

...said many customers were spending about \$300 for designer dog

...a budget version, with smaller diamonds, for about \$20,000.

...ing to top \$3.8 billion this year — up five per cent on last year.

Fancy a game: A diamond domino set

Balmain shack fetches \$720,000

Wife's nod to Lockett



Sleeper: \$160,000 above reserve

A RUN-DOWN fibro shack in Sydney's inner west sold for \$720,000 yesterday, signalling the end to a successful 2001 real estate season.

The three-bedroom cottage, in Balmain's popular Mori St, sold for \$160,000 above the reserve price. It had stood empty for the past three years.

Agent Michaela Padden, of Sarah Lorden Real Estate, said the high price proved the market was still strong for well-located properties.

"The kitchen and bath-

room are both a shambles, and the toilet is outside," she said.

"The whole place is in need of a complete renovation, inside and out."

Although auction clearance rates tapered off to an average of 65 per cent last weekend, agents reported a healthy close to the Sydney real estate market.

Real Estate Institute of NSW president Chris Fitzpatrick said this year's Sydney spring season had been extremely successful.

"The end of the year was a little more vibrant than in the past," Mr Fitzpatrick said.

"To maintain a high volume of sales in the traditional selling months of spring was a fairly good indication that the market is very strong."

In Newcastle, a three-level mansion in the fashionable seaside suburb of Dudley sold for a record \$2.205 million at auction yesterday.

A local chiropractor bought the property, smashing the previous re-

cord residential price for the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie region.

His family's new neighbours include former rugby league star Paul "The Chief" Harragon, Newcastle Knights coach Michael Hagan and pop singer Marcia Hines.

The strikingly designed house had been put on the market after failed Newcastle businessman Lloyd Scott's company was placed in liquidation, owing more than \$15 million.

□ Auction results: Page 121

TONY Lockett's wife, Vicki, was the biggest hurdle he faced before he announced his comeback to Australian football last week.

The champion full forward, writing exclusively for *The Sunday Telegraph*, has revealed that without his wife's consent, he would not be making a return to the playing field for the Swans next year at the age of 35.

□ Full story: See sport