

CLIENT GUIDE





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Aviara
REAL ESTATE

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MEET

Dore & Geoff



Dore was born and raised about an hour away in Azusa - making her a Southern California native. She attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and Azusa Pacific University. As an APU Cougar, Dore competed in Track & Field as a Heptathlete.

After graduating, Dore worked for Easter Seals as a Development Manager, planning large, corporate fundraising events. She joined Geoff in Real Estate in 1997.

Dore coached Long Jump and Triple Jump for the track team at Thousand Oaks High School for 9 years. It was a large commitment of time, but she found the energy of the kids to be contagious.

In 2016, Dore became a Board Member for Make-A-Wish® Tri-Counties. She is inspired by the Wish Kids and their amazing stories. Dore feels honored to be involved with this amazing organization.

Geoff was raised primarily on the east coast, but being part of a military family, he moved often and had the opportunity to also live in Germany, Japan, Texas and Indiana before settling in beautiful, Southern California.

Before becoming a Realtor®, Geoff attended Clemson University on a swimming scholarship, spent 9 years as an Army officer in the 82nd Airborne and was the Vice President of Operations for North American Van Lines.

Geoff received his real estate license in 1990 and his broker's license in 2001. He is very involved in our professional organization and is at the forefront of changes in our industry.

Geoff has two daughters. They are both married and living in Santa Barbara. The youngest of which has given us three grandsons.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INTERESTS

**Board Chair - Make-A-Wish® Tri-Counties
2017-2019**

**Board Member - Make-A-Wish® Tri-Counties
2016 - Present**

**Certified Specialist in Probate, Trusts and
Relocation**

"Agent of the Year", Troop Real Estate

BS in Mathematics, Azusa Pacific University

**Competitor, NAIA National Track & Field
Championships, Vancouver, Canada**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INTERESTS

President, Conejo Valley Association of Realtors

**"Realtor of the Year" Conejo Valley Association
of Realtors**

State Director, California Association of Realtors

BS in Metallurgical Engineering, Clemson

MSBA, Boston University

Black Belt in Tang Soo Do Karate

Member 82nd Airborne Division Association

Geoff and Dore are both avid tennis players. As members of Sunset Hills Country Club, they have competed on and captained a variety of USTA adult tennis teams.



CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

KERRI POLLARD

Chief Revenue Officer

Sold for ABOVE asking. Twenty-day escrow. All cash.

Not to mention, Dore and Geoff had our house listed in less than two weeks to maximize the Spring selling season. From both a personal and professional perspective, it was an absolute pleasure working with the Bakers. They are both extremely responsive and absolute experts in their field. I can't imagine working with anyone else in the buying or selling of any and all of our future homes. Thank you, Geoff and Dore!

KEVIN AND NICOLE

Director of Sales and Teacher

Well to say that Geoff and Dore are AMAZING is an under statement. I can't quite find the perfect word for how wonderful they are, but I will keep thinking. We sold our home and purchased a home with Geoff and Dore. The process was not easy because of some complications that came up with the home we were selling. **Geoff and Dore's knowledge, expertise, dedication, and professionalism are the only reasons we were able to sell our home.** We would not be in the new home we have with out them, no doubt about it! We could not be more thankful for everything that Dore and Geoff did for us, and everyday we are in our new home we think, "wow!" Thanks so much for everything you did to sell our home, and get us in our new home:) I thought of a word....priceless.

CHUCK AND TERE ZANGHI

Retired

We can't imagine what more Geoff and Dore could have done for us when they guided us through the sale of our home. They managed every aspect of the process to insure the best outcome. They are positive and fun to be around. **One of the best decisions we ever made.**

STEVEN SMITH II

Sales

I was referred to Dore & Geoff Baker by my parents. Parents only recommend the best for us and that's what we got! Dore's patience looking at homes and experienced advice in negotiations helped seal the deal! When it came to the home, I was completely lost. Being a first-time home buyer, I didn't know anything about what was in the home inspection report. If it wasn't for Geoff explaining everything to me, I would have been overwhelmed and probably passed on the home. Instead he helped to get the seller to reduce the price and coached me on how to get items fixed on my own. **Dore & Geoff Baker make a great team which helped us purchase our dream home.**

JUNIOR SILVA

Director of Procurement

Dore and Geoff were great to work with. They are very knowledgeable about the area and that made our search for a home very easy. We recently moved to Ventura County from Monterey County and they guided us into the neighborhoods that best fit our family needs. It was a pleasure to work with Dore and Geoff. **I would highly recommend their services to anyone who's in the market for a home.**

SUSAN HARWOOD

Manager

I chose Dore and Geoff Baker after interviewing three realtors - there was no competition and the choice was easy. On that occasion **Dore sold a house for me and since then has helped us find two more**, one our personal home and one an investment property. They make the transaction and paperwork as painless as possible and always offer sound advice when needed. I would highly recommend their services to anyone in need of a realtor.



View over Westlake Village from the Pentachaeta Trail in Triunfo Canyon Park.
Photo: Silvia Berg, SKSgraphics.com

NOREEN FOSTER

Retired

The thought of selling my home of 26 years was a bit daunting. However, Dore went far above and beyond helping me with a few upgrades, and helping me stage my home for showing. She was always available to me during the whole process, keeping me well informed as to the feedback from showings. Geoff handled the negotiations and escrow issues fairly and professionally. Overall, I enjoyed working with Geoff and Dore, and would recommend them to anyone thinking of buying or selling property.

RON PILLSBURY

Chief Operations Officer

Dore and Geoff Baker are outstanding realtors and more importantly, they have the utmost integrity in all of their communications. They are very customer service focused and move quickly to provide their clients with up to date information. We are in the process of selling our 2nd property with Dore and Geoff. They are very thorough in their analysis and “go the extra mile” to meet and exceed our expectations. I wholeheartedly recommend them - **we have moved 5 times in our married life and Dore and Geoff are clearly the most experienced and efficient realtors we have ever used - buying or selling property.**

BOB LANDRY JR.

