



SELLERS' GUIDE

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO BUYING YOUR HOME

ABOUT US

Grand Oak Realty was born in the shade of a beautiful oak tree in La Cresta, California on the Santa Rosa Plateau. With over 30 years of diverse experience in the industry, we have created our real estate brokerage to provide outstanding personalized service to our clients and we are dedicated to their success.

Our real estate model embraces relationships over transactions. Obviously, the real estate is important but the Buyers and Sellers behind the real estate matter more. That's why our approach centers around you—your goals, your timeline, and your unique situation. Real Estate Personalized isn't just a slogan; it's our promise to provide a selling experience that's tailored, thoughtful, and grounded in genuine connection.

We are deeply connected to our community. This connection allows us to better understand the needs, values, and unique character of the areas we serve, which in turn helps us serve our clients with authenticity and valuable insight. By staying actively involved in local community events, supporting small businesses, and building relationships with residents, we're not just helping clients navigate the market—we're helping strengthen the fabric of the community itself. Relationships create community and there is nothing more important to us than living, breathing and understanding the area where we work and live.

The Sellers Guide included here is designed to walk you through the typical process of selling a home which will hopefully help you move forward with clarity and confidence all while knowing you are backed by a diligent team that puts people first!



THE PROCESS

The process of selling your home begins with a consultation and some important conversations. It's time for us to learn the reasons why you are selling, when you would like the sale to happen and any other important considerations.

Having your objectives and motives clearly identified will help us set you and your family on the right path and at the right pace. The better we know you and what you are trying to accomplish, the more helpful we can be!

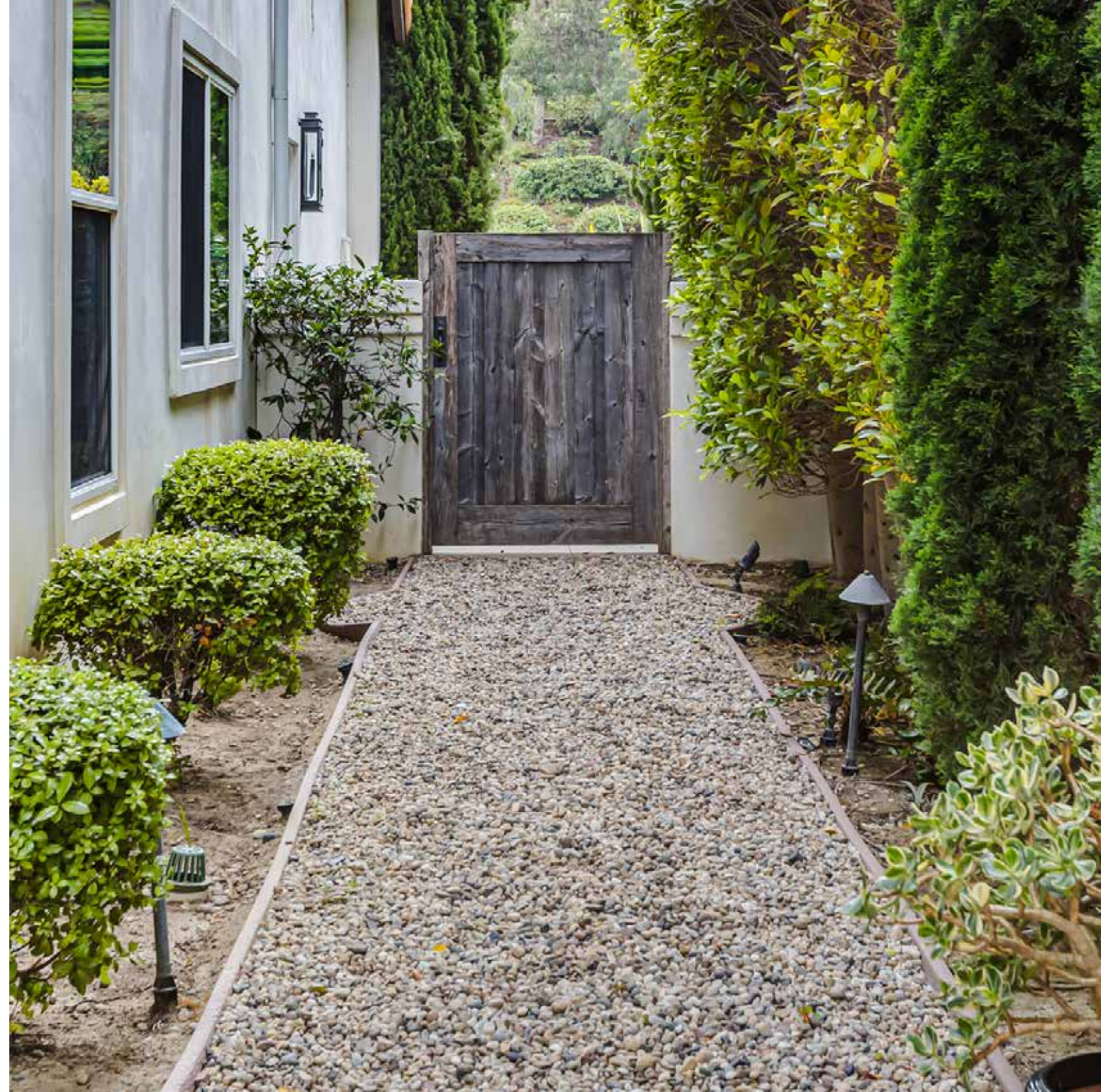
WHY?

