push to secure a home before the school year, whether that is for their own children or to be closer to grandchildren.

That momentum carries into September and October. Our average closing runs about 45 to 60 days, and most people want to be settled by the end of November, or December 22 at the absolute latest, before the holidays. So the buyers moving now are the ones who want to be in and unpacked before winter.

The real risk of waiting until spring

Here is the part most people do not think through. Our average sale price sits in a pocket between roughly $500,000 and $700,000. Over the last four years we have seen monthly price softening in the range of $3,000 to $5,000, depending on the location.

If you believe the market is going to keep easing before it turns, then every month your home is not on the market can cost you $3,000 to $6,000 in value. For a seller, that is a real argument for listing now rather than waiting. For a buyer, the question is different: are you trying to perfectly time the bottom, or are you ready to move forward in your life? Only you can answer that one.

What I will say is that the six straight rate holds from the Bank of Canada have taken a lot of the volatility out of the picture. People have been living in a sense of fear for the last 18 to 24 months, always asking if they have hit the bottom yet. Eventually people stop putting their lives on hold over a few thousand dollars and they move because of how they feel, not because a spreadsheet told them to.

What about first-time buyers?

This is one of the brighter spots. We are seeing more first-time buyers able to get into the market. A modest home can start around $375,000 on the low end, where some sweat equity and forced appreciation will be part of the plan. At that level, a mortgage payment can land below, or close enough to, what it costs to rent a two-bedroom apartment that it simply makes sense to invest in your own future instead.

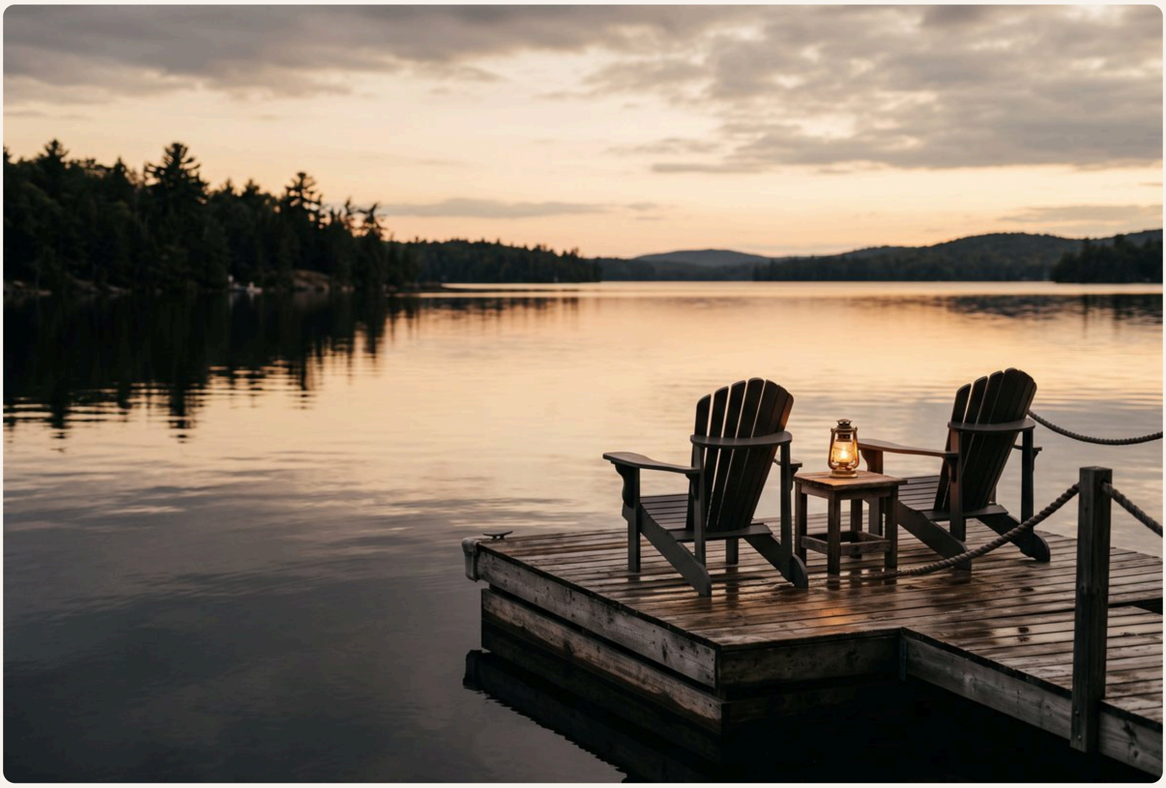
Rates are helping. Right now I am seeing clients lock in around 3.99% on a five-year fixed, about 4.1% on a three-year fixed, and variables around 3.6 to 3.7% depending on the lender. Fixed rates are sitting around 4% right now, and that is pulling people off the sidelines.

