M&M REAL ESTATE · MARKET ANALYSIS & OUTLOOK

The Cost of *Waiting*

What 12 months really costs, in both directions. Rent paid, yield foregone, price movement and rate movement, modelled honestly for a market that is cooling, not climbing.

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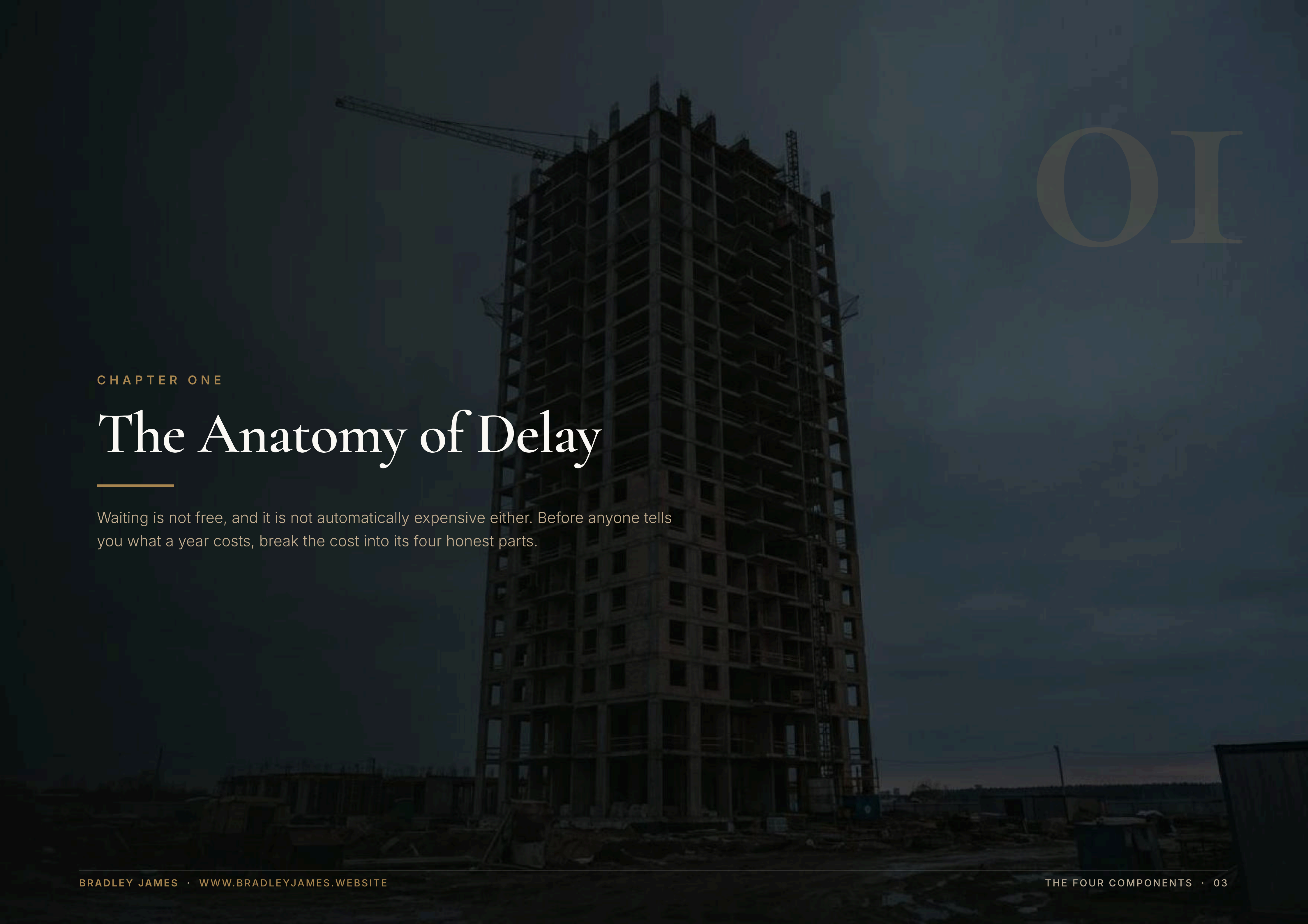


01

CHAPTER ONE

The Anatomy of Delay

Waiting is not free, and it is not automatically expensive either. Before anyone tells you what a year costs, break the cost into its four honest parts.

Four Moving Parts, Not One Slogan

You have probably been told that waiting to buy in Dubai is a mistake, that every month you sit out is money lost. It is a good line for closing a sale. It is also only half true, and the half it leaves out is the half that keeps you honest.

The real cost of waiting is not one number. It is four, and they do not all point the same way. First, **rent paid** while you wait, money that leaves and does not come back. Second, **yield foregone**, the net rent the asset would have earned you over those months. Third, **price movement**, the change in the property's value between now and when you actually buy, and this one can run either way, up in a rising market, down in a falling one. Fourth, **rate movement**, the change in mortgage cost if you borrow, which shifts your monthly payment for years.

