



Julia Ross at her home in Point Piper  
Pictures: Krystle Wright

## MY FIRST PROPERTY

Julia Ross

Deputy chairman and managing director of Ross Human Directions

**What and where was the first property you owned?** I grew up in Cheshire, England, and I bought a terrace in the same suburb.

**When did you buy and sell it?** I bought it at 18 and sold it at 20. I sold it quickly because I moved to Berkshire, in the south of England, for work. I was running an office for a construction group, and was nominated woman of the year at age 21 in the *Veuve Cliquot* "woman in a man's industry" category. I married fairly soon after that and my next purchase was a few years later with my (now-ex) husband.

**What's the story behind the first purchase?** Even as a teenager, I was focused on building assets. Everyone else was out enjoying themselves but I was saving for my deposit and then had a mortgage at an early age. Most people don't think about buying until their 30s, but I never wanted to rent. It was good because it always kept me on the savings path. I am



known to be a bit of saver. I don't mind investing in things that make money, but I don't like wastage. I hate things like putting too much water in a bath.

**How much did you pay for it? Did you have a mortgage?** I paid around 20,000 pounds and had a mortgage.

**How much did you sell it for?** A similar but slightly higher price.

**How did the purchase affect your lifestyle at the time?** It made me more serious about my

job. It was the first time I had to tie myself down to a desk. You can leave a job but you can't leave debt behind you, so my work became a more serious consideration.

**Did you renovate/change it drastically?** I knocked down walls; took out fireplaces and went for a complete makeover. I did most of the basic stuff myself, and my sister helped. We're pretty handy, but we did get tradespeople in to finish things off that we couldn't do.

**Any disasters with the property?** No

**What were the triumphs?** I drastically transformed it and made some money on it, which has given me an ongoing interest in property.

**What lessons did you learn?** Re investment properties, always buy the worst house in the best street because it provides the best potential for investment performance.

**Subsequent purchases?** I have been very lucky with my purchases and there have been numerous good investments both in England and Australia.

**Where do you currently live?** In Point Piper. I love the openness and space that I get from the view.

**What prompted the move?** I fell in love with the uniqueness of the house's position. Being on a double block means there is a lot more outdoor area than many homes, and the position means it can't be built out.

**How has your taste changed?** I have become more "less" than "more" as my sense of what I like has developed. I love natural colours and I have developed my interest in art to be able to have pieces around me that I really love.

**What advice would you give people either buying their first home or investing in property?** If you are buying a home to live in and make your own, let your heart have a big say in your choice. If you are purely making an investment, the decision has to be more about your head and how the numbers stack up.



