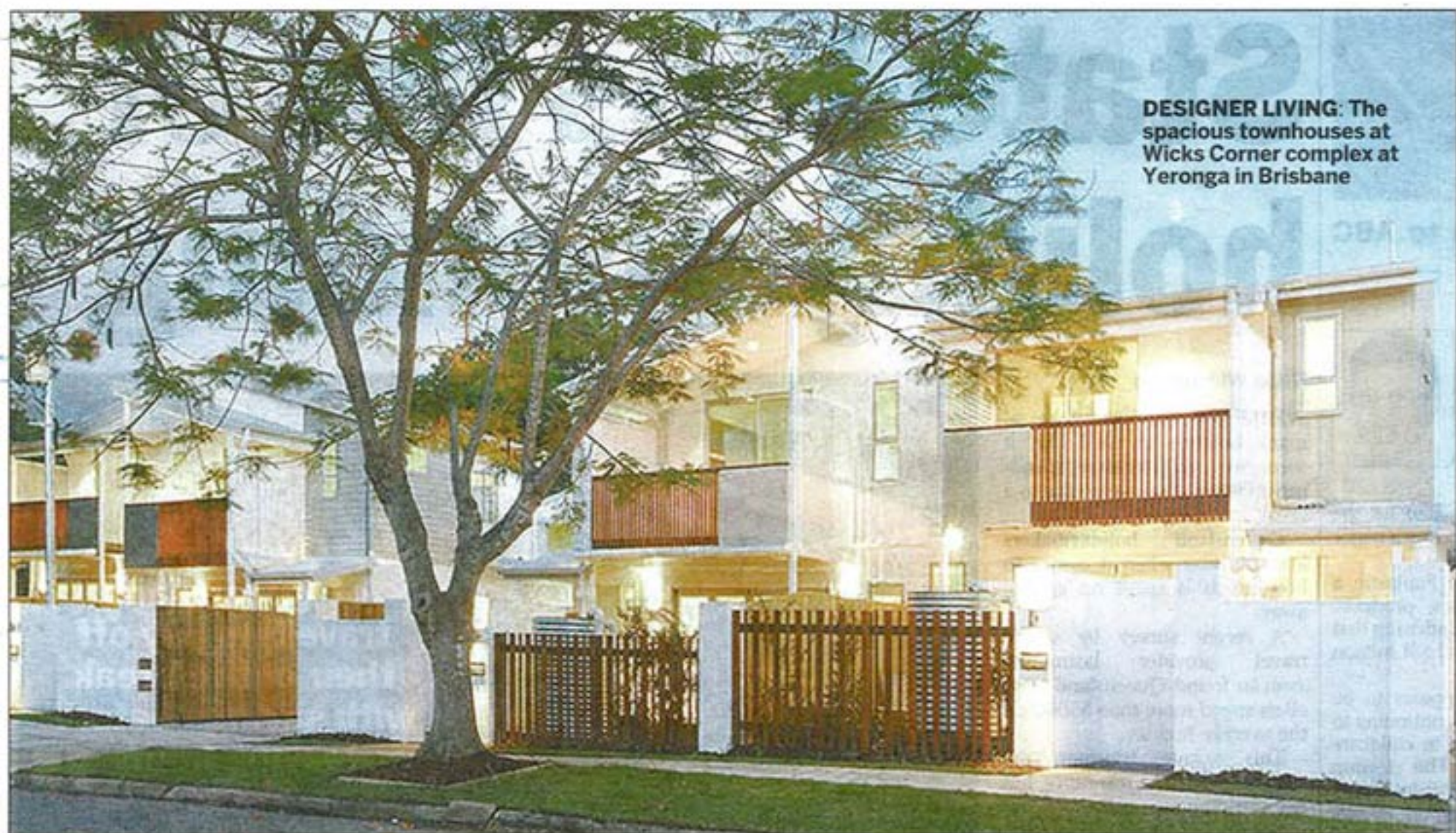


DESIGNER LIVING: The spacious townhouses at Wicks Corner complex at Yeronga in Brisbane



Window opens on new must-haves

HOME buyers are looking for fewer but bigger rooms, a bedroom with a view and the latest in technology.

In a report due out early next month, industry commentator and Matusik Property Insights director Michael Matusik said the trend was for fewer but larger rooms.

While the formal dining room went out of fashion a long time ago, spare bedrooms and the third bathroom are the next to be crossed off the home buyer's shopping list.

What they do want, Mr Matusik said, is a master bedroom with a view. And while it doesn't have to be on another floor, there does have to be a bit of distance between it and other bedrooms. And the ensuite must have plenty of room, where owners can sit in the bath and see outside. And, despite current water restrictions, they like to have a spa.

Home theatres are still on the "must have" list but now we also want plasma screens everywhere.

"A plasma screen in the home theatre room is no longer enough," Mr Matusik said.

"We seem to want to be in contact

A survey into house buying trends reveals some surprises, as Michelle Collins writes

with the outside world — well at least the version that is broadcast — all the time. Ultra-thin plasma screens are turning up in nearly every nook and cranny, including in the kitchen, bedroom, near the pool and even in the bathroom."

Technology continues to affect our homes and it is also now important to buyers that their home has a wireless connection so they can work from home and don't have to compete with the rest of the family for cable access.

And that also means a proper office to work in. No longer is it enough to put a desk in the corner — home buyers are looking for a room away from the noise where they can set up their computer and a printer/fax.

Real Estate Institute of Queensland chairman Peter McGrath said the location still seems to hold firm as the perennial key to future capital growth.

"Schools, shopping centres, public transport, parks and, increasingly,

cafes and restaurants, are all desirable aspects of suburban living and favourable attributes to potential buyers," he said. "From most buyers' viewpoint, the really important features for the location of their home are that the neighbourhood is safe, close to schools, medical services and shops, and also close to their workplace or to reliable public transport.

"The aesthetic characteristics of a suburb or street also rank high on most homebuyers' list of desirable features.

"REIQ research shows that most people buy another home within only a few kilometres of where they currently live."

Mr Matusik said it was also important to buyers that their new home reflected the local community.

"Home owners are looking for a look that reflects their locale, but is also different from the neighbour and the development around the corner," he said.

A survey by Archicentre this year asked home buyers about what feature they would place above others.

Almost 80 per cent said a water tank for gardening while 14 per cent said a spa in the en-suite and 6 per cent went for the large plasma screen.

"Sustainable housing practices, such as rainwater tanks, are becoming more popular across the board," Mr McGrath said.

The new Wicks Corner complex at 46 Eversley Tce at Yeronga in Brisbane is one of the typical new developments.

Each of the 11 townhouses in the development has two bedrooms and each has its own ensuite and balcony. And each of the bedrooms has its own wall-mounted LCD TV. The townhouses also have IT-ready study spaces and water tanks.

Sharon Wilson of Re/Max Colonial said the townhouses were aimed at young professionals who wanted to house-share to supplement their income. "The townhouses have been designed, therefore, with two double-sized bedrooms with full ensuites and which are separate from each other," she said.