Add the first two and price movement when it rises and you get the familiar case for buying sooner. But flip the third component, let price fall, and the arithmetic can invert entirely. In a cooling market, waiting can be the cheaper decision, not the costlier one. That is not a comfortable thing for an advisor to write, which is exactly why it belongs on the first page. This guide models both directions and lets the numbers, clearly labelled as illustrations, do the talking.

COMPONENT	WHAT IT IS	WHICH WAY IT POINTS
Rent paid while waiting	Money out the door with no asset behind it	Always a cost of waiting
Yield foregone	Net rent the asset would have earned you	Always a cost of waiting
Price movement	Change in the property's value before you buy	Cost if prices rise, saving if they fall
Rate movement	Change in mortgage cost if you borrow	Depends on the rate cycle

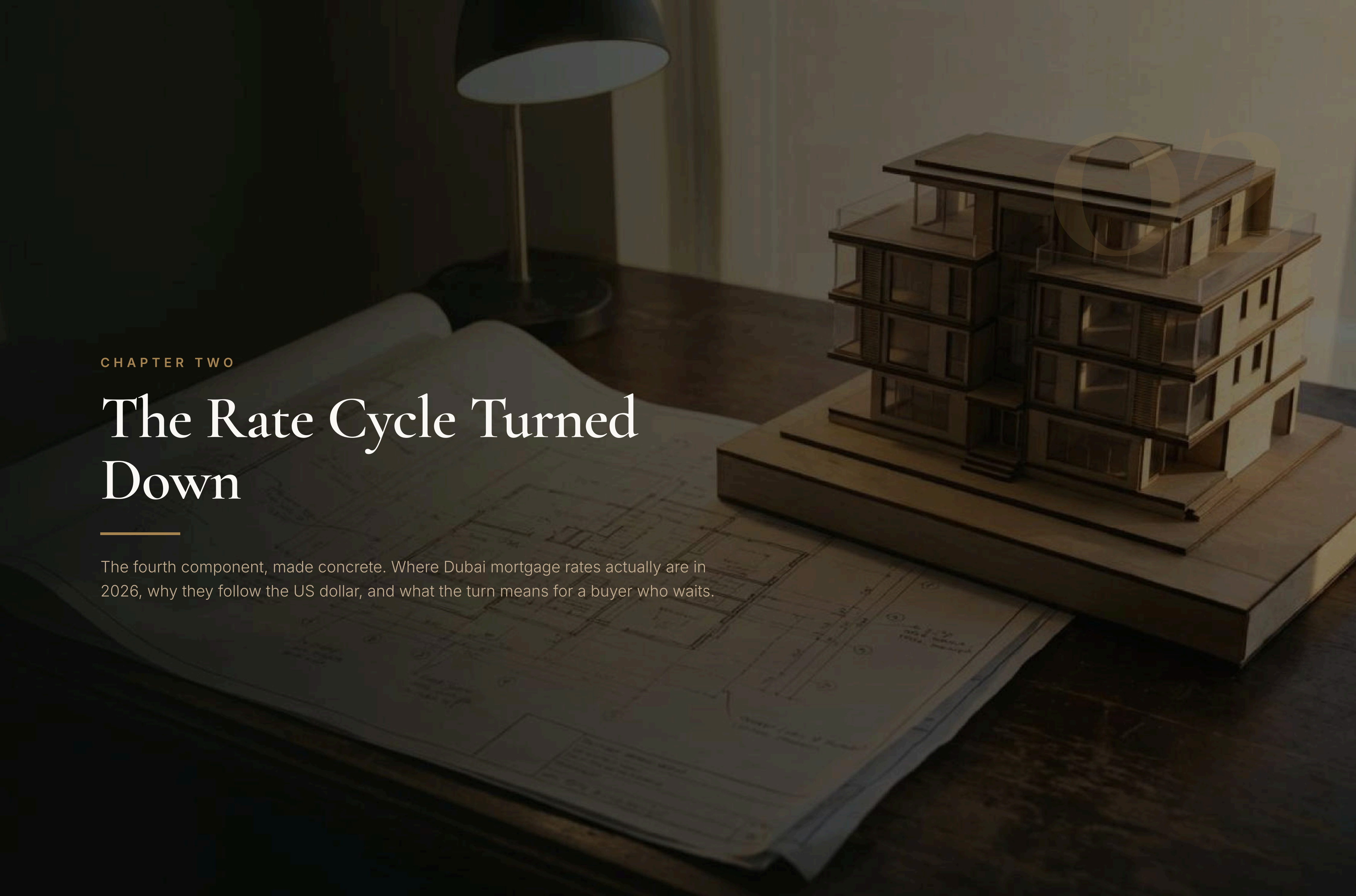
The framework this whole guide runs on. Two components always favour acting; one can favour waiting; one depends on the cycle. Honest analysis holds all four at once.

THE FOUR COMPONENTS

- Rent paid while you wait: always a cost.
- Yield foregone: always a cost.
- Price movement: a cost if prices rise, a saving if they fall.
- Rate movement: tracks the US-dollar rate cycle.

THE HONEST FRAME

"Waiting is not free, and it is not automatically expensive. It costs in a rising market and can save in a falling one. Which is why the cycle matters more than the slogan."