Your home is your life. It is where you have made memories and raised your family. Whether it is for your wants or for your needs there are as many reasons for selling a property as there are properties. Whether it's time to upgrade to a larger home with more usable land, downsize to something smaller, or anything in between, the decision to sell can be a hard one to make.

WHEN?

When is the right time for you to sell? It is important to establish a timeline based on your needs.

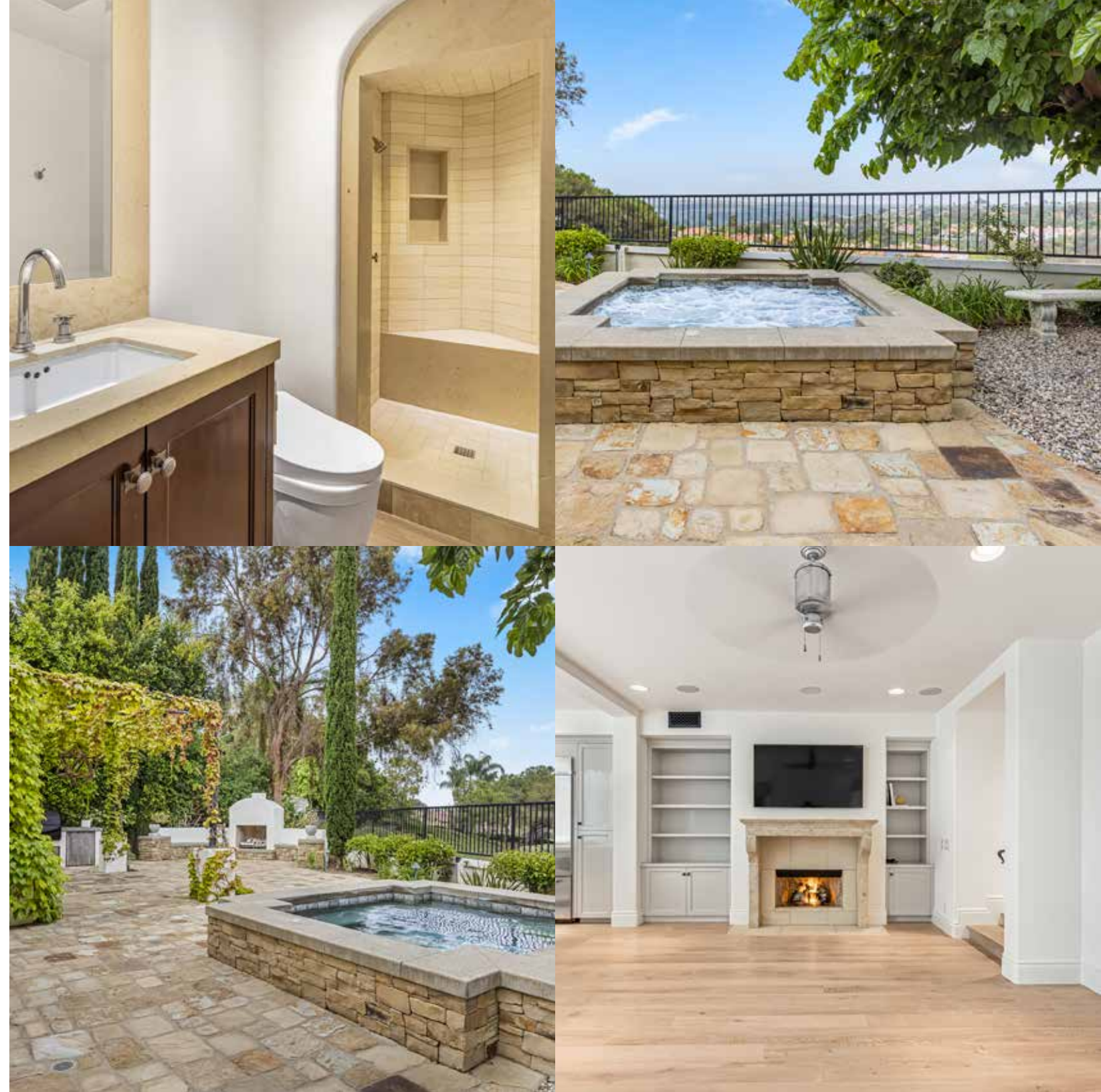
If you need to move swiftly, we will employ an action plan to bring the house to market fast and will provide a complete market analysis and make an action plan that works with your needs and objectify a move is farther off in your future, we will study the market conditions, evaluate your options and assist with finding the best time to sell.



PREPARING YOUR PROPERTY FOR SALE

Before your property is listed for sale it's typically best to address any necessary repairs and make strategic cosmetic upgrades to maximize your return and boost the likelihood of a quick sale. In some instances, it may make sense to complete major repairs or renovations. There are also times when it can make sense to do nothing and sell "as is". But generally speaking, if it's in the financial budget and works with your timeline its best to make the property look as sharp as possible before inviting potential buyers into your home.

To make the most of your time and financial resources, and to avoid over-improving, it's helpful to follow some general guidelines when planning your updates.



GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. DEEP CLEAN THE HOME

- Professional Cleaning: Hire a cleaning service or do a thorough cleaning yourself. A sparkling clean home creates a great first impression.
- Carpets and Floors: Clean carpets, scrub floors, and polish wood surfaces to make everything shine.

2. DECLUTTER AND DEPERSONALIZE

- Declutter: Remove excess furniture, knick-knacks, and personal items. A clutter-free home feels more spacious and allows potential buyers to envision themselves living there.
- Depersonalize: Take down family photos and personal items. This helps buyers imagine the space as their own.

3. REPAINT OR TOUCH UP WALLS, BASEBOARDS AND TRIM

- Neutral Colors: Freshen the paint with a neutral, light color like beige or soft gray. Neutral tones are appealing to most buyers and help create a more modern and cleaner look.
- Touch-Up: If full repainting isn't necessary, consider touching up scuff marks, chipped paint, and high-traffic areas.

4. ENHANCE CURB APPEAL

- Landscaping: Trim bushes, mow the lawn, and add a few inexpensive plants or flowers to the front yard. A well-maintained yard creates a positive first impression.
- Paint the Front Door: A fresh coat of paint on the front door can make the home feel more inviting. Opt for a bold, stylish color like navy blue or red to add a touch of charm.
- Clean the Exterior: Power-wash the driveway, walkway, and exterior of the home to remove dirt and grime.