Real estate is a long game. On a 100-year trend these properties appreciate 4 to 5% a year. If you are trying to get rich in the next 12 to 24 months, that is unlikely. But if you are looking at a 5 to 10 year horizon, I believe our first-time buyers will look back on 2026 and say it was a fantastic opportunity, and the people who sat on the sidelines waiting for one more price drop will wish they had moved.

Should I list in August, or wait until September?

The honest answer comes down to your competition. When you launch a listing, buyers compare it to everything else that is active. Simple supply and demand: if you are one of six homes instead of one of seventeen, your odds of selling go up. In a market with less room to negotiate, a compelling price, a strong presentation, and genuine value still get a home sold. Buyers are absolutely still buying the properties that check those boxes.

A word on cottages and second properties

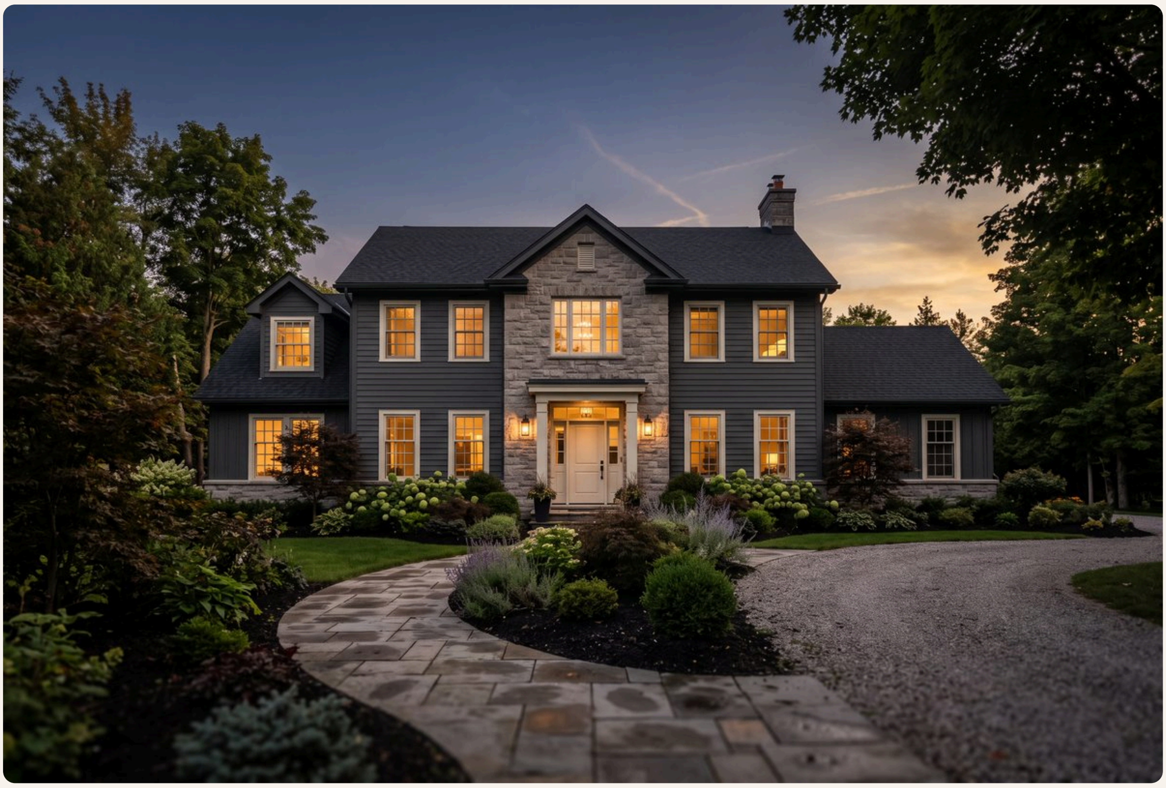


Second properties are telling their own story this year.

The secondary-property market tells its own story right now. Very few people have been buying cottages over the last four years, and many current owners, especially in Tiny Township, are looking to let go of that second set of expenses as it gets harder to carry two properties. There is also an age demographic aging out of the upkeep and choosing to cash in.

For owners who have held since the 60s, 70s, 80s, or 90s, the gains have still been significant. The tougher stories are the buyers who bought at the peak of the COVID boom, some of whom are now in a negative-equity position and, in certain cases, taking real losses to sell. If you own a cottage and have been wondering about timing, it is worth a real conversation before you decide.

Thinking of selling? Start with this



The best light of the year is right now.

If you want your home ready to sell, this is the best time of year for photography. Your gardens are full, your lawn is green, and the exterior is usually at its best. At a minimum, have your agent capture strong exterior photos right now. Bank them. If you end up launching in the fall when it is wet or the leaves are down, you can still showcase the home the way it looks today.

To maximize value, remember that buyers fall in love with curb appeal. You have about the first 7 to 10 seconds from the moment someone arrives to set the feeling, and most people choose a home on how it makes them feel, not on logic. From the front door in, your job is to remove as many perceived issues as you can. Every deal-breaker or negotiating point you eliminate before a buyer sees it protects your final price.