CHAPTER TWO

The Rate Cycle Turned Down

The fourth component, made concrete. Where Dubai mortgage rates actually are in 2026, why they follow the US dollar, and what the turn means for a buyer who waits.

Why Your Rate Tracks Washington, Not Dubai

Because the dirham is pegged to the US dollar at **3.6725**, the Central Bank of the UAE moves broadly in step with the Federal Reserve. When the Fed cuts, UAE benchmark rates follow, and when it hikes, they follow that too. Your Dubai mortgage cost is set in Washington far more than in Dubai. That is the price and the point of the peg, the same stability the currency imports on the way in, it imports on the rate as well.

Here is where that leaves a buyer in 2026. The **CBUAE base rate sits at 3.65%**, held after the December 2025 cut, following the Fed's target range down to **3.50% to 3.75%** after roughly **75 basis points** of easing across 2025. Most UAE mortgages price off the **3-month EIBOR**, currently around **3.74%**. So the rate cycle did not just pause, it turned **down**. A buyer who waited through 2025 for the mortgage market to calm has, in fact, been waiting into a falling-rate environment, not a rising one.

Read the fourth component carefully, though, because it cuts both ways too. Falling rates make borrowing cheaper for whoever buys next, waiter or not, so a further cut is not a reason to rush. What matters is the direction of the surprise. If rates keep drifting down, waiting costs a leveraged buyer very little on this component. If they turn back up, the buyer who locked in earlier looks smart. Nobody can tell you which, and anyone who claims to is guessing with your money.

3.65%
CBUAE BASE RATE, HELD SINCE DECEMBER 2025
CBUAE / Khaleej Times

~3.74%
3-MONTH EIBOR, THE UAE MORTGAGE BENCHMARK
CBUAE / Trading Economics

-75bps
FED EASING ACROSS 2025 (RANGE NOW 3.50% TO 3.75%)
Khaleej Times

◆ THE PEG MECHANISM

AED is fixed to USD at 3.6725. The CBUAE mirrors the Fed, so a falling Fed means a falling EIBOR means a falling Dubai mortgage cost. You are not exposed to a local-currency rate cycle, you are exposed to the dollar's. In 2025 to 2026 that cycle has been easing, not tightening.

◆ THE RATE READ

"The cycle turned down, not up. For a leveraged buyer that quietly lowers the cost of having waited, and removes the urgency that a rising-rate story would create."

CHAPTER 02 · THE RATE READ

What a Rate Move Actually Does to Your Payment

Abstract basis points are easy to wave away, so make the rate component concrete. On an illustrative **AED 1,500,000 mortgage** over 25 years, a **1 percentage point** difference in the rate moves the monthly payment by roughly **AED 850**, or on the order of **AED 10,000 a year**, every year, for the life of the loan. That is why the fourth component is not trivial for a leveraged buyer, and why the direction of the cycle matters more than its level on any single day.

Now the honest part. A lower rate helps **whoever buys next**, the person who waited and the person who acted a year earlier and can refinance. So a further cut is not, on its own, a reason to rush in or to hold off. What would genuinely reward the earlier buyer is rates turning back **up**, and what would reward the waiter is rates falling **further**. Since 2025 delivered cuts, the recent past has modestly favoured patience on this one component. The future path is unknowable, so plan for a range rather than a forecast.

SCENARIO	ILLUSTRATIVE EFFECT OF THE RATE ON AN AED 1.5M, 25-YEAR MORTGAGE
Rate around 3.75% (near today's EIBOR)	Lower monthly carry, the current environment
Rate 1 point higher (~4.75%)	About AED 850 more per month, ~AED 10,000 a year more
Rate 1 point lower (~2.75%)	About AED 850 less per month, a lighter carry