Retired

I just have two words. **Incredible professionals.** I recently had to sell my Mom’s house. I chose the Baker’s /Aviara Real Estate. As it turns out, this was the best decision I had made in years. From day one they were on it. I was kept informed each and every step of the way. Amazingly in 19 days I had the check in hand at a great selling price. Would I recommend them? Absolutely with no reservations.

ANGELA CANTON

Vice President Compliance

Dore and Geoff are true professionals in their field. My husband and I have personally purchased three properties in the Conejo Valley working with Dore and Geoff, so speak from experience. They are solid advocates for their clients starting with deal negotiations through and following closure of escrow. Both are tremendously responsive and detail oriented to ensure all goes smoothly. Over the years we have explored many options: investing in rental properties, relocating our family home, etc. Dore and Geoff have been open and available through all our deliberations, providing sound advice and seemingly limitless patience; **I have never felt pressured into pursuing any one option or property, they sincerely work in support of the best option for their clients, which we appreciate.** I enthusiastically recommend Dore and Geoff for any of your real estate needs - they are, quite simply, the best.



OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We are dedicated to the integrity of our profession and our fiduciary duty to you.

We believe that whenever possible, it's best that every buyer and seller have their own distinct advocate in negotiations and throughout the escrow process. Therefore, we will never represent a previously unknown buyer on one of our listings. This is an important and unique piece of our business model, which we feel ensures all parties receive the highest level of service and representation.

As our client, your best interest will always be our top priority.

OUR PROMISE TO OUR COMMUNITY

We will donate a portion of our commissions on your transaction to the local charity of your choosing. We hope this effort will help our community to continue to thrive and improve for all of those who call it home.

Dore & Geoff



AVIARA REAL ESTATE

AVIARA REAL ESTATE

OUR COMPANY

Aviara Real Estate is managed by a board of directors, elected annually, and composed of a maximum of 30 teams with currently over 170 agents. The company teams operate as individual offices, but the success of the company is measured based on the sum of the teams' efforts, not by a management-dictated direction.

Unlike traditional offices, we share and collaborate so that each team may benefit from the knowledge of all. Our agents may compete with other company members for listings and buyers, but we never allow this competition to restrict our culture of sharing. The result is a company built on passion, professionalism, and performance - the very attributes that have driven the careers of these elite professionals.

OUR AGENTS

Aviara represents the ultimate resource for buyers, sellers and investors alike.

Aviara agents are committed to providing clients with the most comprehensive and caring service available in real estate throughout Ventura and Los Angeles Counties.

Don't settle when it comes to your next home sale or purchase: Place your important investment in the hands of the elite professionals of Aviara Real Estate.

We're "Leading The Way" when it comes to helping people capitalize on their real estate opportunities.

We will ensure your next move is a complete success!



Aviara
REAL ESTATE

2555 Townsgate Rd, Suite 200
Westlake Village, CA 91361
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AVIARA ESCROW



WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

**At the Aviara Real Estate Escrow Division we will go above and beyond to help you!
Not only do we want our agents and their clients to have a smooth transaction,
we also make sure the other side has an excellent experience as well.**

- ▶ Our Escrow Division is organized into two escrow teams that work together to help our agents and their clients.
- ▶ We front client-based fees such as CC&Rs, HOA documents and city reports. This speeds up the processing times for sellers' mandated disclosures and helps clients meet their contract disclosure time frames.
- ▶ Clients' documents that need to be returned to Escrow will be sent to the client with a large, self-addressed and stamped return envelope for their convenience.
- ▶ Documents can be e-signed (electronic signature) for fast and secure processing.
- ▶ Sellers are always welcome to come by the Escrow office to have their Grant Deed and/or Trust Certifications notarized at no charge.
- ▶ We are in-house, so control is much easier, as is access to problem-solving.
- ▶ We are an agent-friendly office and agents enjoy working with us!

AVIARA IS A MEMBER OF LEVERAGE GLOBAL PARTNERS

OPENING THE WHOLE WORLD TO YOU!

As an exclusive partner of Leverage Global Partners we make the connection to elite real estate listings around the world.

Leverage Global is specialized in connecting homebuyers and sellers to prestigious independent real estate brokerage firms.

Each member of Leverage Global has been carefully selected as demonstrating innovative leadership and peerless integrity in the field of real estate.

By being a partner in Leverage Global, Aviara has access to multiple avenues through which your property's profile or search can be maximized both nationally and globally.

As a partner of Leverage Global, we can connect YOU with superior agents globally to help you with your relocation.



Selling *your home*





MARKETING PLAN

Once your listing is in our hands, it's time to give it the widest possible exposure.



We employ the best marketing strategies and tools available to present your home to the greatest number of potential buyers, which will bring you the best price in the shortest amount of time.



SETTING THE STAGE

Staging your home doesn't have to cost a lot of money.

Often times, all you need is a little elbow grease, a discerning eye and the advice of a trained professional. The way you live in your home day to day is completely different from the way your home should be presented for sale.

We will guide you through the process and put more dollars in your pocket at closing.

Get **MAXIMUM IMPACT** for minimal outlay.

Let us create an action plan that is tailor-made to your budget, lifestyle and home.

To show your home to its best effect, we provide:

- Advice on furniture placement
- Color recommendations
- Assistance with soft furnishings and décor
- Contacts for staging furniture, if needed
- Suggestions for landscaping updates
- Direction on important maintenance items





TOP NOTCH PHOTOGRAPHY

Great marketing starts with Professional Photography.

We live in a digital world where first impressions are more important than ever. The proper visual presentation of your listing is a keystone to our success. We invest in professional, high-quality

photography to ensure that your home is showcased to its best effect. The upgrades and details you've put so much thought into over the years will be framed beautifully for maximum appeal.



VIDEO IS KING

In today's busy world, buyers want to experience a property in less than 60 seconds.

If they like what they see, they'll spend the time to check out all the photos and really dive into the write-up. A well done video is like an amazing appetizer that sparks the interest of a hungry diner.



facebook



SOCIAL MEDIA

If it isn't on social media, it doesn't exist.

