

# TOP AGENT MAGAZINE



## Liz Bates

Success in the real estate world requires not just expertise and professionalism, but also the ability to connect with clients with an easy rapport and sense of confidence. Liz Bates with First Team Estates in Laguna Beach, California has an amazing balance of both expert knowledge and an outgoing personality. Her unique marketing techniques and her exemplary training have earned her the Executive Award for volume two years in a row and is on track to reach her goal of entering First Team Estates' Hall of Fame.

Liz entered real estate nearly by coincidence. After starting her own line of organic beauty products she took a job as a transaction manager hoping to earn enough seed money to get the company off the ground. Instead, she landed a spot with one of the nation's leading agents at the time, and fell in love with the business. "It really was a trial by fire," she recalls. "With just two weeks of training I was thrown into one of the busiest offices in the area. It was probably the best training I could have received. You have to be a problem solver in this business, and you can't shy away from a challenge. Those first years taught me some of the most important lessons of my career and I couldn't have asked for a better mentor."

This amazing foundation allowed Liz the freedom to build a unique career. Soon after setting out on her own, she developed the Gnome Approved Home concept. "There are so many agents out there; I wanted to do something fun that would separate me from the crowd," she explains. "That's where the gnomes come in. The gnome is a symbol of protection and family, they remind us how special each home is with its own memories and stories. When I market a home, I touch upon its true essence, conveying not only the physical attributes but the emotional attributes as well. This helps to personalize the entire experience. Home is where the gnome is!" At an open house Liz will hide a garden gnome somewhere on the property and whoever finds it wins a prize. "It helps to break the ice while they're exploring the house," she says. When one of Liz' clients buys a house, she will also hide a gnome at the new property as a welcome home gift. The gnome is a small gesture, but one that helps to forge a lasting connection between Liz, her clients, and her community.

On a practical level "gnome approved" means that all of Liz's clients agree to have their homes pre-inspected and ensure that the homes meet California code requirements. "There's nothing worse than getting caught up in the small details at the closing table," Liz explains. "By that point everyone's energy is flagging and want to get things finished as quickly as possible. When we have this kind of inspection up front there are no surprises for the buyer and the seller can be confident that the sale will progress smoothly."

The gnome has been a great tool for Liz, although some situations in this complex market call for a different kind of approach. She has created the Liz Bates Group for foreclosure prevention. She and her team of experts offer not just help through the sales process, but also free seminars to the community that can help troubled homeowners find the best solution for their situation. "Short sales and foreclosures are complicated and there is not a lot of good information out there," she explains. "The Liz Bates Group shows them their options and helps clients make the right decisions." Though Liz has been able to return primarily to conventional sales with the recovery of the market, she carries the same honest, open approach to all aspects of her business.

Even while managing a high sales volume and an ambitious career, Liz finds time to help raise money for charity. This year at her client appreciation night she added a fundraiser for Finding Freedom International, a group that fights human trafficking worldwide. "The dinner was a great opportunity to give back," says Liz. "We raised over \$6000 to help build a safe house for trafficked children." The event was such a success, she hopes to tie in the charity to more events soon.

Liz' energy is boundless; she's a mother of four, a backup singer in a band, and a tremendous agent. "My favorite thing to do is spend time with my children, they are my greatest blessing," she says proudly. "I also really love what I do, so much so that most of the time, it doesn't feel like work." With such a positive approach to life, she meets every challenge fearlessly and there is no doubt that Liz will enjoy a long, prosperous career.



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