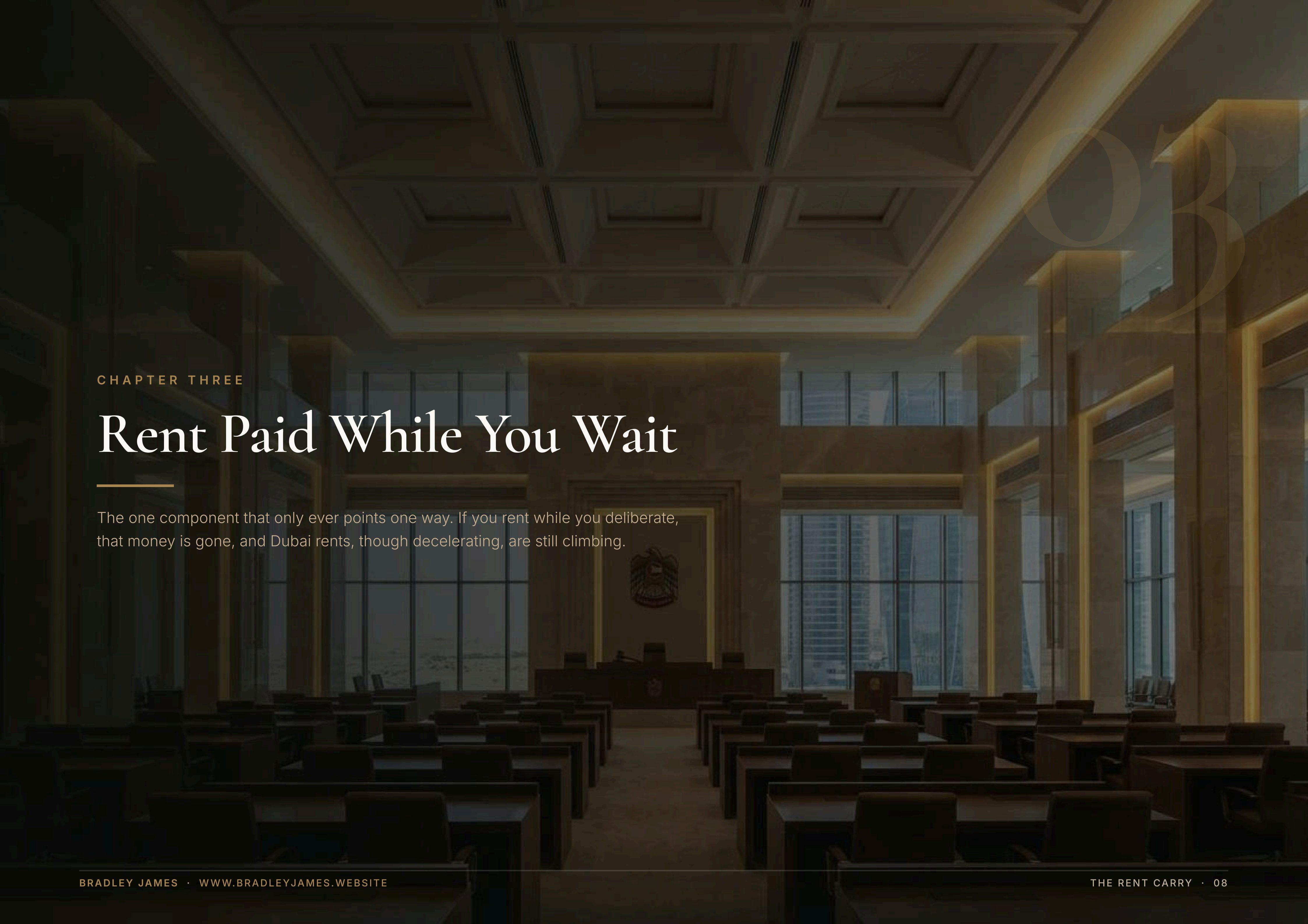
Illustrative only. Approximate figures on an AED 1,500,000 loan over 25 years; actual payments depend on your rate type, term, margin over EIBOR and lender. Shown to size the rate component, not to predict rates.

◆ LEVEL VERSUS DIRECTION

The rate you pay is set by the dollar cycle, so nobody controls it locally. What matters for the cost-of-waiting question is not today's level but the direction of the next move, and that is precisely what cannot be forecast. Model a range, not a point.

◆ THE PLAN

"Assume you cannot time rates. Choose a payment you would be comfortable with a point higher, and a further cut becomes a bonus rather than the reason you bought."



03

CHAPTER THREE

Rent Paid While You Wait

The one component that only ever points one way. If you rent while you deliberate, that money is gone, and Dubai rents, though decelerating, are still climbing.

CHAPTER 03 · THE RENT CARRY

The Cost That Never Runs in Your Favour

Of the four components, rent paid is the cleanest. There is no scenario where the rent you hand a landlord while you wait comes back to you. It is the truest cost of waiting, and it deserves an honest number rather than a scary one.

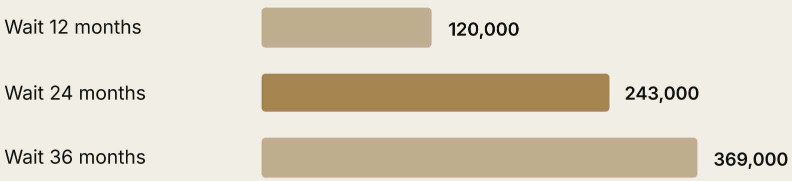
Dubai rents have been rising, but the pace is cooling. New-contract rents grew **+16% for apartments and +5% for villas in 2024**, then decelerated to **+7.2% and +4.8% year-on-year by Q2 2025**, and further to **+5.6% and +3.5% by Q3 2025**, with asking rents beginning to stabilise. So the input to the rent-carry model is a slowing-but-still-positive curve, not a runaway one, and not a falling one. If you are renting while you decide, you are paying a rent that is still edging up, on a home you do not own.

Put an illustration on it. Say you would occupy a home you would otherwise buy, and the equivalent rent is **AED 120,000 a year**. Wait 12 months and that is **AED 120,000** paid out with no asset behind it. Wait 24 and, with rent still creeping up, it is more than **AED 240,000**. That is the component that makes indefinite waiting genuinely expensive, not because prices must rise, but because the rent clock never stops. The figures here are illustrative, your own rent will differ.

