THE 5 R MASTERCLASS · PROFITABLE INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE INVESTING

LESSON 5

The Right Time

Welcome back. Yesterday, we talked about the Right Price, and how RETA members profit the day they buy by locking in equity below market value.

Today, we're going to talk about something just as powerful, and just as misunderstood: timing.

You've probably heard the saying, "Time in the market beats timing the market." That's true for stocks. But real estate works differently. In property investing, timing can make or break your returns.

Buy too early, and your capital sits idle. Buy too late, and you're paying for everyone else's gains. The key is to catch the wave, and not the hype.

So in this lesson, we'll talk about how to read a market's cycle, how to recognize early momentum, and how to enter when conditions are early but real.

If I could summarize two decades of global real estate scouting into one principle, it would be this: catch the wave, not the hype.

You don't want to be the first person in the water. But you definitely don't want to be the last one paddling out when the wave's already breaking.

In practical terms, that means buying after the catalysts appear, but before the crowd arrives. You want proof that progress is happening: infrastructure under construction, flights increasing, brand-name resorts breaking ground. But before the influencers, glossy magazines, and "everyone's talking about it" crowd shows up.

At that stage, prices are still low, supply is still being built, and momentum is just beginning to pick up speed. Buy then, and you give your capital room to grow as the market matures. Wait too long, and you're left chasing appreciation that's already been baked into the price.

So the art of timing isn't about predicting the future. It's about recognizing when change has already started, but recognition hasn't yet caught up. That's your sweet spot.

Think of a market as having three phases.

Phase 1: The Pioneer Phase. This is when only locals and visionaries are investing. Infrastructure might still be in planning, and there's little data. The upside is high, but so is the risk.

Phase 2: The Momentum Phase. This is where you want to be. Catalysts are visible. New air routes are opening, hotels are reporting higher occupancy, developers are breaking ground, and early investors are already seeing returns. It's early enough to get in below retail value, but real enough to be confident growth is coming.

Phase 3: The Maturity Phase. This is when everyone knows about the opportunity. You'll see traffic jams, long lines at immigration, and prices that outpace fundamentals. Retail buyers flood in. Profit margins shrink.

Your goal as an investor is to enter in Phase 2. When the market's potential is obvious to those paying attention, but still invisible to the masses.

As I like to say, "You want to see cranes on the skyline, not traffic jams." Cranes mean construction. Traffic jams mean you're late.

So, how do you know when a market has entered that sweet spot? There are four big indicators I look for — and they've never let me down.

1. **New Air Routes.** Air connectivity is the heartbeat of international real estate. When airlines commit to new routes, they've already done years of forecasting. They're betting on rising tourism and population growth. When I see new direct flights from the U.S. or Europe, it means the market's about to expand.
2. **Rising Hotel Occupancy.** Hotel operators are on the front lines of demand. If occupancy rates are climbing year after year, it means tourists are discovering the destination — and short-term rentals will follow. By the time hotel rooms are full, long-term rentals will be next.
3. **Developer Activity.** When reputable developers start breaking ground on new projects, it's a powerful signal. But make sure they're the right kind of developers — experienced, well-financed, and focused on long-term quality. One good developer entering a market can set off a domino effect of progress.

4. **Lifestyle Infrastructure.** Look for new marinas, golf courses, or international schools. These are the amenities that turn destinations into full-time communities.

If you see those four signs happening at once, the wave has started. That's when you want to position yourself — early enough to ride the growth, late enough to know it's real.

Now let's talk about what to avoid. The markets that have already peaked.

When everyone is talking about a destination, it usually means the easy money has been made. You'll see celebrity chefs opening restaurants. You'll see influencers posting sunset selfies with hashtags that include the word "undiscovered." If you hear that word, it's probably already discovered.

Late-entry markets are easy to spot once you know the signs: prices growing faster than rental income. Locals being priced out of their own communities. Developers pre-selling projects years before completion at inflated prices. And too much short-term speculation, not enough real end-user demand.

When fundamentals lag behind prices, that's a bubble — not an opportunity.

So, resist the temptation to chase headlines. Let others buy hype. You focus on the numbers, the data, and the progress on the ground. That's how you stay ahead. And safe.

Let's bring this to life with a real example: Playa Flamingo, Costa Rica, 2024.

Before the new international-standard marina opened, this beach town was still a quiet stretch of coastline visited mostly by surfers and locals. But new infrastructure — the marina, improved roads, and an influx of North American travelers — signaled a major turning point.

RETA members who secured luxury condos just before the ribbon-cutting paid early-stage prices. Within eighteen months, comparable units were selling for $100,000 more, with strong short-term rental demand driven by visiting boaters and vacationers.

The catalyst was clear. The opportunity was temporary. We bought when progress was visible but not yet priced in. And that's what "Right Time" looks like in practice.

We didn't buy at the hype stage. We bought when momentum was clear but recognition was still catching up. And that's the formula for every successful RETA deal since.

Our edge isn't speculation. It's patience and pattern recognition, and knowing when the market is early but real. If you can learn to identify that phase consistently, you'll never need to gamble again. You'll see progress unfolding before others do, and you'll already be in position when the crowd finally notices.

Here’s your quick checklist for identifying the Right Time:

Catalysts Confirmed. Infrastructure and lifestyle upgrades are visible and measurable.

Momentum Building. Flights, tourism, and population are growing steadily.

Prices Rational. Still below long-term potential, with room for appreciation.

Developer Confidence. Reputable builders breaking ground.

Rental Yields Healthy. Rents keeping pace with prices.

Media Quiet. Little mainstream coverage — no hype yet.

Locals Positive. When locals are optimistic, you’re early. When they’re complaining about traffic, you’re late.

If most of those boxes are ticked, congratulations! You’ve likely found a market entering its prime. That’s when you buy. That’s when you catch the wave, before it crests.

Now let’s put this into practice. Open your worksheet to the section titled “Early but Real Markets.”

I want you to think of one destination you’ve been following. Maybe a place you’ve traveled to recently or read about in RETA’s monthly reports. Ask yourself:

Are there new air routes opening?

Are hotel bookings rising?

Are reputable developers starting to build?

Are property prices still affordable relative to rental income?

If you can answer “yes” to at least two of those questions, that market might be early but real. Write it down, and note what specific indicators you’ve observed.

This simple habit — tracking catalysts and momentum — will train your eye to see opportunity before it’s obvious. That’s how you become a true RETA-style investor.

Timing is what turns potential into profit. Buy too soon, and you wait. Buy too late, and you chase. But buy at the right moment — when the signs are there but the hype isn’t — and you can ride years of compounding growth.

Remember my mantra: you want to see cranes on the skyline, not traffic jams. Cranes mean progress is underway. Traffic jams mean the crowd has already arrived.

If you can consistently catch the wave, not the hype, you'll never depend on luck or chance again.

Tomorrow, we'll wrap up this masterclass with a special session. A recap of all five "R's" and how they work together, to help you build a global real-estate portfolio that delivers freedom, security, and joy for years to come.

I'll see you then.