

Valley of the Sun Real Estate Update

September, 2005

Why hire an agent?

It's been said that there's no such thing as bad publicity, but as a group real estate agents do not enjoy the highest of reputations. Several recent sources have called into question the competency of agents in general, as well as the fee structure that is traditional in the industry. Especially with the rise of the internet and various "discount" or "fee-for-service" brokerages, it is reasonable to wonder just what you get when you hire an agent to sell your house. (Remember that, in most cases, it costs nothing to have an agent help you buy a house—more on that next issue.)

The benefits of listing your home with an agent fall into three general categories. First, it can substantially reduce the hassle factor of selling your house. You will have someone available to handle all the aspects of the transaction, from printing flyers and showing the home to negotiating the contract and guiding it through escrow to a smooth closing. This means you can spend more time on the rest of your life—work, family, vacation, etc—without hurting your chances of selling the home.

Secondly, using an agent can actually help you net more money on your sale than working without one. Real estate is a supply & demand industry, and the publicity available through the Multiple Listing Service is the best advertising your home can have. Whether the market is hot or slow, the more people who know about your home, the better your chances are of getting the best possible price and the quickest sale.

Third, and maybe most important, using an agent allows the seller to shift a great deal of potential liability away from themselves. Proper disclosure of hundreds of details about a home is a significant part of the escrow process, and a knowledgeable agent can guide you through this process in the appropriate fashion. While no seller looks forward to highlighting whatever challenges or defects may be affecting their home, doing so is the best

way to minimize the risk of expensive litigation, which can come back to haunt you years after the sale is done.

Of course, not all sellers will need every service that an agent might be able to provide. Be sure to talk with your agent about which tools will best help you achieve your goals, and be sure that you can see the value in what you are paying for. At ERA Lucas Realty Group, it has always been our goal to save our clients time, money, and hassles. Our sellers net more money than the Valley average, sell their homes in less than half the time, and enjoy a successful sales rate of better than 98%. If you are thinking about selling a home, and would like to schedule a time to discuss fees & services in more detail, please give me a call.

On the Home Front



Taran just had his 6-month doctor visit, and he has turned into a very active little boy. He loves rolling around on his playmat, playing with all the toys in his activity center, and shredding any newspaper he can get his hands on. He looks like he will be crawling pretty soon—watch out!



Ken Mayer

Ken@LucasRealtyGroup.com

Direct: 602-750-3678

Office: 480-940-7100

www.kenmayer.com

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Recipe of the Month Scallops al Balsamico

As the summer draws to a close, folks in much of the country are unpacking their sweaters and stocking up on firewood. Here in the Valley, the return of mild evenings means we can once again enjoy dining outside. Simple & flavorful recipes—and of course, good company—will make the experience even more enjoyable. This recipe comes from Marcellino Ristorante in North Phoenix, via the Arizona Republic's food page. And if you need good company, well, just give me a call!

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
White flour for dusting
12 medium scallops
6 scallions, sliced in 3/4-inch strips
3 roma tomatoes, finely diced
Generous splashes of white wine vinegar
& balsamic vinegar (about 2 Tbs each)
Salt & pepper to taste
Basil leaves for garnish

1. In a large skillet, warm the oil on medium heat.
2. In the meantime, spoon some flour into a medium bowl. Roll each scallop in the flour, just enough to get a light covering. Set aside.
3. Saute the scallions & tomatoes for about 1 minute. Then, place the scallops in the pan to brown. Splash in the two vinegars, and add salt & pepper to taste.
4. Turn the scallops over and cook until slightly golden and cooked through. Place them on serving plates, top with tomatoes & scallions, and garnish with basil.

The recipe is designed for 4 portions, but it is easy to adapt for larger or smaller parties. Serve with rice or polenta and a nice white wine. Add a salad & a loaf of warmed Italian bread for a heartier meal.

Culture Corner

Quick reviews of some recent favorites

Movies: Stephen Chow directs and stars in **Kung Fu Hustle**, and you can tell that he just loves movies. This one, filmed in a rough & ready style, is both a spoof of, and an homage to, the martial arts movies of the '70's, but Chow doesn't stop there, piling on references to (among others) A Clockwork Orange, The Shining, and even Wile E. Coyote. Not great art, but very entertaining.

Books: How did the English defeat Napoleon? With magicians, of course! You can read all about it in **Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell**. Author Susanna Clarke creates a vividly imagined period piece, with strong characters and "historical" footnotes on the origins of English magic. It's a weighty book (around 800 pages) but filled with lots of wit, and Clarke never loses focus on her theme: magic is a strange business, so be careful what you wish for!

Food: Recipe for success: good food, generous portions, & friendly service. That's what you'll find at **Ollie's Omelette House** in Mesa. It's a great place for breakfast & lunch when you want a break from the usual chain restaurants.



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Ken, how much is my home worth?



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_____ I'm not thinking of selling my home. I'm just curious about value. Please send me a complimentary current market analysis.

_____ I'm thinking about selling my home. Please send me a complimentary current market analysis plus a Home Seller's Handbook with information about ERA Lucas Realty Group, our "Common Sense Commission Plan", "Aggressive Marketing Plan", and other money-saving tips.

Home Description:

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