PERIOD	NEW-CONTRACT RENTAL GROWTH	READING
2024: apartments	+16%	Fastest of the cycle
2024: villas	+5%	Steadier than apartments
Q2 2025: apts / villas	+7.2% / +4.8%	Clearly decelerating
Q3 2025: apts / villas	+5.6% / +3.5%	Stabilising, still positive

Source: ValuStrat new-contract rents. Rent growth is slowing but remained positive through 2025, so the rent-paid-while-waiting component still runs against the waiter, just less sharply than in 2024.

ILLUSTRATIVE RENT PAID WHILE WAITING (AED)



Illustrative only. Assumes AED 120,000 equivalent annual rent growing ~3% a year. No asset is acquired against this spend. Your own rent and its growth will differ.

◆ WHY THIS ONE IS CLEAN

Price movement can reverse. Rates can fall. But rent paid is gone the moment it leaves your account. It is the single component that makes open-ended waiting costly regardless of where prices go, which is why a decision, either way, beats drift.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Cost in a Rising Market

The classic case for acting, modelled properly. When prices and rents both climb, all three of the front-loaded components stack against the waiter.

The Arithmetic When the Market Climbs

This is the scenario the traditional pitch assumes, and in a rising market it is largely right. Put the components together on an **illustrative AED 2,000,000 property** across a 12-month wait, in a market that keeps climbing. This is deliberately simple, and every figure is illustrative with its assumptions shown.

Suppose prices rise **10%** over the year, in line with the more constructive 2026 outlooks. The same home now costs **AED 2,200,000**, so **price movement alone costs AED 200,000**. Add the rent you paid to wait, say **AED 120,000**, and the net yield you did not earn, at a conservative net figure the asset would have thrown off. On these assumptions, a year's wait in a rising market runs well into six figures before you count reinvestment. In a climbing market, the old line holds, waiting is expensive.

Notice what is doing the work, though. It is **price movement**, the one component that is not guaranteed. The rent and the foregone yield are real in any market, but they are the smaller part of this total. The large number, the AED 200,000, exists only if prices actually rise 10%, and in 2026 that is a forecast, not a fact. Which is the entire reason the next chapter has to exist.

COMPONENT	ILLUSTRATIVE, AED 2M HOME, MARKET RISING 10%
Price paid if you buy now	AED 2,000,000
Price paid if you buy in 12 months	AED 2,200,000
Price movement (cost of waiting)	AED 200,000
Plus rent paid while waiting	AED 120,000
Illustrative total cost of a 1-year wait	~AED 320,000, plus yield foregone

Illustrative only. Assumes a 10% price rise over 12 months (consistent with the more constructive 2026 house views, a forecast, not a fact), AED 120,000 equivalent rent, no reinvestment and no transaction costs. Change the price assumption and the total changes completely, as Chapter Five shows.

ILLUSTRATIVE COST OF A 1-YEAR WAIT, RISING MARKET (AED)

Illustrative, AED 2m home, +10% price assumption. The large bar depends entirely on prices actually rising.

◆ THE LOAD-BEARING ASSUMPTION

The headline cost in a rising market is the price rise, and that is precisely the component nobody can promise. Strip out the 10% and the cost of waiting shrinks to the rent and the yield. Always ask which assumption is carrying the number.

◆ THE RISING-MARKET TRUTH

"When the market climbs, waiting genuinely costs, and price movement is most of the bill. The honest question is whether the market will climb."

Why a Rising-Market Cost Widens With Time

The single-year illustration understates the rising-market case in one respect: it stops at 12 months. If prices genuinely compound, the gap between buying now and buying later widens each year, because you are missing not just this year's rise but the rise on top of the rise. Over a five-year hold, a market that compounds in the high single digits leaves an early buyer meaningfully ahead of a late one, on price alone, before rent and yield.

But hold the discipline from the last page. That widening only happens **if** prices actually compound upward, and in 2026 the consensus is **moderation**, not the high-teens growth of 2024 and 2025. Knight Frank's mainstream Dubai outlook for 2026 is only around **+1%**, with prime near **+3%**, and CBRE sees low-single-digit normalisation. So the compounding-cost argument is real in principle and muted in the current cycle. It is a reason to respect a genuine bull market, not a reason to treat 2026 as one.

The practical takeaway is about **horizon**, not timing. If you are holding for a decade, the compounding case says the entry month barely matters, because the asset has years to work and a 12-month wiggle washes out. If you are holding for two or three years, the entry price is a much larger share of your outcome, and in a cooling market that argues for patience and selectivity, not urgency. Same maths, opposite conclusions, set entirely by how long you will hold.

SCENARIO	ILLUSTRATIVE PRICE PATH ON AN AED 2M HOME
Constructive case (~+10%/yr)	Early buyer pulls ahead, gap widens each year
Consensus 2026 case (~+1% to +3%)	Gap is small, entry month barely matters
Cooling case (prices soft/negative)	Late buyer can be ahead, see Chapter Five

Illustrative only. Ranges reflect published 2026 house views (Knight Frank ~+1% mainstream / ~+3% prime; CBRE low-single-digit), which are forecasts, not facts. Shown to link the cost of waiting to holding horizon, not to predict a path.

◆ HORIZON DECIDES

Compounding rewards the early buyer only in a sustained bull market and only over a long hold. In a moderating market on a short horizon, the same logic points the other way. Before you weigh the cost of waiting, fix how long you will actually hold.

