

Valley of the Sun Real Estate Update

December, 2005

Buy Now, Pay Later!

The end of the year is typically the slowest time in the real estate market. Mostly, this is because people devote the holiday season to vacationing with family, or seeking a little peace & quiet before the hectic activities of the new year. But after seeing the huge lines of post-Thanksgiving shoppers, it occurs to me that lots of folks are just too busy buying gifts for friends & family to have any time left over for house-hunting.

Of course, one of the great American shopping traditions is the idea of charging everything on your credit card. That way, you don't have to actually pay for the stuff you buy—at least, not right away. The bill will come eventually, but many people hope to delay the need to make payments until they have received their end-of-year bonus, or gotten a little something from the grandparents, or otherwise found a little more disposable income.

Indeed, we see the same thing in the real estate market. When you buy a house, your agent's services usually don't cost you anything, but when the time comes to sell the house, you will probably pay not just your own agent, but the buyer's agent as well. Why is that?

Basically, it's a "buy now, pay later" scheme that has allowed the market to thrive. Buying a home is an expensive project, and it can be especially daunting to first-time buyers. With loan costs, inspections, and repairs, not to mention new furniture, buyers are often looking at many thousands of dollars they will need to spend. The need to pay an agent on top of all that would be a significant hurdle for many buyers, who value the expertise an agent can put to use for them but just don't have the financial resources to cover that additional expense.

And most buyers want to use an agent. If they couldn't afford one, they would be much less inclined to buy a house at all. That would be bad news for sellers, since fewer buyers translates very quickly into fewer sales, lower prices, and a stagnant marketplace.

So, sellers have a pretty big motivation to do something to support buyers. And with the equity they are likely to have gained after many years of home ownership, sellers are typically much better able to pay for the services of the agents involved in a transaction. Of course, paying for the buyer's agent as well as their own means sellers do not net as much on their sale, but it does ensure the stability of the overall marketplace and, in the long run, enables buyers and sellers to be confident that the system will continue to work for all parties involved now and in the future.

Will we always have this system? It's hard to say, especially in an industry that changes as much as the real estate market. But it's been in place for a while, and no better options have emerged yet. If you have any ideas or suggestions, feel free to pass them along to me!

On the Home Front



Taran had a very eventful Thanksgiving. He went to visit his grandparents in Colorado, where he saw snow for the first time, and he also got to meet his 2-week old cousin in Wyoming. Along the way, he even learned how to pull himself up to a standing position. The mountain air must agree with him—I guess he takes after his mom!



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Recipe of the Month

Stuffed Pork Loin With Maple Glaze

Here's another recipe courtesy of the Republic's Food section. If you are looking for something new & fun to try in the kitchen, check out the Wednesday paper—there's almost always something in there worth experimenting with.

1 pork tenderloin, 2-2 1/2 pounds
 1 cup walnuts, toasted & roughly chopped
 1 cup feta cheese, diced or crumbled
 1/2 cup golden raisins
 1 tablespoon Balsamic vinegar
 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 2 cups maple syrup
 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
 12 ounces India Pale Ale

1. In a bowl, combine walnuts, cheese, raisins, vinegar & pepper. Mix thoroughly.
2. Cut a horizontal slit most of the length of the tenderloin, and at least halfway through the meat. Fill with stuffing and secure with twine as needed. Brush the meat with some of the syrup.
3. Heat the oil in a large pan, and then sear the loin over high heat for a few minutes, turning a few times to brown evenly. Reduce heat to medium, add beer & remaining syrup, cover & braise for 25-30 minutes.
4. Remove pork from pan & reduce remaining liquid for glaze. Serve with potatoes, roasted vegetables, and corn bread. A full-bodied cabernet would make a good pairing. Serves 6.

This recipe is very adaptable. Many groceries sell smaller loins (about 1 1/2 lbs) if you are cooking for 2 or 4—just trim down the other ingredients accordingly. For variety, try substituting cranberries, apricots, cherries or other dried fruit for the raisins, or mix in gorgonzola, brie, or another favorite cheese. You can also use whatever beer you have around the house for braising, but try to pick something with a light, clean flavor.

Culture Corner

Quick reviews of some recent favorites

Movies: I just saw the DVD of **Jay & Silent Bob Strike Back**, from director Kevin Smith. If you're a movie fan, like he clearly is, you'll love this send-up of all things Hollywood. Smith dishes out plenty of jabs at teen stars, greedy agents, egotistical actors, tyrannical directors, and—best of all—many of his own past films.

Food: You can find **Lee's Sandwich Shop** on the corner of Dobson & Warner, and it's well worth the trip. For not much more than a fast-food McMeal, you can choose from an unusual variety of Asian sandwiches, as well as more typical American styles, and top it off with a smoothie, ice cream, or fresh-baked pastry.

TV: If you feel a certain lack of profanity, debauchery, and back-alley murder in your television viewing, I have the solution for you. Just get yourself a copy of HBO's **Deadwood** on DVD, sit back, and let the good times roll. The series is not all rough edges—in fact, the ensemble acting is tremendous (highlighted by Ian McShane as the man you love to hate) and the costumes and sets make the show seem more like a documentary than like fiction.



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