As for how long it takes, most sellers I sit down with are ready to be on the market within 7 to 10 days. Some need a deeper plan, a little decluttering, some paint, but it is remarkable what people accomplish in ten days with a deadline that they never got to in three years of living there. That short window is where the transformation happens.

My listing playbook

When you list with me, here is exactly what happens:

- We meet and build a strategy around what the market is doing and how to get you to your goal.
- Staging comes in for a consult and preliminary photos, going room by room to plan how we maximize the way the home presents online.
- Then the full photography appointment, about two to three hours. That is not just photos. It is drone, laser measurements, 2D floor plans, and a 3D walkthrough.
- The marketing engine kicks in and the listing goes live within 48 hours: every syndicated site and third-party app, printed material created and delivered to the home, and the sign installed.

The big picture, and the biggest mistake

Right now, this is a buyer's market. Months of inventory in Simcoe County is sitting around 7.8, and in Tiny Township we are pushing close to 11. More inventory against the same number of buyers means more downward pressure, and how much depends entirely on where you are looking.

The biggest mistake I see in the summer is a lack of urgency. Sellers feel they have all the time in the world, so they overprice, miss the summer energy, and then chase the market down with price reductions through the fall. By the time winter pressure hits, they panic and cut hard just to get it done. What started as a plan to sell in 30 to 60 days becomes 180 days on the market as one of the pack, instead of seizing the momentum the market gives you in the first 30 days.

Bottom line

If you have been on the fence about buying or selling, the first step is a real conversation. On the selling side, hire someone who does this full time and has a proven track record in good markets and hard ones, with a clear strategy to get you sold so you are one of the six that sells and never has to fall back to Plan B or Plan C. On the buying side, work with someone full time who knows what is happening and has the agent relationships to know what inventory is coming. Even in a buyer's market, the good homes still sell in the first few days. If you love it, chances are someone else will too.

If that conversation is worth having, reach out anytime. No pressure, just a straight answer about your situation.

Book a straight-talk conversation

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