◆ THE DISCIPLINE

"Respect compounding in a real bull market. Do not import a bull market's arithmetic into a cooling one just because it makes the case for acting today."

CHAPTER FIVE

The Saving in a Falling Market

The half the sales pitch leaves out. Dubai is cooling in 2026, not climbing, and in a softening market the price component can turn the cost of waiting negative.

The Cooling That Is Actually Happening

Now the part most cost-of-waiting guides quietly skip. In 2026 Dubai is not in the runaway phase the rising-market model assumes. It is cooling, and in a cooling market the price component can flip from a cost into a saving.

This is not speculation, it is live. The consensus of the rating agencies is **moderation, not a crash**: Fitch sees a peak-to-trough correction of **up to 15%** and says explicitly there is no 2008 repeat, ValuStrat's citywide capital-growth outlook has cooled to **~10%** from close to 19.8% in 2025, and S&P frames the downside as apartment-concentrated given the supply pipeline. On the ground, early 2026 has already shown the first monthly capital-value decline of the cycle on the ValuStrat index, a sharp month of lower transaction volume during the spring regional escalation, and a visible band of asking-price reductions across listings. The softening is real and it is here.

So run the same AED 2,000,000 home through a falling market. If prices **fall 8%** over the year, the same home costs **AED 1,840,000** in 12 months, a **AED 160,000 saving** on the purchase price. Set the rent you paid to wait, say AED 120,000, against that, and on these illustrative assumptions the waiter is still **ahead by roughly AED 40,000**, before counting the cheaper entry on transaction fees and a possibly lower mortgage rate. In a falling market, waiting can be the capital-preserving move, not the costly one. That is the honest other side of the ledger.

COMPONENT	ILLUSTRATIVE, AED 2M HOME, MARKET FALLING 8%
Price paid if you buy now	AED 2,000,000
Price paid if you buy in 12 months	AED 1,840,000
Price movement (saving from waiting)	AED 160,000 saved
Less rent paid while waiting	AED 120,000
Illustrative net position of waiting	~AED 40,000 ahead

Illustrative only. Assumes an 8% price fall over 12 months (within the range of the 2026 cooling views, still a scenario, not a certainty), AED 120,000 rent, no reinvestment and no transaction costs. It shows the direction, not a prediction: in a falling market the price component can more than offset the rent carry.

up to 15%

FITCH PEAK-TO-TROUGH VIEW FOR THE COOLING, 'NO CRASH'

Fitch (CR.D)

~10%

2026 CITYWIDE CAPITAL-GROWTH OUTLOOK, DOWN FROM ~19.8% IN 2025

ValuStrat (CR.D)

◆ THE APARTMENT SKEW

S&P and the supply data both point to the downside sitting mainly in apartments, where the delivery pipeline is heaviest, while villas are more cycle-extended on valuation but better supported on scarcity. A cooling is not uniform. Where you buy shapes which side of the price component you land on.

◆ THE MISSING HALF

"In a rising market waiting costs. In a falling one it can save. Dubai in 2026 is cooling, so pretending only the first case exists would be selling, not advising."

What the Houses Actually Forecast for 2026

Since two of the four components hinge on the price path, the honest thing is to show what the professional forecasters actually say, and how far apart they are. Every figure below is a **forecast**, a forward opinion, not realised data.

Read across the table and one thing jumps out. The houses agree almost entirely on the **word**, moderation, and disagree on the **sign and size** of the move, especially in apartments. S&P sits at the cautious end with an apartment-concentrated downside in its stress case, Knight Frank and CBRE cluster around low single digits, and ValuStrat is the most constructive at roughly **~10%** citywide with villas leading. When the full-data models span from a possible correction to high single-digit growth, no single number is **the** cost of waiting. The spread is the message.

This is also why the apartment-versus-villa distinction matters for your own decision. The downside risk is concentrated where the supply pipeline is heaviest, in apartments, while villas are more extended on valuation but better supported by scarcity. A cooling is not one thing happening everywhere. The cost of waiting on a supply-heavy apartment in a delivery-heavy district is a very different calculation from the cost of waiting on a scarce villa, and a serious answer treats them separately rather than quoting a citywide average at you.

HOUSE	HOUSE	2026 DUBAI RESIDENTIAL VIEW (FORECAST)
S&P Global Ratings	Moderation, not decline; stress case a mild, apartment-skewed correction, no 2008 crash	
Fitch Ratings	Peak-to-trough up to 15%, explicitly no crash	
Knight Frank	Around +1% mainstream, +3% prime, prime stabilising thereafter	
CBRE	Low-single-digit normalisation, rents beginning to stabilise	
ValuStrat	Around ~10% citywide, villas leading, apartments slower	

Every row is a published forecast, an opinion, not realised data. Houses agree on moderation and disagree on the sign and size of the move, especially in apartments. Presented as a range on purpose: no single figure is the cost of waiting.

◆ **THE SPREAD IS THE POINT**

From a possible correction to high single-digit growth, the professionals with the best data cannot agree on the direction of the price component. That is not a reason to freeze, it is a reason to model a range and let your horizon, not a headline, break the tie.