That's why we invest in targeted boosting to the demographics that make the most sense for your home. Whether we're aiming to attract first time buyers or baby boomers looking to downsize, we'll make sure your listing posts are seen by the most likely buyer pool.

QUALITY BROCHURES & MAILERS



Your home will have full-color, brochure-style flyers and mailers created by our graphic designer.

The brochures will be available to prospective buyers viewing your property. Mailers will be delivered to hundreds of residents in your area. It's very common for buyers to be directed to your home by one of your neighbors.



OPEN HOUSE EVENTS



- **Open Houses**
- **Brokers' Caravan**
- **Brokers' Lunch**

From the eye-catching flags at the curb, to the unique refreshments, our open house events are memorable.

No matter the theme, prospective buyers will be treated to a warm and welcoming feeling – their first happy memory in what might become their future home.

We personally invite neighbors to an exclusive viewing for the first hour, then open your home to the public for an additional two to three hours.

Open houses are often seen as being less formal than requesting a showing through an agent. Some buyers prefer this as a more accessible, less pressured option.



DYNAMIC EMAILS

Your new listing is placed in front of more than 1,000 of our area's top real estate agents, as well as our personal database of potential buyers.



NEW LISTING
9 Fallen Oaks Drive

\$839,900
Open This Sunday 1-4



4 Bdrms / 2 Baths / 2,229 sf
3 Car Garage





NEW MOORPARK LISTING
14450 Laurel Lane
MLS # 219007465

\$799,900
Open This Sunday 1-4



4 Bdrms / 3 Baths / 2,317 sf
3 Car Modified Garage



Dore & Geoff
BAKER
AVIARA REAL ESTATE

REALTORS® serving:
Agoura, Calabasas, Camarillo, Lake Sherwood,
Moorpark, Newbury Park, Oak Park, Oxnard,
Santa Rosa, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks,
Westlake Village, West San Fernando Valley,
Wood Ranch and Ventura

Aviara
REAL ESTATE

WHAT OVERPRICING CAN DO

TO YOUR HOME'S EVENTUAL SALE PRICE



You will lose the excitement that a new listing generates

Agents are working with buyers who have seen what is currently on the market and are waiting for something new to be listed. Therefore, most activity will take place within the first fourteen days of a listing. Your home will probably receive its best offers during this time. After this initial period, the only people who come to look at your home will be new buyers in the marketplace.

You will lose the most qualified prospects

Potential buyers will not “make an offer” because they probably will never see your property. They will view the properties that are priced within their purchase-power range, knowing that they cannot afford anything above their price range.

Overpricing helps sell other more competitively priced homes first

Your home may become the example demonstrating the good value of other properties. Your objective should be to enter the market in a position that will attract prospects, not drive them away.

Your home may become stale on the market

Prospects may wonder why it has been on the market so long or if something is wrong with the property, even after you lower the price. You will likely have to settle for less than market value. A house takes on a reputation surprisingly fast, so do not wear out your welcome on the market.

You lose a strong negotiating position

When your house is on the market a long time, it hurts both financially and mentally. Prospects will not “rush” to make an offer on an overpriced property, and you may be faced with accepting less when they finally do. Buyers tend to expect more flexibility in negotiations the longer a home has been on the market.

AS YOU CAN SEE, pricing your home correctly will make a tremendous difference in how fast it sells and for how much. We make it our business to know the market and price our clients' homes to sell for the most money in the least amount of time.

SELLER'S ESCROW PLANNING TIMELINE

IMPORTANT EVENTS		YOUR DATE
Day 0	The contract is accepted by both parties/acceptance is confirmed.	
Day 1	The first day AFTER acceptance. All contingencies based on "days after acceptance" or similar wording, start on this date.	
Day 3	The last working day for the buyers to deliver their deposit to escrow, which will be held in a non-interest bearing account.	
Day 7	The last day for us to deliver your disclosures to the buyers.	
Day 17	Typically, the last day for your buyers to remove many of their contingencies in writing. This includes Discovery (Inspections), Disclosures & Reports, HOA CC&R's (if applicable) and Appraisal. This time frame may have been negotiated to a different number of days in the contract.	
Day 17	This is the last day for your buyers to remove their Loan contingency in writing.	
COE minus 5-10 Days	You will need to sign your Grant Deed. This needs to be notarized and can be done at the Escrow Office.	
COE minus 5 Days	The first day the buyers can perform their final walk-through of the property to ensure it is in an acceptable condition. Don't forget to schedule your utilities to turn off at closing.	
COE minus 1 Working Day	Loan funding day. The buyers' lender provides funds to escrow so that your sale can occur. If funds don't arrive, escrow closing will be delayed.	
COE (Close of Escrow)	The deed is recorded at the County Recorder's Office. <u>You have sold your home.</u> The time and date when you must physically vacate your home is specified in the contract.	

Escrow time periods are typically 30-45 days, beginning on day 1. All numbers of days above are calendar days, except for the three days allowed for the buyers' deposit to be brought into escrow. That timeframe is calculated in business days.

SELLER DO'S AND DON'TS

DO'S



Do thin out closets and cupboards.



Do hire a gardener and house cleaner while your home is on the market. It'll make your life a lot easier.



Do tell us about any recent inspections or estimates for repairs you've received for your home.



Do keep your pet beds and litter boxes clean and tidy. You'd be amazed what a turn-off potty smells can be.



Do try to be as accommodating as possible (within reason) to buyers agent's showing requests.



Do be sure and leave during showings. It's more comfortable for the buyers and it will keep them from peppering you with questions.



Do tell us if anything happens to your home while we are in escrow. We may need to revise your disclosures.



Do ask us questions at any time. We're here to make sure you're comfortable with the process and always feel well informed.

DON'TS



Don't leave things off of your disclosures. If a buyer backs out because of information you share, that's ok, it's better than getting sued over something later.



Don't cook fish or other strong-smelling foods in your home while it's on the market. Use your BBQ for those items.



Don't stack tons of boxes against your garage walls as you're cleaning out your home for sale. If possible, stack things in more of an island shape in your garage so the termite inspector can get to the walls.