5. MAKE MINOR REPAIRS

- **Fix Leaky Faucets:** Small plumbing issues, like leaky faucets, can be a turn-off to buyers.
- **Repair Broken Fixtures:** Ensure all light fixtures, door handles, and electrical outlets work properly.
- **Seal Gaps:** Caulk around windows and doors to improve insulation and the home's overall appearance.

6. STAGE THE HOME

- **Rearrange Furniture:** Make rooms feel more spacious by rearranging furniture to create an open, inviting atmosphere.
- **Add Simple Decor:** A few well-placed decorative items (such as fresh flowers, new throw pillows, or a stylish rug) can enhance the home's appeal without costing much.
- **Use Natural Light:** Open curtains and blinds to allow as much natural light in as possible. A bright home feels more welcoming.

7. UPGRADE LIGHTING

- **Switch to LED Bulbs:** Replace old, dim light bulbs with energy-efficient, bright LED bulbs to make the home feel well-lit and modern.
- **Add Lamps:** If a room feels dark, add some stylish lamps to brighten up the space.

8. KITCHEN AND BATHROOM UPDATES

- **Cabinet Hardware:** Replacing outdated or worn-out cabinet handles and knobs is an inexpensive way to give kitchens and bathrooms a more modern look.
- **RegROUT Tile:** If your bathroom or kitchen tile grout is dirty or stained, cleaning or regrouting it can make a significant difference at a low cost.
- **Add Fresh Towels and Rugs:** New, matching towels and bathmats in neutral colors can elevate the bathroom's look without much expense.



9. CREATE A WELCOMING ENTRYWAY

- Add a New Mat: A clean, welcoming doormat sets a positive tone when entering the home.
- Add a Few Potted Plants: Plants in the entryway can make the space feel fresh and inviting.



By focusing on these affordable improvements, you can create a more attractive, move-in-ready home, which can lead to a quicker sale and potentially higher offers.

Certified Move-in Ready - for homes already in good condition we may recommend a prelisting inspection to pre identify anything that may come up when the buyer goes to do their inspection.

