

REAL ESTATE

Home (Selling) for the Holidays

By Erik Derr

Almost as soon as the season's last trick-or-treater stepped off their front lawn, Bob and Betty Winn were thinking about the upcoming holidays. Their minds, however, weren't filled with visions of dancing sugarplums or roasting chestnuts, but of enticing newspaper ads, front-yard "For Sale" signs and busy open houses.

The Winns --- Bob is a retired truck driver, Betty a retired school teacher who now works as a part-time caregiver --- were looking to sell their home. All economic things considered, the Hawthorne-area couple figured the coming wintry season would be as good a time as any to put their house on the block. "We heard a while ago and tend to believe that the holidays are actually a good time to offer your house," said Bob Winn.

June Fletcher, a writer for the real estate Website Move.com, recommends against seasonal selling. "For everything there is a time and a season --- and late fall isn't the season to be selling a home," Fletcher advised in a recent article. "When thoughts turn to turkey, mistletoe and cozy evenings by the fire, the last thing people want to do is get out boxes and start throwing things in them, except of course when they're wrapping last-minute holiday gifts. Moving seems like too much of a hassle during the holidays."

Elizabeth Weintraub, a real estate analyst from About.com, also suggests avoiding holiday selling. She disagrees with the notion that when a seller puts his or her house on the market over the holiday season, it demonstrates a commitment to finding a buyer. "You know what I think about that?" she said. "It's hogwash. If you don't have to sell between Thanksgiving and New Year's, take your home off of the market."

Weintraub cites several reasons why

homeowners should steer clear of the holiday market, including: It's inconvenient to have to be ready to show your property at a moment's notice; offers received during the holidays will likely be for less than list price; holiday-time sellers appeal to a much smaller inventory of buyers who have very specific needs; it's generally impossible to close a transaction in December if an offer is received mid-month; and agents typically go on vacation and are unavailable through December.

Regardless, Winn responds that he and his wife realize the sales process may be a bit more challenging during the holidays, but the quality of prospective buyers during that time outweighs any procedural headaches. "I think buyers looking during the holidays are more serious and straightforward in their decisions, and that's what I like," Winn said. "No goofing around --- one, two, three, four, sold."

Josh Sloan, a Southern California real estate agent agrees holiday house hunters differ from the norm. "Those people out hunting during the holiday season usually have a good reason," Sloan said in a widely-distributed installment.

Yes, admitted Sloan, the holidays are "not a popular time for house hunting; most people go house shopping in the spring, when the weather is nicer and more people put their houses up for sale." Also, "many serious buyers wait until after the holiday season to start house hunting."

So, before starting the selling process, a homeowner should "stop and think whether you really want to" deal with all the hassles of selling during the Yule season, said Sloan. Then, if the answer is still yes, sellers can rest assured that "with some extra thought to decorating and scheduling, you can certainly pull off house selling on the holidays."

Open House Directory

OUT OF AREA BROKERS OPEN HOUSE

1. Fri 12:00-2:00 1826 11th St, MB 5 Bd. 3.5 Ba. \$1,749,000
Bill Ruane Re/Max Beach Cities Realty 310-877-2374

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2. Sun 1:00-4:00 4321 Crest Dr #A, MB 3 Bd. 2.5 Ba. \$1,599,000
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3. Sun 1:00-4:00 4323 Crest Dr #B, MB 3 Bd. 2.5 Ba. \$1,789,000
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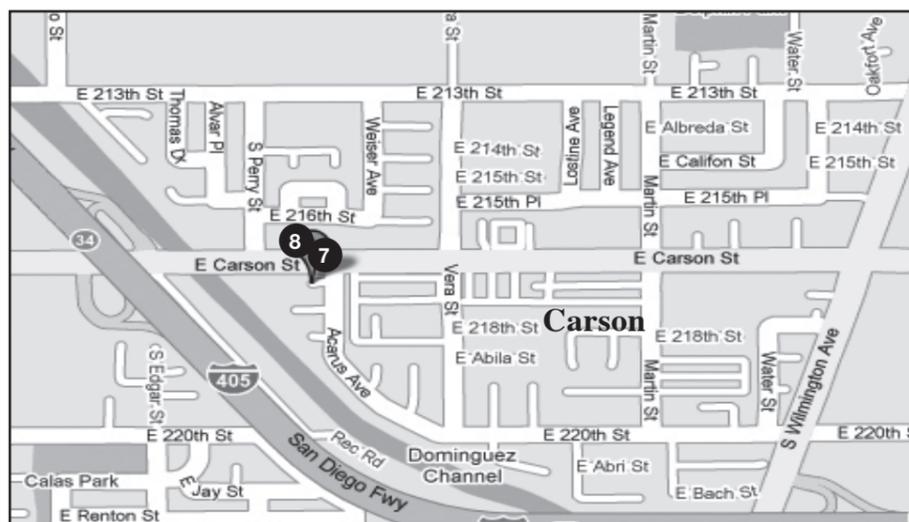
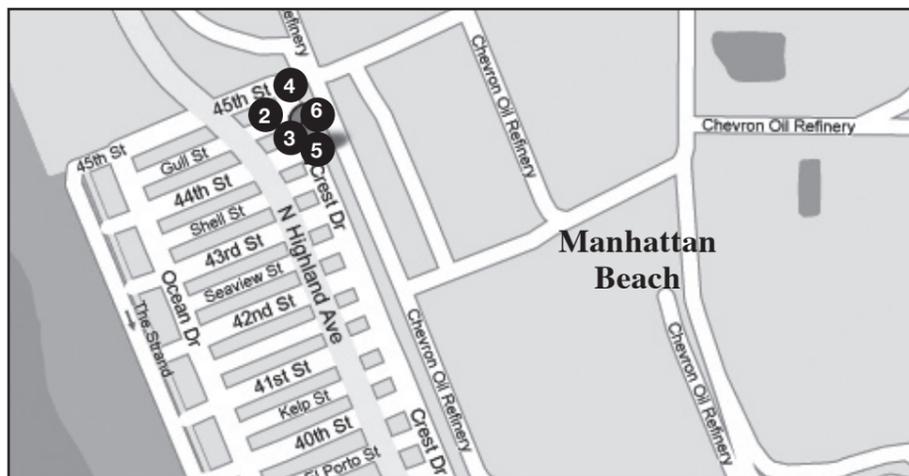
4. Sun 1:00-4:00 4320 Highland #C, MB 3 Bd. 2.5 Ba. \$1,859,000
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5. Sun 1:00-4:00 312 44th St #D, MB 4 Bd. 4.5 Ba. \$2,299,000
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6. Sun 1:00-4:00 316 44th St #E, MB 4 Bd. 4.5 Ba. \$2,299,000
Bill Ruane Re/Max Beach Cities Realty 310-877-2374

7. Sun 2:00-4:00 1215 Ashmill St, Carson 4Bd. 2.5 Ba. \$575,000
Bill Ruane Re/Max Beach Cities Realty 310-877-2374

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