Don't put too much stock in the opinions of your 'committee'. They mean well, but their selling experience is probably somewhat limited and/or may not be directly applicable to yours.



Don't talk directly to the buyers. (loose lips sink ships)



Don't post on social media about the negotiating process, how excited you are to get your home sold, etc. Wait until your home has closed, then have at it.

MOVING CHECKLIST

IT'S A GIVEN THAT MOVING IS STRESSFUL.

However, if you cross off the items on the following checklist as you go, your advance planning may pay off with a welcome reduction in stress levels.



8 Weeks Out

- ☐ **Get organized:** Set aside a folder or file where you can put all your move-related paper work. Dedicate a notebook as your moving notebook for all your notes.
- ☐ **Start sorting:** Decide what to keep, discard or donate. If you're moving to a smaller place, be aggressive in your decision making.
- ☐ **Research moving companies:** Go online to check for moving companies with positive reviews. Ask friends and family if they have any references for moving companies. Take a week or two to research - you're not in rush mode quite yet.

7 Weeks Out

- ☐ **Get supplies:** Buy packing materials: boxes, tape, markers and bubble wrap.
- ☐ **Plan a garage sale:** As you go through your possessions, you'll find things you don't want to move. It's a perfect time to lighten your load. In the process, you'll make a few bucks at the garage sale to spend on moving expenses.

6 Weeks Out

- ☐ **Notify schools:** If you have kids, tell the staff at their schools of the impending move. Get copies of their school records and check into the enrollment process at the schools near your new residence.
- ☐ **Medical records:** Check with your doctor to get copies of your family's medical records.

5 Weeks Out

- ☐ **Book a moving company:** Thanks to your research, you are ready to pick your movers. Pick a company you feel confident with and confirm the date, time, and details of your move.

4 Weeks Out

- ☐ **Start packing non-essentials:** Begin boxing up the things you won't need right away. Make sure to label the boxes.
Notify utilities: Start the process of closing out utility service at your current place and getting utilities set up at your new residence.
- ☐ **Notify your landlord:** If you're moving from a rental, let your landlord know. Find out when you can have your security deposit returned.

3 Weeks Out

- ❑ **Strategize your food situation:** Use up food items that you don't want to move. Plan ahead to have nothing left in your freezer by your move date. Same goes for your pantry.
- ❑ **Pets and plants:** Make arrangements to get your animals and plants to your new home.
- ❑ **Change your address:** Complete a change of address form on the USPS website. Notify banks and credit cards of your new address.
- ❑ **Transfer insurance:** If your current home is covered, check with your agent to transfer the policy to your new home.
- ❑ **Take care of your car:** Have your car serviced, especially if you're embarking on a long-distance move. Check with your car insurance company about transferring your policy.

2 Weeks Out

- ❑ **Pack with a vengeance:** Now's the time to start boxing up most everything left in your home. Again, make sure to label everything to ensure a smooth transition at your new place.
- ❑ **Coordinate your valuables:** If you have jewelry, heirlooms or other valuable items, sequester them from the main move. You don't want valuable items mixed up with your other packed items. Keep them in a safe place so you can transport them yourself.
- ❑ **Make a clean move:** If your new place needs a thorough cleaning, make arrangements to have it scrubbed before you arrive.
- ❑ **At your disposal:** Properly dispose of any items that can't be moved such as cleaning materials, propane, or paint.

1 Week Out

- ❑ **Confirm and confirm again:** Check in with your mover to confirm the time and date of the move.
- ❑ **Pack an essential kit:** Prepare a suitcase with items you will need right away at your new place. Take it with you. Don't load it on the truck. Be sure to keep extra sets of car keys with you.

1 Day Before

- ❑ **Keep important documents handy:** Make sure to have any documents related to the move at the ready.
- ❑ **Defrost and clear:** Clean out your empty fridge and freezer. Check your cupboards and pantry for any open food items.



Moving Day

- ❑ **Work with your movers:** Help your movers by identifying fragile or large items right away. Be there when the movers load your items onto the truck. You'll be responsible for verifying that they loaded everything, so it's vital that you're there to coordinate and answer questions. Sign the bill of lading when you're satisfied that everything is accounted for.
- ❑ **One final sweep:** Before the movers pull away, do a final check of your home to make sure nothing was left behind.

COORDINATING A SALE & PURCHASE

OPTION 1

FIND YOUR NEXT HOME

PUT IT INTO ESCROW

LIST YOUR CURRENT HOME

YES SALE OF HOME CONTINGENCY **YES** HOME OF CHOICE CONTINGENCY

In this scenario, the seller of the home you are buying will give you 17 days to get your current home into escrow. That could be doable, but may require a more tantalizing price to inspire immediate action by buyers.

This scenario is not preferred by the seller of the home you are going to purchase, but if that property has been on the market for a while, he or she may be willing to work with us. In a competitive bidding situation we would be at a large disadvantage.

Having a home of choice contingency may decrease your number of prospective buyers, but not hugely. In this case, you've already got your next home under contract when your buyer comes along, so that's less concerning to them.

OPTION 3

FIND YOUR NEXT HOME

PUT IT INTO ESCROW

CLOSE ESCROW

LIST YOUR CURRENT HOME

NO SALE OF HOME CONTINGENCY **NO** HOME OF CHOICE CONTINGENCY

This scenario requires an alternative financial arrangement. Either an equity line (HELOC), a portfolio advance from your investment manager, a home equity advance through our Avira Advantage program or cash reserves of your own. This allows you to purchase your next home independent of the sale of your current home.

This approach is the least stressful, but results in the additional cost of paying for two properties for a short period of time and possibly some fees for setting up the bridge loan.

This is a good approach if you think you may need to do some upgrading to your new home and want to be able to make those improvements while you still live in your current home.

This scenario is even more preferred by the seller of the home you are going to purchase, since it involves no contingency regarding the sale of your current home. It is also preferred by your buyer, because there is no uncertainty regarding you finding your next home.