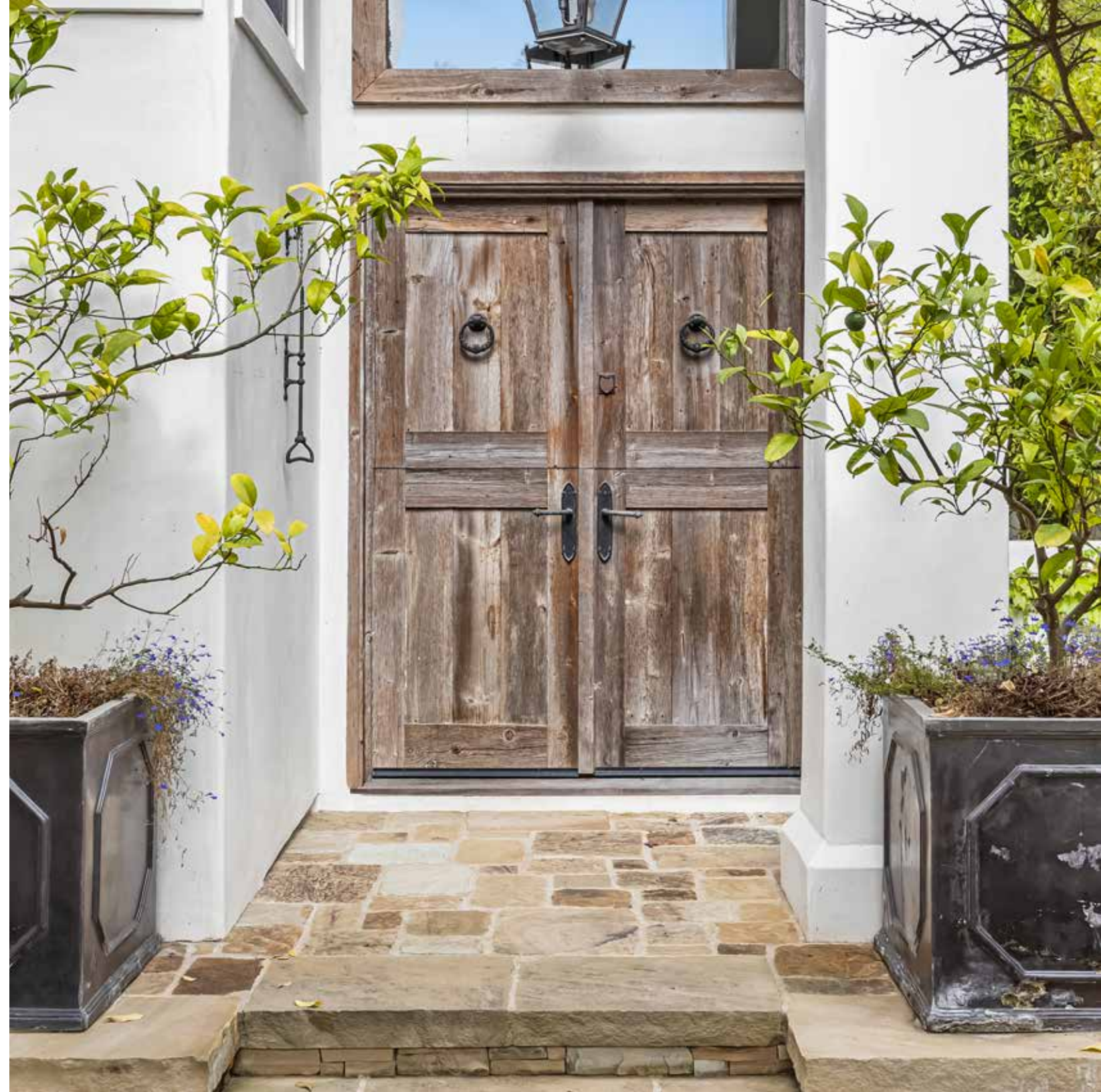
Homebuyers and investors typically look for the most affordable property in the best neighborhood they can afford. To attract interest, it's important to make repairs and improvements that enhance the property's appeal while aligning with the neighborhood's standards and preferences. For older properties, consider arranging a home inspection before listing. This can help identify and address any significant repairs needed, ensuring fewer surprises during the selling process. Some repairs are crucial and can often lead to a positive return on investment, unless you are willing to accept a significantly lower price for the property.

EXTERIOR UPDATES

- Repair loose siding, damaged roof shingles, leaves, gutters and cracked windows for your home and garage.
- Secure loose shutters and awnings.
- Wash windows, gutters, mailboxes and doors.
- Repair cracked pavement and walkways on your property.
- Ensure lawns and gardens are attractive and well maintained.
- Sweep the entryway, porch and sidewalks daily.

INTERIOR UPDATES

- One of the quickest ways to refresh a home is by applying a new coat of neutral-colored paint. Renovating the kitchen and bathrooms can also provide a strong return on investment.
- Repair any broken appliances, fixtures, lighting, leaky faucets, showerheads, or cracked tiles.
- Steam clean carpets or replace them if needed.
- Depersonalize your home by removing personal photos, memorabilia, and collections.
- Declutter all spaces and consider moving excess furniture and personal items to off-site storage if necessary.
- Finally, give every room a thorough cleaning to ensure the home is clean spotless and inviting.





PRICING STRATEGY

Setting the right listing price for your property is a pivotal part of your sales and marketing strategy and should be done in collaboration with our team. Your recommended listing price will reflect your home's fair market value, adjustments for unique features, neighborhood market trends, and effective pricing strategies tailored to current market conditions.

