

YOUR HOME

JULY 2012

TIPS AND TRENDS FOR HOMEOWNERS, BUYERS AND SELLERS

Home Sweet Second Home

Sometimes a vacation can be so good that it makes you want to move to your vacation destination permanently — or at least visit more often. If your recent getaway has you thinking about buying a second home, consider these pointers from Frontdoor.com and CNN Money before taking the plunge.

Ultimately, your lifestyle will determine the kind of second home you buy. How much time will you spend in your second home? A few weeks a year? Are you looking for a weekend getaway? Be realistic: Consider how long it takes to travel there and how often you'll really be using it.

Will you rent it out when you're not there? Homeowners who rent out their home for fewer than 15 days a year don't have to pay taxes on rental income — rental expenses, however, aren't deductible (and vice versa). Whether or not you choose to rent it out, it's important to add in extra costs, such as maintenance and insurance — which will be higher in risky weather areas, such as beach properties — and then decide whether the upkeep and costs still fit within your budget.

Know the rules of renting. Some towns don't allow short-term rentals, so make sure your chosen locale does, and read up on landlord laws for tenants. If your home will be primarily for rental income, opt for a family-friendly home in a popular location with easy access to airports or other modes of transportation for a more desirable rental option.

Last, consider long-term goals when choosing a second home. If you're thinking of the home as a good place to retire, it's important to check out local hospitals and other resources, and factor in costs associated with making a home compatible with senior living.



Noise Control

For many homeowners, the days of hearing the neighbor's radio through paper-thin walls are gone. But noise can still be a problem, even under your own roof. Lower the decibel level in your abode with some ideas from TLC.

First, find out how sound travels in your home with one simple step. Turn off the lights in one room while leaving the rest of the lights on in surrounding rooms and look for any light that's peeking through the walls. If light can travel through, so can sound. Use acoustical caulk, available from most hardware stores, to seal off these hidden cracks between walls, ceilings and floors. Put carpet or rugs on higher-level rooms to reduce the noise traveling to lower floors.

To help reduce noise in other rooms, in-wall insulation can help, but it requires cutting holes in the walls. For an easier fix, buy wall coverings that have soundproofing capabilities and repaint them to match your décor, or hang noise-control curtains in the room. The most time- and cost-intensive fix — but also one of the most effective — is to replace standard windows with double-paned ones, which greatly reduce noise.

Don't forget the outdoors. Block off sounds from the street by placing heavy shrubbery and evergreens with large leaves near doors and windows. And consider ornamental fountains for a more welcoming sound.



Digital Vision/Getty Images

fast fact

One in five people in the U.S. suffer from allergies or asthma; common allergens include pollen, dust mites and insect bites.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR AGENT, A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF RESIDENTIAL SPECIALISTS

Play Zone

School's out, and it's no surprise your kids are clamoring to stay outdoors. Keep them safe and close to home by building an outdoor play area.

Start by asking your kids what they envision. Do they want a nature area with a garden or bug observation station, or perhaps a building area with toy blocks and a table? Swing sets, slides, play towers and the like are the most popular choices for play areas, and you don't have to have a huge yard to accommodate them. If you want to include this kind of play equipment, be sure to consider size, materials, components, price and safety features before buying.

Once you've decided what you want to include in the play area, assess your yard for the ideal location. Choose a large,

level area in your backyard, and remove any rocks or roots so there's little chance of tripping on uneven ground. Consider placing the play area underneath big trees for extra protection from the sun. Then, prep the play area: Dig up the dirt or grass and refill the play zone with a protective surface such as mulch, sand or shredded rubber at least three inches deep to minimize injury if a child falls.

Install bender board (landscaping border material) on the outskirts of the play area to ensure the filling stays put. Depending on how old your kids are, consider adding a fence around the border of the play area for added safety, and keep it free of obstacles (like rocks or lawn chairs) at least six feet around each edge.

Keep in mind that not all play areas need to look and feel like a playground. Kids can have just as much fun with



Wealan Pollard/Getty Images; Creative Corp/Getty Images

weatherproof chalkboards, a basin of water with toy boats to race, or even cardboard boxes in different sizes.

Say Yes to CRS

Buying or selling a home can seem like an overwhelming task. But the right REALTOR® can make the process easier — and more profitable.

A Certified Residential Specialist (CRS), with years of experience and success, will help you make smart decisions in a fast-paced, complex and competitive marketplace.

To earn the CRS Designation, REALTORS® must demonstrate outstanding professional achievements — including high volume sales — and pursue advanced training in areas such as finance, marketing and technology. They must also maintain membership in the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and abide by its Code of Ethics.

Work with a REALTOR® who belongs in the top 3 percent in the nation. Contact a CRS today.



Certified
Residential Specialist
The Proven Path To Success

DID YOU KNOW?

22 percent of workers in Davis, Calif., commute by bicycle, making it the most active bike-commuting city in the U.S.



Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home? Please mention my name.

This newsletter is for informational purposes only and should not be substituted for legal or financial advice.
If you are currently working with another real estate agent or broker, it is not a solicitation for business.