WHICH APPROACH IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

OPTION 2

LIST YOUR CURRENT HOME

RECEIVE AN OFFER

FIND YOUR NEXT HOME

YES SALE OF HOME CONTINGENCY **YES** HOME OF CHOICE CONTINGENCY

In this scenario, your buyers will give you 17 days to put your future home under contract. If we're not able to find a home in that timeframe, the buyer can agree to grant you additional time, or they can cancel. If they decide to cancel, we would put your home back on the market and seek new buyers.

This scenario is preferred by the seller of the home you are going to purchase, because they know you already have a buyer.

Having a home of choice contingency may decrease your number of prospective buyers. It's a bit more challenging in this scenario than Option 1, because in this case, you will not have identified your home of choice yet. This is more concerning to the buyers of your current home.

OPTION 4

LIST YOUR CURRENT HOME

RECEIVE AN OFFER

CLOSE ESCROW

FIND YOUR NEXT HOME

NO SALE OF HOME CONTINGENCY **NO** HOME OF CHOICE CONTINGENCY

This scenario requires that you arrange for alternative housing and storage for your belongings until you find your future home. This can be a good approach if the timing is right for your sale, but you think it may take some time to find just the right home that you'll want to buy.

When you ultimately do buy, you will have no sale of home contingency, which will make your offer more attractive to a seller. In the sale of your current home, you don't have a home of choice contingency, which is more attractive to the buyer of your home.



CONGRATULATIONS

YOU ARE ABOUT TO BUY A NEW HOME!

The decision to buy your own home is an exciting one. We'll put our expertise to work to ensure that your purchasing experience is hassle-free.

We will help you with honest, accurate information so you can make well-informed decisions regarding the purchase of your home.

The enclosed information will give you an idea of what to expect during each phase of your transaction.

Buying *your home*



PRE-APPROVAL VS. PRE-QUALIFICATION

LOAN PRE-QUALIFICATION is a simple process. It takes into account very basic information regarding your financial status and gives you an amount for which you may qualify. This can be done strictly on a verbal level or electronically over the internet. The pre-qualified amount is based solely on the information you provide. In most markets, pre-qualified buyers usually hold little clout compared to pre-approved buyers due to the fact that the information given during the pre-qualification process is not thoroughly investigated and therefore may be unreliable. Where a pre-approved buyer is actually approved for a loan of a certain amount, a pre-qualified buyer is only told that they might be approved for a certain amount.

LOAN PRE-APPROVAL is a much more involved. The lender will take all pertinent information regarding your finances and perform an extensive check on your current financial status. This will ultimately give you the exact amount that you will be eligible for (depending on what type of loan you decide to go with). Being pre-approved lets the seller know that you have gone through an extensive financial background check and there should be no unexpected obstacles to buying the home. You can see how being pre-approved would be more attractive to a Seller than just being pre-qualified.

LET US HELP YOU

We have worked with many excellent, local lenders and would be happy to refer you to a few that you can talk with and interview about their services. We strongly recommend that you not rely on an internet based lender as we have found them to be inconsistent and often times not timely in their performance.





CLOSING COSTS

Closing costs typically are approximately 4% of Sales Price.

The following fees and services comprise closing costs:

- Appraisal Fee
- Loan Fee, Credit Report
- Recording Fees
- Proration of Property Taxes
- Property Inspections
- Reserve Account Setups ... Taxes, Insurance, HOA Dues
- Title Insurance for Lender
- Escrow Fee
- Preparation Fees for Processing, Underwriting, and Lender Documents
- Pre-Paid Interest (This applies if you don't close escrow at the end of a month)
- Mortgage Insurance Premium – (if down payment is less than 20%)
- One Year's Hazard Insurance Premium and One Year's Flood Insurance Premium (if applicable)

Your lender should be able to provide you with a detailed list of the specific costs of these items once you decide on a home price. That list is called a Good Faith Estimate of Costs.

WHAT IS AN IMPOUND ACCOUNT?

An impound account is a neutral depository for funds that will be used to pay expenses incurred by the property, such as taxes, assessments, property insurance, or mortgage insurance premiums which fall due in the future. You will pay one-twelfth of the annual amount of these bills each month with your regular mortgage payment. When the bills come due they are paid by the lender from the special account. At closing, it may be necessary to pay enough into the account to cover these amounts for several months so that funds will be available to pay the bills as they come due. You may also be required to refund items prepaid by the seller. For example, if the seller has paid the special assessments or taxes for that year, you may be required to refund the value of the months remaining in the year when you take possession of the property. An escrow fee is usually charged to set up the account.

PROPERTY TAXES



UNDERSTANDING PROPERTY TAXES

All property owners must pay general real estate taxes. These taxes are also called “ad valorem” taxes because the amount of the taxes varies, according to the value of your property. General real estate is levied for the operations of various governmental agencies and municipalities. Other taxing bodies may include school districts, drainage, water, sanitary, and recreation districts. Properties are valued or assessed by the county assessor.

There are two ways to pay your property taxes:

- 1. Monthly**
- 2. Bi-Annually**

PAYING PROPERTY TAXES MONTHLY

If you select this option, your annual tax amount will be divided into 12 equal payments that will be added to your mortgage payment. Your mortgage company will require you to set up an impound account at the close of escrow. The dollar amount that you put into the account will be equal to between 4-10 months of property taxes. (The exact amount is determined by your lender and the time of the year you are closing escrow.) If you put down less than 20% on the purchase of your home, the lender may require that you pay your taxes monthly.

PAYING PROPERTY TAXES BI-ANNUALLY

The tax year is divided into two sections.

July 1st - December 31st & January 1st - June 30th

If you select this option, your annual tax amount will be divided into 2 equal payments. You will receive one tax bill on November 1st that is considered late after December 10th and another on February 1st that is late after April 10th. With this option, it is important to understand that the county tax assessor tends to run a little behind with respect to home sales. The first one or two tax bills that you receive could be based on the old tax base, (the value the previous owner was taxed at), as opposed to the value that you paid for the home. Do not get excited, your total taxes will be between 1% - 1.25% of your purchase price. When the county catches up on things, they will send you a “Supplemental Tax Bill” to make up for their error.