◆ **THE HONEST NUMBER**

"There is no single 2026 outcome to plug in. Anyone who gives you one precise cost of waiting is selling you certainty that does not exist."

06

CHAPTER SIX

Committing Without Paying in Full

The third path most people miss. Between buying outright today and waiting on the sidelines sits the off-plan payment plan, which changes the shape of the whole question.

It Is Not Only 'Buy Now' or 'Wait'

The cost-of-waiting debate is usually framed as two doors, buy the whole thing today or stay out. Dubai has a third door that quietly reshapes the maths: the **off-plan payment plan**. Off-plan is around **60% of all Dubai sales**, and the defining feature is that you do not pay in full up front. You commit at today's price and spread the payments across the build.

What that does to the four components is worth seeing clearly. You **lock today's price**, so if you believe the rising-market case you have captured it without paying in full. But you also stage your capital out over time rather than sinking it all at once, which in a cooling market means you are less exposed than an outright buyer if values soften before handover. It is a middle position, not a free lunch, and it carries its own risks, covered in the honest chapter. The specific plan structures vary by developer and are marketing terms, not a single market constant, so treat any ratio you are quoted as an illustration to model, not a rule.

The reason this is defensible rather than reckless is **escrow**. Under **RERA Law No. 8 of 2007**, an off-plan buyer's funds sit in a project escrow account and are released to the developer only against verified construction milestones. Your staged payments are tied to progress, not handed over on trust. And because a **AED 2 million** DLD valuation qualifies for the 10-year residency even when off-plan or mortgaged, committing via a plan can secure the visa runway too. The all-in transaction cost of roughly **~7%**, including the **4%** DLD fee, applies whichever door you choose, so factor it into any round-trip.

1. **Commit at today's price**
   An off-plan reservation locks the purchase price now, without paying the full amount up front.
2. **Stage the capital**
   Payments spread across construction milestones, so your money goes out over time, not all at once.
3. **Escrow protects each stage**
   RERA Law No. 8 of 2007 holds funds in project escrow, released only against verified progress.
4. **Residency runway**
   AED 2 million DLD valuation qualifies for the 10-year visa, off-plan and mortgaged included.

60%
OFF-PLAN SHARE OF DUBAI SALES
CR.D

~7%
ALL-IN TRANSACTION COST, EITHER DOOR
CR.D

◆ THE MIDDLE DOOR

A payment plan is neither buying outright nor sitting out. You lock price but stage capital, which hedges you partly against both the rising-market and falling-market cases. Escrow under RERA Law No. 8 of 2007 is what makes staging your money defensible.

◆ THE REFRAME

"The question is rarely a clean 'now or later'. Often the real answer is 'commit at today's price, but stage the money', which changes the cost of waiting entirely."

How Staged Payments Reshape the Four Components

Work an illustration to see why the middle door changes the maths. Take the same **AED 2,000,000 property**, bought off-plan today, with your capital staged across the build rather than paid in full on day one. You have locked the purchase price, so a rising market rewards you as if you had bought outright. But because most of your money is still in your own account until later milestones, a **falling** market touches a smaller share of your committed capital at any given moment than it would for an outright cash buyer.

That is the genuine hedge. Against the rising-market case, you captured today's price. Against the falling-market case, you staged your exposure. It is not a free win, and the honest chapter that follows sets out the risks, developer delivery, the possibility that values at handover sit below what you committed, and the fact that a plan is a commitment you cannot casually walk away from. But as a structural answer to a cost-of-waiting question in an uncertain cycle, staging capital under escrow is a more thoughtful position than a binary bet on direction.

Two guardrails keep this honest. First, plan structures are **developer marketing terms**, not a market constant, so whatever split you are offered, model it as an illustration and check the milestone schedule against real construction progress. Second, escrow protects your funds against misuse, it does **not** protect you against the market, if values soften by handover, that is your risk to weigh, not something escrow insures. Use the structure for what it does, and do not let anyone sell it as a guarantee it is not.

1. **Lock the price today**
   Reserve at the current price, capturing it if the market rises, without paying in full.
2. **Hold most capital back**
   Stage payments to milestones, so a soft patch touches less of your committed money at once.
3. **Verify the schedule**
   Treat any plan ratio as an illustration; check milestones against real build progress.
4. **Separate protection from risk**
   Escrow guards your funds, not the market; the value-at-handover risk stays yours to weigh.

◆ A HEDGE, NOT A GUARANTEE

Staging capital under RERA escrow partly answers both the rising and the falling case at once. That is genuinely useful in an uncertain cycle. It is not a promise that values hold, and honest advice never dresses it up as one.

◆ THE MIDDLE-DOOR MATHS

"Lock the price for the upside, stage the money for the downside. It will not remove the risk, but it does stop the decision being an all-or-nothing bet on timing."

07

CHAPTER SEVEN

When Waiting Is the Right Call

The chapter that keeps the rest honest. Timing is genuinely uncertain, and the right answer depends on your horizon and the cycle, not on a slogan.