Pricing your home appropriately is key to achieving a sale at fair market value within a reasonable timeframe. At Grand Oak Realty, we'll work with you to develop the optimal pricing strategy, taking into account the following critical factors.



DETERMINE FAIR MARKET VALUE

Fair market value represents the price a buyer is willing to pay for a property, taking into account its condition, comparable recent sales and listings, and the dynamics of the local real estate market.

COMPARATIVE MARKET ANALYSIS (CMA)

To establish your home's fair market value, we will create a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) report. This report examines properties in your area with similar square footage, construction, age, and condition that have recently sold or are currently listed for sale. Recent comparable sales and active listings are key factors in determining fair market value. Additionally, expired listings—properties that did not sell—provide insight into pricing limits. Adjustments to your home's valuation will account for factors like location, floor plan, upgrades, amenities, parking, and storage, among others.

EXTRAORDINARY HOMES

For extraordinary homes and estates with few or no comparables, crafting an accurate CMA requires specialized expertise. If your property is unique or exceptional, Grand Oak Realty is equipped to assist. Contact us to schedule a complimentary consultation tailored to your needs.

LOCAL MARKET INVENTORY AND TRENDS

Other influences on fair market value include whether the market favors buyers or sellers, the number of similar homes currently available, interest rates, lending conditions, the average time comparable properties remain on the market, and whether they are selling above or below the asking price. These factors ensure a comprehensive and informed approach to pricing your home.

MARKETING

A decade ago, property marketing strategies often relied on a simple “For Sale” sign, print ads, postcard mailings, and MLS listings. However, today’s homebuyers—97% of whom use the internet during their search—expect much more. On average, buyers view nine homes, with five of those viewed exclusively online. Modern buyers come from both local and nationwide markets, using a blend of traditional and digital marketing channels. To achieve the highest possible price for your home, it’s crucial to maximize its visibility across these platforms.

YOUR MARKETING PLAN WITH GRAND OAK REALTY

At Grand Oak Realty, we go beyond standard marketing practices to deliver a customized plan tailored to your home. Our approach ensures your property is showcased to the most relevant and qualified buyers through a combination of online platforms, social media, mobile advertising, print materials, and traditional marketing methods.

We pride ourselves on delivering the highest level of service, professionalism, and discretion, no matter your home’s size, location, or price point. Unlike companies that rely on basic lawn signs and MLS exposure, Grand Oak Realty invests in innovative marketing strategies to ensure your home stands out. Our financial commitment to cutting-edge marketing programs guarantees that your property will attract more quality buyers and achieve exceptional results.



SHOWINGS AND OPEN HOUSES

Once your home is listed, we will guide you on how showings and open houses fit into your overall marketing and selling strategy. We will collaborate with you to schedule and facilitate these events, ensuring they are as seamless and effective as possible. Additionally, we will provide feedback from prospective buyers, allowing you to adjust your home’s presentation as needed.

To maximize your home’s appeal to buyers and investors, it is essential to present it in the best possible light. Before any showings or open houses, be sure to follow the steps outlined in the attached checklist, along with any tailored recommendations from us. These preparations can make a significant difference in how buyers perceive your home and its value.

PROPERTY INTERIOR

- Ensure every room is spotless tidy and organized.
- Clean all fixtures and appliances thoroughly.
- Sweep floors and vacuum carpets or rugs.
- Wipe down window panes.
- Empty all garbage bins.
- Clean kitchen counters, sinks, and appliances.
- Empty the dishwasher and put away any dishes.
- Place fresh towels in the kitchen and bathrooms.
- Deep-clean the bathrooms, ensuring they look pristine.
- Clear countertops and coffee tables of clutter.
- Make all beds and tidy up closets.
- Ensure every room is well-lit and welcoming.
- Open drapes and window coverings to maximize natural light during the day.
- Turn on all lights to enhance the atmosphere.
- Make sure all rooms are well-ventilated and fresh.
- Eliminate any unpleasant odors, including those from pets or cooking.
- Maintain a 100% smoke-free environment while your home is on the market.
- If possible, open windows to allow fresh air in.