WHICH OPTION SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Accountants typically recommend paying your taxes bi-annually. The idea is “Why give the government your money earlier than you have to so they can make interest on it?” If you are disciplined enough to put aside money for taxes each month, then you can benefit from the interest. Ultimately, you need to select the payment option that makes the most sense for your financial situation.

BUYER DO'S AND DON'TS

DO'S



Do spend the time to get pre-approved BEFORE you go shopping. There is nothing more painful than finding the perfect home and not being able to make an offer on it.



Do be completely honest with your lender about child support, alimony, garnishments or any other payroll deductions.



Do fill out your loan application with your name as it appears on your driver's license. This really matters when the notary shows up to help you sign your loan docs.



Do get a signed gift letter and bank statement from your family member if they are giving you money to purchase your home.



Do take advice from family and friends with a grain of salt. They mean well, but their experience may be limited and their priorities for a home may not be the same as yours.



Do tell us if you have any vacations planned during the time we will be in escrow.



Do return all paperwork promptly to your lender and the escrow company. If you have questions, be sure to ask, so we can get your questions answered and move the process along.



Do make an offer if you find a home that has 80% of what you want, 10% that you're willing to change and 10% that you can live with. That's a keeper!



Do ask us questions at any time. We're here to make sure you're comfortable with the process and always feel well informed.

DON'TS



Don't quit or change your job.



Don't make a major purchase, not even on credit or with a delayed payment plan.



Don't allow a number of people to pull your credit.



Don't co-sign for ANYONE for ANYTHING while you are trying to buy a home.



Don't neglect to tell us if you are planning to use funds to buy your home that are not currently available and/or are out of the country.



Don't make David Copperfield deposits. (all funds need to be traceable)



Don't talk to the sellers directly. (loose lips sink ships)



Don't forget to tell us if you are allergic to animals.



Don't verbally trash a home while we are standing in it or talk about the offer you want to make. Many homes today have cameras and listening equipment.



Don't expect to find your dream home. No matter what your budget, there is always some level of compromise. Even Bill Gates probably doesn't have everything he wanted in his home.



Don't post about the home you want to offer on, or are in the process of buying, on social media. Wait until escrow closes - then you can post away.

CONSIDER YOUR BUYING OPTIONS

WHAT NEIGHBORHOOD IS RIGHT FOR YOU?



You've certainly heard the phrase Location, Location, Location. Well, truer words were never spoken. When you're considering what home to buy, the most important factor is where it's located. Not just what city or neighborhood it's in, but also how it's positioned. For instance:

- Does it back to a busy street? Is it noisy?
- What is its directional orientation and what does that mean to you?
- Does it have a lot of natural light?
- Will it receive excessive afternoon sun, increasing your cooling costs?

These are just a few examples of things you'll want to consider when selecting your home. Don't worry, we'll help you to notice important factors.

Other factors you'll also want to consider:

- Schools and school scores
- Crime rates
- Commute time
- Access to parks and hiking trails
- Proximity to shopping
- Future development

CONDOMINIUMS & TOWNHOMES

Condominiums and townhomes are the "starter home" of choice for many home buyers today because they are generally smaller and less expensive than conventional single-family houses. The term "condominium" does not describe a particular style of architecture, but rather a type of joint ownership. Each living unit is individually owned, while the facilities and common space (the surrounding land and any recreational facilities) are owned collectively by the owners of each unit. In addition to their monthly mortgage payment, condominium/townhome owners pay a "homeowner's fee" that pays for the management of the complex, upkeep of the common property areas, and occasionally the cost of some of the utilities.

Condominiums/townhomes combine some of the advantages (and disadvantages) of apartment living with those of home ownership. Condominium/townhome owners reap the same financial benefits (tax breaks and equity buildup) as other homeowners without many of the traditional chores of home ownership (such as being responsible for the gardening and hiring a contractor to fix the leaky roof). Moreover, condominiums/townhomes often offer such amenities as landscaping, security gates and recreation areas.

A townhome is the same as a condominium in that the unit will share common walls with other units. However, a townhome differs in that each unit has its own ground space, so you will not have other units above or below your unit.

Selecting a condominium/townhome is more complex than buying a single-family home because it also involves joining a social group and buying into a business. As a result, you need to investigate not only the specific unit in which you are interested, but also the entire project, both from a physical and financial standpoint.



Here are some questions you might want to ask when you contact the condo association or items to review when the CC & R's are in your possession:

1

What percentage of units are owner-occupied?

What percentage are tenant-occupied?

Generally, the higher the percentage of owner-occupied units, the more marketable the units will be at resale.

2

What covenants, bylaws, and restrictions govern the property?

What grandfather clauses are in place?

3

How much does the association keep in reserve?

How is the money being invested?

4

What does and doesn't the HOA dues cover – common area maintenance, recreational facilities, trash collection, cable, water?

5

What special assessments have been mandated in the past five year?

How much was each owner responsible for?

Some special assessments are unavoidable. But repeated, expensive assessments could be a red flag about the condition of the building or the board's fiscal policy.

6

How much turnover occurs in the community?

7

Is the project in litigation?

If the builders or homeowners are involved in a lawsuit, reserves can be depleted quickly.

8

Ask residents about their perception.

Is the management company responsive to homeowner's requests?

9

Are multiple associations involved in the property?

In very large developments, umbrella associations, as well as the smaller association into which you are buying may require separate dues.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

for you to review prior to closing escrow on a condo or townhome are:

- 1) Copy of the Conditions, Covenants and Restrictions (CC&R's)
- 2) Budgets and By-Laws (usually incorporated in CC&Rs).
- 3) Recent HOA Board meeting minutes and financials.

MAKING AN OFFER

FIVE ITEMS WE NEGOTIATE



WE WILL WORK THROUGH ALL OF THESE TOGETHER!