There Is No Universal Answer, and That Is the Answer

If you have read this far hoping for a verdict, here it is, and it is not the one a salesperson wants to give. There is no universal cost of waiting, because two of the four components depend on things nobody can forecast reliably. The honest answer is conditional, and it depends on you.

Timing the cycle is genuinely uncertain. Every rating house in the market, from S&P at the cautious end to ValuStrat at the constructive end, agrees on **moderation** for 2026. They disagree on the sign and size of the move, especially in apartments. When the professionals with full data models cannot agree on the direction, treating any single number as the cost of waiting is false precision. The models in this guide show a range on purpose.

The right move depends on your horizon. If you are buying to hold for a decade and to preserve capital across a generation, a 12-month wiggle in entry price is largely noise, and the rent you pay to wait for perfect timing may cost you more than the timing gains you. If your horizon is short, or you are leveraged and rate-sensitive, the cooling is a real reason to be patient and selective. Same market, opposite advice, driven entirely by the buyer, not the headline.

Waiting for a bottom is its own gamble. Nobody rings a bell at the low. Buyers who wait for absolute certainty tend to buy after the turn, having paid rent the whole way, which is the trap the rent-carry chapter describes. The goal is not to nail the bottom, it is to buy the right asset at a sensible price with a horizon long enough that the entry month stops mattering. That is capital preservation, not market timing.

And these are illustrations, not forecasts. Every money figure in this guide is modelled with stated assumptions. Change an assumption and the answer changes. Use them to understand the shape of the decision, then bring me your actual numbers, horizon and risk tolerance, and we will run your real position, honestly, before you commit a dirham.

◆ THE LINE I HOLD

I will not tell you the market always rises, because in 2026 it is cooling, and I will not tell you to wait for a bottom, because nobody can time one. The right call depends on your horizon and the cycle, and anyone who gives you a single answer without asking about both is selling.

◆ THE VERDICT

"The cost of waiting is real in a rising market and can be a saving in a falling one. Your horizon decides which matters. There is no slogan that survives contact with your actual numbers."

08

CHAPTER EIGHT

Straight Answers

The cost-of-waiting question turned into the things investors actually ask, answered straight and both ways.

CHAPTER 08 · FAQ

The Questions Investors Actually Ask

Q. So is waiting a mistake or not?

It depends on the direction of prices and on your horizon, and honestly nobody can promise the first. In a rising market the four components stack against you and waiting costs real money. In the cooling Dubai is seeing in 2026, a softer price can more than offset the rent you pay to wait, so waiting can save. If you are a long-horizon capital-preservation buyer, a 12-month wiggle matters far less than buying the right asset. If you are short-horizon or leveraged, patience is more defensible right now.

Q. Is Dubai actually cooling, or is that just caution?

It is cooling, and this guide states it plainly. Fitch models a peak-to-trough correction of up to 15% and rules out a 2008-style crash, ValuStrat's 2026 citywide outlook has eased to ~10% from close to 19.8% in 2025, and early 2026 has already shown the first monthly capital-value decline of the cycle, a sharp month of lower volume during the spring regional escalation, and visible asking-price cuts. It is a supply-led moderation, not a collapse.

Q. If prices might fall, why buy at all right now?

For some buyers, you should not rush, and this guide says so. But price is only one of four components. Rent paid while you wait never comes back, the asset earns nothing for you while you sit out, and rates have been falling not rising. If you find the right asset at a sensible price with a long horizon, the exact entry month matters less than getting the asset and the structure right.

Q. What about mortgage rates, should I wait for them to drop further?

The rate cycle already turned down. The CBUAE base rate is 3.65% after 75 basis points of Fed-led easing in 2025, and 3-month EIBOR is around 3.74%. Because the dirham is pegged to the dollar, your rate tracks the Fed, not local conditions. Cheaper rates help whoever buys next, waiter or not, so a possible further cut is not by itself a reason to delay a purchase you are otherwise ready for.

Q. Does an off-plan payment plan change the calculation?

Yes, meaningfully. It lets you lock today's price without paying in full, staging your capital across construction under RERA Law No. 8 of 2007 escrow protection. That hedges you partly against both a rising market, since you have captured today's price, and a falling one, since your money goes out over time rather than all at once. Plan structures vary by developer and are marketing terms, so model any ratio you are quoted as an illustration, not a rule.

Q. How do I decide for my own situation?

Start with your horizon and your risk tolerance, not the headline. A decade-long capital-preservation buyer and a leveraged two-year buyer get opposite advice in the same market. Run your actual rent, your actual price, your actual financing and a realistic range of price outcomes, not a single number. Send me your position and I will model it honestly, both directions, before you commit anything.

Every Figure, Sourced

Every statistic in this guide is attributed. Where sources differ, a range is used. Links are live and clickable.

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◆ ABOUT BRADLEY

Not a broker, an advisor. I built a business in the UK and spent more than a decade advising people from all walks of life, before moving to Dubai and joining M&M Real Estate to work at a higher strategic level than the typical transactional broker. I specialise exclusively in off-plan investment for overseas and high-net-worth clients, I put my own capital into the projects I recommend, and my business is more than 80% referral-driven, because every client came through someone who trusted me first.

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