PROPERTY EXTERIOR

- Keep the entrance, garage, and porch areas free of clutter.
- Ensure driveways and walkways are clear of toys, bicycles, vehicles, garbage cans, snow, ice, or any other obstacles.
- Mow the lawn, weed, and trim the yard, and tidy up flower beds, hedges, and gardens.
- Clean the garage and work areas to make them neat and organized.

SECURITY

Keep money, jewelry, small electronics, personal documents and other valuables out of sight and secure.

OFFER BASICS

Grand Oak Realty will help you evaluate and negotiate offers from potential buyers in order to protect your legal interests, and to ensure you are optimizing the price and conditions surrounding the sale of your home.



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OFFER DETAILS

The offer you receive will include

- The legal names of the potential buyer(s) and seller(s).
- The legal civic address of the property.
- The price the buyer(s) is offering to pay.
- Desired inclusions (items in or around the home the buyers wish to include, such as appliances, lighting fixtures, or window coverings).
- The amount of the buyer's deposit.
- The desired dates for legal and physical possession of the home.
- Legal "subjects" or "conditions" that must be satisfied for the contract to become final (e.g., satisfactory home inspection or financing approval).
- The date the offer expires.



POTENTIAL RESPONSES

You can respond to an offer in one of three ways

1. **Accept as is:** Your signature finalizes the contract, making it legally binding.
2. **Counter Offer:** You may make changes to the offer, such as adjusting the price, closing date, or conditions. The buyer can then accept, reject, or make another counter offer. The contract only becomes legally binding when one party signs an unconditional acceptance of the other's offer.
3. **Rejection:** You can simply reject the offer, and the sale will not proceed.

OFFER WITHDRAWAL

The buyer can withdraw an offer at any time before you accept it in writing. If you are evaluating an attractive offer, remember that timing is crucial.

OFFER ACCEPTANCE

Once both parties reach an agreement, the offer is considered "accepted," and there will be a set period to satisfy the legal conditions (or "subjects") agreed upon in the contract. These conditions may include completing a satisfactory home inspection or securing financing. The contract only becomes legally binding after all subjects or conditions are removed.



FIRM OFFER

An offer is considered firm once all subjects have been removed by both parties. Typically, the subject removal period lasts one week to 10 days, or as agreed in the offer.

NEGOTIATIONS

OFFER NEGOTIATION

Price is just one factor to consider when evaluating and negotiating an offer. Every situation is unique. While securing the best possible price may be a priority given current market conditions, other factors should also be taken into account, such as the buyer's desired completion, possession, and adjustment dates, requested inclusions, the number of conditions or subjects in the offer, and the deposit amount. Grand Oak Realty will assist you in evaluating each offer to determine which one best meets your needs and circumstances.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Through careful investigation, your associate can help assess the potential buyer's background and motivations, which can provide valuable insight during negotiations. For example, a buyer who has already sold their home and needs to move within a specific timeframe may be more willing to adjust their price if they can negotiate a closing date that aligns with the completion of their home sale.

MULTIPLE OFFERS

In high-demand, low-inventory markets, you may find yourself facing multiple offers on your home. Some sellers in these competitive markets may intentionally list their property at a lower price to attract more offers. While this doesn't always lead to significant bidding wars, it does require careful attention. We will work with you to assess each offer's strengths and limitations, ensuring a strategic negotiation process. This will help you maximize the value of your property while safeguarding your legal interests in what could be a time-sensitive and complex negotiation.



CLOSING THE DEAL

The Closing Day is when the buyer takes legal possession of your property.

