



Senlie Tong at home ... real estate is fun work.

Now it's buyers Senlie nurses

THERE is an antique typewriter perched on a polished oak table in Senlie Tong's house.

"Do you like it? Only cost \$80. Not a bad buy is it?" she asks and laughs.

The same woman who clinches million-dollar property deals as a sales consultant for Knobel and Davis says she is lousy with money.

So bad she sometimes forgets to pick up her pay cheques — for weeks.

The Chinese-born sales consultant joined the real estate industry almost three years ago when friends rang from Hong Kong wanting to buy property on the Gold Coast.

"The particular property they wanted to buy was like a concentration camp. I told them to buy something more decent," she says.

"After friends kept ringing me, I asked Ray White for commission and they said they could not pay me unless I worked for them."

The former nurse worked with Ray White for about a year before joining Knobel and Davis.

She says nursing is similar to real estate. "Everybody said it would be a big change from nursing to real estate but it is not different, except the people I deal with don't have medical problems.

"It is very hard to change from nursing to a profession where people don't trust you at all. You have to gain that trust in a very hard way.

"I have to prove I am not an ordinary sales person."

Senlie says people should be realistic about the real estate market.

"A man wanted to sell his house and was asking \$195,000 for it. It was worth \$175,000 at the top of the range," she says.

"I sent him a contract for \$175,000 but he said 'you are insulting me'. He said not a penny less than \$195,000.

"The lady who wanted to buy his house bought something else. The seller came to the Gold Coast two weeks later and said he realised it was too expensive and reduced the price to \$189,000.

"Two months later he took it off the market."

She says an important factor in selling real estate is letting people decide for themselves — but she is not afraid to tell people what their property is worth.

"You have to decide yourself whether you want to be the one to make a quick dollar and vanish or have a good name around town for a long, long time."

Senlie predicts Chinese investment will grow on the Gold Coast.

"I am still a very traditional Chinese-thinking person. My parents were teachers and in China, teachers have very set rules," she says.

"I judge people on how genuine they are. I leave the dollars away from it."

Senlie says she is not a worrier except about 'little things' — like whether she has made the potato salad for a friend's barbecue or returned a phone call.

As for the business, she enjoys it. "There is nothing else you can do that makes you feel so much achievement. So much self satisfaction.

"It is fun".

- CHRISTINE RETSCHLAG

Senlie's 61 sales bring \$11m year

GOLD Coast real estate agent Senlie Tong has notched up 61 property sales worth \$11.8 million in the latest financial year.

Her employer, Knobel and Davis principal Kerry Davis, says the 61 sales may be a national record for a general real estate agent.

Mrs Tong says 30 of the properties sold at auction, 27 were sole agency listings and four were open listings.

She says 17 of the auction properties sold before auction or sold under the hammer.

The sales covered a range of properties, from an \$85,000 Benowa villa to a \$570,000 Sanctuary Cove home.

Most of the properties were in Bundall, Benowa, Ashmore and Southport.

The Chinese-born former nurse moved to Australia 20 years ago with husband William and has spent 19 of those years on the Gold Coast.

The Tongs have two teenage sons.

Mrs Tong says one of her most rewarding sales was selling a unit to a woman who initially disliked it when she inspected it.

She capped off that sale by selling the woman's son a townhouse on the same day.

Another couple allowed Mrs Tong to set the reserve for their



Gold Coast real estate agent Senlie Tong: 61 property sales worth \$11.8 million

home and after selling it for \$6000 above what was expected, bought another home through her within days.

Mrs Tong, who has sold homes to clients without their inspection, says

trust has been the most important element in her success as a real estate saleswoman.

In the 1994-95 financial year Mrs Tong notched up 55 sales worth \$17 million.