

A FOUR YEAR LISTING

The house was funky. But, the land was wonderful. Located in the much desired Indian Valley, the house was built originally as a log cabin. Over the years it had been remodeled by various owners, out-buildings were added, including a large horse barn, a workshop, and other smaller structures. Level land, large garden area, a seasonal stream, and seclusion, yet only minutes from downtown. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? It was. The owner had struggled with assorted real estate agents trying to sell the property for 4 years. When offers came in, they would fall apart almost immediately. The owner was becoming desperate. His frustration continued to rise. In talking about it to friends and neighbors, my name was given to the owner by two separate people. They both had told him to call me. If I couldn't sell the house, he was told by a friend, then the next best thing to do was to burn it to the ground.

"That's a pretty drastic measure," I told him when we first met. "Tell me, why do you believe your house hasn't sold?" He replied, "I've had plenty of offers on the property. In fact, I had an offer when it was at a higher price. I accepted it; we opened an escrow and the buyer ordered inspections. That's when everything turned sour. The pest report, from a local pest company, came in at over \$80,000 for Section I work." The sale fell apart.

I was not surprised at the amount once I learned who the pest company was. I knew they were notorious for placing high prices on items to be repaired. This company was in business to make a killing, not a living.

The seller went on. "I received the next offer, accepted it, and we opened another escrow. His pest report company came in with a price to repair Section I items at \$6,000." That escrow fell apart because the buyer thought the difference between \$6,000 and \$80,000 for the same work was somewhat of a sham. He was unwilling to buy the house with such divergent reports. "So now what do I do?"

I told him that, once the property was listed with me, I would give him my answer. We sat down at my office the next day, listing the property. Upon signing the last document, the seller said, "I'm holding you to your promise. What do I do now?"

I simply said, "Order a third pest report." "Do WHAT???" The seller was incredulous! "What good will yet a third report do?" "Order the report, and then we will talk," I said.

A week later, the seller called me with a report. He was in agony. The third report had totaled \$11,000 for Section I work. We met. I then told him my strategy. "Have the last pest report company do all the Section I work for \$11,000. You will have a pest clearance on the entire property. Even though we must still disclose all of the reports you have obtained, the other two reports will become a "Non-issue" in light of the clearance.

The seller immediately did as I suggested. I placed the following remarks in MLS: Property has been cleared of all Section I items. Please call for copies of all reports. Three weeks later the seller received an acceptable offer for his property which subsequently closed escrow.

FENG SHUI PERFECT

The couple was Asian. They had been looking, with his mother, for a home that would accommodate their needs as a two-family home. The trouble was, they had been looking for three years, according to the mother, with absolutely no success. The trouble was that they were very serious about their new home meeting the ancient Feng Shui concepts of Harmony and Balance. I was sad to hear that they had been looking for three years. That told me they were intent on accomplishing their goals. After all, they had been looking diligently for so long. It also told me that the agent or agents they had chosen were not really into finding out exactly what the buyers' goals were. Certainly, spending time with these serious buyers and learning about this ancient culture could be fun and exciting. At our first meeting, we spent three hours together. They had been referred to me by other clients who were ecstatic with my services. In that meeting, I listened to the frustration in their voices as they explained that the most recent agent was trying to talk them in to buying a home in San Rafael that did not meet their needs. It met the agent's needs, however, because it was her own listing, on the market for a very long time and about to expire from the market.

We agreed that we wanted to work with each other and that afternoon I began researching homes that might qualify as a Feng Shui perfect home. They bought the fifth home I showed them. Listening to a buyer and then putting their requirements first, was the best thing I could have done for them. After the close of escrow, my husband and I were invited to their new home for an incredible home made traditional Chinese dinner. We have become friends and I now look forward to my next Feng Shui-seeking Buyer.

A BACK YARD WEDDING

They were engaged, young, beautiful, energetic, and nervous. This was to be their first home. He called on an ad I was running and after speaking with him on the phone, we made an appointment for a counseling session in my office. Here is how I work: Instead of meeting a buyer at a home they have seen on the internet, I agree to spend two hours with them in my office teaching them, at no obligation, about how to buy real estate. I make them aware of financing available to them, pre-qualify them so they know exactly how much and what kind of loan their new lender will pre-approve them for, talk about negotiating and winning, what their closing costs will be, what their monthly payments will be, discuss all types of inspections they may want to have on any home they buy, and in general, answer all of the questions that they have about real estate but didn't know to ask.

After talking about the type of home they wanted, Steve, Kathryn, and I agreed to meet the following Saturday to see a few homes. During that week, I was called by a prospective seller who asked me to come to his home and tell him what I thought the property would sell for. His wife was being transferred to the East Bay with a promotion to her company's headquarters. They needed to paint, clean the carpet, and start packing away all of the treasures from years of collecting. When I saw their home, I knew right then this might be a property that Steve and Kathryn would like. I told the owner I had a prospective buyer and asked if I could show it to the buyer on Saturday. They were shocked that this could happen so quickly, but they happily said, "Yes!"

Well you probably guessed at the happy ending. Steve and Kathryn loved the house. I wrote an offer and presented it to the sellers. They were enthralled. They could sell at their price, not have to pack until they were ready to close the escrow, and knowing their house was in escrow, they could start looking in the East Bay for a new home. Oh! Did I forget to mention... They didn't have a place for their wedding. I invited them to see our home and back yard. When they saw the gazebo, 8 beautiful rose trees surrounding a black bottom pool, they knew this was the perfect place to say their vows. Over the next several years, I have enjoyed 8 more transactions with Steve and Kathryn. Best of all, my husband and I became their son's Godparents.