PREPARATION

You'll need to choose a lawyer or notary to assist with the completion of the sale. If necessary, we can provide recommendations and ensure the lawyer receives a signed copy of the contract. As closing day approaches, Grand Oak Realty, along with your lender, will stay on top of the transaction's progress to avoid any last-minute issues. You'll also need to schedule a meeting with your lawyer or notary before the completion date to review and sign the necessary documents. Don't forget to bring photo identification and a personal check to cover any legal fees during this meeting.

CLOSING DAY

Closing day in a real estate transaction is when the final paperwork is signed, funds are transferred, and ownership officially changes hands. The buyer and seller (or their representatives) meet to review and sign necessary documents, including the deed, mortgage, and closing disclosure. The buyer typically pays closing costs, and once all funds are disbursed, the title company records the new deed with the county. Once possession is transferred, Grand Oak Realty will assist you in coordinating the handover of the keys to the buyer, ensuring a smooth transition.



CLOSING COSTS

Closing costs in a real estate transaction are the fees and expenses that buyers and sellers must pay to finalize the sale. These typically include loan origination fees, title insurance, escrow fees, appraisal costs, and property taxes. Buyers usually cover the majority of closing costs, though sellers may contribute depending on negotiations. The total amount varies but is generally 2-5% of the home's purchase price, and all costs are settled at closing before ownership is transferred.

AFTER CLOSING

The end of escrow is just the beginning of our relationship. We will be a forever resource and your local point of contact for finding you a new home, or selling your next. If you find yourself in need of a trusted partner to work on your new home, we will share our network of plumbers, electricians, landscape architects and interior designers. We are connected within the community and you will always have access to us and our trusted service providers.

We are truly excited for you to start this new chapter of your life, and we hope that you will rely on us for all things real estate. It brings us joy when all our buyers and sellers come to us for advice or have questions. We hope to support you for many years to come.



HERE'S A LIST OF THE PRIMARY STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF SELLING A HOME IN CALIFORNIA:

1. Prepare Your Home for Sale
 - Clean, declutter, and make necessary repairs.
 - Consider staging the home to make it more appealing to buyers.
2. Hire a Real Estate Agent
 - Choose a licensed real estate broker with experience in your area.
 - Discuss pricing strategy, marketing plans, and commission structure.
3. Set a Competitive Listing Price
 - Work with your agent to determine a competitive price based on a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA).
 - Consider current market conditions and buyer demand.
4. List the Property
 - Complete all necessary paperwork, including disclosures.
 - List your property on the MLS (Multiple Listing Service) and other relevant platforms.
5. Market the Home
 - Professional photography, virtual tours, and open houses.
 - Marketing through online listings, social media, and email campaigns.
6. Review Offers
 - Evaluate offers with your agent, considering factors like price, contingencies, and buyer qualifications.
 - Negotiate terms with potential buyers if necessary.
7. Accept an Offer
 - Accept the best offer or negotiate further terms.
 - Sign a purchase agreement with the buyer.
8. Open Escrow
 - Choose an escrow company to manage the transaction.
 - Provide necessary documents (title, disclosures, etc.) to the escrow officer.



9. Complete Inspections and Appraisal
 - The buyer will typically conduct home inspections and request repairs or credits if issues are found.
 - The lender may require an appraisal to determine the property's value.
10. Negotiate Repairs or Credits
 - Negotiate any repair requests or price adjustments after inspections.
 - Agree on what will be fixed, replaced, or credited to the buyer.
11. Review Closing Documents
 - Once inspections and negotiations are complete, review and sign the closing documents.
 - Ensure that all contractual obligations are met and that the buyer has secured financing.
12. Close the Sale
 - The escrow company will record the sale with the county, disburse funds, and transfer ownership.
 - The buyer will receive the keys, and the property officially changes hands.
13. Pay Closing Costs
 - Pay any seller's closing costs, including agent commission, title insurance, and transfer taxes.
14. Move Out
 - Remove all personal belongings and ensure the property is in the condition agreed upon.

This outline should give your sellers a clear understanding of the process and help them navigate each step with ease.





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