KEY CONCEPTS

EARNEST MONEY

When you decide to make an offer, you must be prepared to make an earnest money deposit. That deposit is a sign of your good faith that you are seriously interested in buying a home and you have the wherewithal to do so. The check should not be made payable to the seller or to your Realtor®, but rather, to the Escrow Company. Your earnest money deposit may be forfeited if the seller accepts the contract and you decide to back out of the deal outside the terms of the contract. Typically, an earnest money is 3% of the offer amount.

WHERE DOES MY EARNEST MONEY GO?

Once both the buyer and the seller have reached an agreement, we have three business days to make that deposit. The earnest money is deposited into the Escrow Company trust account. That deposit becomes part of the down payment. The earnest money is not deposited until there is a mutual acceptance of the offer.

CAN I LOSE MY EARNEST MONEY?

Very rarely does any purchaser lose the earnest money. Most offers are contingent on the buyer obtaining financing and conducting an inspection of the home. Prior to removing your contingencies regarding these things, your deposit is safe. However, if you decide that you do not want to buy the house, after removing all of your contingencies, your earnest money would be in jeopardy. In either situation, your earnest money is not released by the escrow company until both the buyer and the seller sign off, agreeing to whom the deposit is being released. If you have not yet released your contingencies, the seller would have no legitimate reason to withhold your deposit. If the buyer and seller cannot agree on what will be done with the earnest money, the funds will remain in the escrow account until the matter is resolved by either the court system or through mediation.

WHAT IS A CONTINGENCY?

A contingency is an open item that needs to be resolved or confirmed in order for you to continue with the escrow. As a buyer, you have a number of contingencies and each one will be released in writing during the course of your escrow. Examples of contingencies are:

- Inspection of the home
- Review of seller's disclosures
- Review of HOA documents
- Satisfactory appraisal
- Final loan approval

WHAT DOES ESCROW MEAN?

In California, this is a trick question. We use the word 'escrow' to mean multiple things. It's the period of time between offer acceptance and when the home closes and becomes yours. It's also the process through which all things occur to make it possible for you to own your home. Sometimes we use the phrase 'escrow account' which describes a neutral depository for funds. Lastly, it's a 3rd party entity who manages the escrow process and oversees the transfer of title as well as the funds to complete the closing.

WHAT IS TITLE INSURANCE?

Title insurance companies insure the parties involved against defects in the title of real property. During the escrow process, the title company will research the property and verify that the title to the property is free of unexpected liens and may be cleanly transferred to the buyer. In each real estate transaction, there are two title insurance policies. The seller purchases a policy that indemnifies the buyer for the purchase price of the home. The buyer in turn purchases a policy for the lender that indemnifies the lender for the loan amount.



DISCLOSURE

Once we have an agreed upon offer on a property, the seller will make a number of disclosures to you. These are all required by the state and some are a bit lacking in specific information about the home. There are, however, a couple of disclosures that are very informative.

THE NATURAL HAZARDS DISCLOSURE

The Natural Hazards Disclosure will be provided to you by a third-party company. This report will inform you about the natural hazards of a home or area that may affect this property. It will also give you a good idea as to whether or not you will need to carry flood insurance or additional fire insurance on the home.

THE TRANSFER DISCLOSURE STATEMENT AND SELLER PROPERTY QUESTIONNAIRE

These documents are filled out directly by the seller. They disclose to you in great detail what the home has and does not have, as well as what things may not be functional. These disclosures could also alert you to possible neighborhood nuisances or other factors of the home that would only be known by the seller. In addition, the SPQ will inform you about a number of things, including modifications the seller has made to the home, past issues and repairs, regular pest services, etc. Regardless of when you receive these documents during the escrow time period, you have 72 hours to cancel the purchase once you are given these disclosures.

DISCOVERY

Discovery is your right as the buyer to “discover” aspects of the home and factors affecting its value during the escrow time period. This is a weighty responsibility and should not be taken lightly. You will be hiring inspectors to visit the property and provide you with information.

You may also want to:

- Check the police department website to inquire about crime in the neighborhood.
- Call the city to learn about what future developments may be occurring in the area.
- Knock on the doors of your future neighbors to see how they feel about the neighborhood.
- Visit the area at different times of the day and different days of the week. This will give you a more complete sense of the neighborhood.

The most important aspect of your discovery is the Home Inspection.



INSPECTION

IS AN INSPECTION NECESSARY?

For any property you are thinking of purchasing, you have the right to arrange an inspection by a professional inspector of your choice. You should always exercise your option to have the physical condition of the property and its inclusions inspected. Many of the more severe and expensive problems such as mechanical, electrical, structural and plumbing are not noticeable to the untrained eye. If repairs are needed, we will negotiate those issues during the escrow timeframe. A professionally conducted home inspection followed by a written evaluation is standard procedure in home buying.



AS-IS

Every home in the state of California is sold as-is. That simply means that the seller is not obligated to make repairs to the home at the request of the buyer. There are a few things that a seller must do in order to sell his or her home, as mandated by local law, but beyond those items, the home is being sold as-is. Any other requests for repair or credit will be negotiated through escrow. The seller is not required to agree to your request and you are not obligated to continue with the purchase if you don't like the seller's answer.

ARE INSPECTORS LICENSED?

You have the right to hire whomever you choose to conduct your inspection. However, you're responsible for the parties that you bring to the property, so it is strongly recommended that you select a licensed and bonded home inspector. Such a qualified person will be better versed in the intricacies of home construction that vary due to the age and style of the home.

WHAT DOES AN INSPECTION ENTAIL?

A qualified inspector will follow Standards of Practice in conducting their inspection. The inspection consists of a physical inspection of the home followed by a summation walk through with the purchaser present and a written report detailing their findings. They report on the general condition of the home's electrical, heating and air systems, plumbing, roof, visible insulation, walls, ceilings, floors, windows, doors, foundation, and visible structure. The inspection is not designed to criticize every minor problem or defect in the home. No home is perfect. It is intended to report on damage or problems that require repair for the well being of the home and that might require significant expense.

