

# COTTAGES & GARDENS

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## **A Buyer's Market Explained by Top Brokers**



After a year and a half, the buyer's market is slowly starting to see some signs of shifting. From the first quarter to the second, reports appraisal firm Miller Samuel, supply in Manhattan dropped (indicating a move toward a more stable market), sales volume jumped 39.4 percent, and the median sale price increased 13.1 percent to \$1.215 million—the first rise in six quarters. (Additionally, Manhattan rents saw a record first-quarter high, hitting \$3,217 a month, according to StreetEasy.)

“The market always has a way of leveling itself,” says Core’s Emily Beare. “There has been an uptick in buyers because prices have started to become more realistic, but at the same time, there’s still a lot of inventory to be absorbed.” While some of the numbers “are promising,” adds Compass broker Vickey Barron, “part of the increase in sales volume and price can be attributed to new-development contracts that were signed a long time ago, when the market was hotter.”

Also spurring sales: low interest rates, along with the recent increases in mansion and transfer taxes. Effective as of July, the latter were “a trigger to get contracts signed during the second quarter,” notes Barron. “The laws won’t deter people from buying at the high end,” adds Beare, “but they will affect sale prices because buyers will be trying to negotiate more in order to make up for the higher taxes.” The bottom line, says Barron, is that “prices are still very attractive right now, and buyers who have been waiting on the sidelines have finally jumped in. There are some amazing deals to be had.”