BUYER EDUCATION IS NECESSARY

The primary purpose of the inspection is to educate the buyer to make an informed purchasing decision. A good home inspector knows how the home's many systems and components work together and how to minimize the damaging effects of sun and water. The buyers' attendance at the summation of the inspection provides them with an overall idea of possible future repair costs and maintenance routines. This is valuable information, which could increase the life span, and perhaps the future selling price of the home.

TIME AND FEE GUIDELINES FOR THE INSPECTION

The time necessary to properly inspect a home, as well as the fee charged by an inspector, varies according to market location, the size and age of the home, and the individual inspection company. However, you can expect that it will take an average of one and a half to three hours to competently inspect a typical three-bedroom home, with an average cost of \$400 to \$800.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN HIRING AN INSPECTOR

- How much do you charge for the inspection?
- When will the final report be ready?
- Will it be typed? Will it include pictures?
- Will you tell me if I have asbestos, aluminum wiring or galvanized steel pipes in the home?
- Can you determine the condition and estimated life of the roof?
- Will you determine the condition of the foundation?
- Do you inspect pool/spa areas and operating systems, in-ground water sprinklers, lighting systems and low voltage systems?
- Do you inspect chimneys?
- Do you inspect the attic and ductwork?
- What other areas do you inspect?
- When can you do the inspection?
- What time should I be there?

ADDITIONAL INSPECTIONS

Your Home Inspector may recommend further inspections be done by more specific individuals. The items that sometimes require further inspection are the chimney, roof, pool and spa.

In almost all transactions, we also recommend the following two inspections:

PEST INSPECTION

This is often called a termite inspection. The purpose of this inspection is to determine if there is any visible wood rot present in the home, whether it is due to the presence of termites or water intrusion. The pest inspection report will be broken into two parts. Section I calls out areas where damage currently exists and recommends corrective action. Section II calls out areas where damage could occur in the future if corrective action is not taken. Some sellers will have already obtained a pest inspection report and will include with their disclosures. If not, we will recommend that you hire a pest inspector as part of your discovery.

SEWER LINE INSPECTION

I think we can all agree that when you buy a home, you expect the sewer to be functional. The only way to check this is to hire a qualified plumber to run a camera down the sewer line and report the findings. The original material used for the sewer line may be deteriorating beyond its useful lifespan or the line could be infringed upon by tree roots or other plant life.

The results of all inspections will be negotiated through the request for repair process. This is where we will request that the seller take corrective action or give you a credit through escrow to make agreed upon repairs after close of escrow.

CLOSING YOUR TRANSACTION



2 - 3 DAYS BEFORE CLOSING

2-3 days before closing you will be required to pay the “funds needed to close”. This consists of the balance of your down payment and all closing costs in the form of “guaranteed funds” such as a cashier’s check or wire transfer. Your escrow officer will notify you of the exact amount.

1 DAY BEFORE CLOSING

Your lender will wire the loan funds into the escrow account.

CLOSE OF ESCROW DAY

The title company transferring ownership of the property will have a representative at the County Clerk’s office. They will record your ownership with the County. At that time, title is considered transferred and you own the home. This event could take place at any time between 8:30 and 5:00 on the day of close of escrow. Geoff will call you to let you know when we have been notified of the recording.

It is important to understand that ownership and possession are two different things. We will negotiate your possession date as part of the purchase contract. For instance, we may close escrow on Friday, but your possession of the home may not begin until Saturday at 5:00 pm. Geoff will be able to give you your new key in time for you to take possession of the home at the agreed upon time.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PREPARE FOR THE CLOSING?

Pack your things, coordinate your movers (or your friends that own trucks), set up house cleaners or carpet cleaners as needed. In California, it is not necessary for you to be present on the day of close of escrow. Everything that you will need to sign will have been done by this time.

BUYER'S ESCROW PLANNING TIMELINE

IMPORTANT EVENTS		YOUR DATE
Day 0	The contract is accepted by both parties/acceptance is confirmed.	
Day 1	The first day AFTER acceptance. All contingencies based on "days after acceptance" or similar wording, start on this date.	
Day 3	The last working day to deliver your deposit to escrow, which will be held in a non-interest bearing account.	
Day 7	The last day for the sellers to deliver their disclosures to you.	
Day 17	Typically, the last day for you to remove many of your contingencies in writing. This includes Discovery (Inspections), Disclosures & Reports, HOA CC&R's (if applicable) and Appraisal. This time frame may have been negotiated to a different number of days in the contract.	
Day 17	This is the last day for you to remove your Loan contingency in writing.	
COE minus 5-10 Days	Review the Closing Disclosure and set up a time to sign your loan documents.	
COE minus 5 Days	The first day you can perform your final walk-through of the property to ensure it is in an acceptable condition. Don't forget to schedule your utilities to turn on at closing.	
COE minus 1 Working Day	Loan funding day. Your lender provides funds to escrow so that your purchase can occur. If funds don't arrive, escrow closing will be delayed (possibly with a penalty to you).	
COE (Close of Escrow)	Your deed is recorded at the County Recorder's Office. <u>You now own your home.</u> The time and date when you can physically occupy your home is specified in the contract.	

Escrow time periods are typically 30-45 days, beginning on day 1. All numbers of days above are calendar days, except for the three days allowed for the buyers' deposit to be brought into escrow. That timeframe is calculated in business days.

NOTES

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WE LIKE WHAT WE DO AND WE LOVE THE AREA WE SERVE

Our clients range from first time buyers to retirees who are ready to downsize and everything in between. Whatever your stage of life and real estate experience, we've done it before and we're ready to put our expertise to work for you.

As a team, we bring knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment to your purchase or sale. Our goal is to empower you through real estate while we guide you through a hassle-free transaction.

As Realtors® serving Ventura and Los Angeles counties for more than 24 years, Geoff and I are dedicated to this community that we call home. Watching the good work of our local charities has inspired us to initiate a 'give-back' program.

Through our Who's Next? Community Giving Project - we donate a portion of our commission on your transaction to the local charity of your choosing. We enjoy creating this tie between our professional success and the ongoing strength of this unique community.

**Give us a call to buy or sell and help
your favorite charity at the same time.**