

DANA LIFE

Issue #10 | Jan 2023 | Dana Point, CA



- New Home Listings
- Dana Point Housing Stats
- How to Hold Title
- Local Legends
- Featured Local Businesses
- New Beginnings
- Home Loans

Pictured from left to right:
Leilani Serrao-Baker, Local
Legend Dan Lefler and David
Allen Baker

Letter from the Publisher

January, 2023! Wow! Who else feels like 2022 went by in the blink of an eye? This new year may go by just as fast, but what will make this year different for you? For me, new beginnings! This year, Baker Real Estate Group is launching a new real estate company, bringing Civitas Realty to southern California, giving us the ability to serve our community and our clients even better. Civitas (Si' vi tahs), Latin for community, is all about bringing a community-driven mindset to the practice of real estate. After all, it's all about our commitment to you, our neighbors who make up our local communities.

This year, we also bring a new specialty to the table. After seeing a client go through a year of untangling messes, a ton of paperwork, lawyers and court, and still not seeing an outcome for another 4-6 months on the sale of his mother's home, I have rededicated myself to helping clients navigate trust and probate sales. Though I have done several in the past, it was time to procure my trust and probate certification to guide my clients with laser focus. Trust and probate sales can be very difficult. Having an agent who understands the ins and outs fully is priceless. On pages 8 and 9, Nicole Vettraino of Vettraino Law, specializing in estate planning, probate and trust law, lays out the different ways to hold title and lists the positives and the negatives of each. There are many ways to hold title, but which one keeps you out of probate? Read Nicole's article to find out.

In keeping with this issue's theme of new beginnings, Dana Life is proud to introduce our new segment, Local Legends. Each issue will feature long-time Dana Point residents whose ideas, energy, creativity, talents, skills and efforts have greatly and positively impacted the quality of life and culture of our wonderful city of Dana Point. Dana Life is honored to feature in this first segment the owner of Danman's Music, Local Legend Dan Lefler.

So, what about new beginnings for you? What do you have planned this year? I know most of us have already planned some of our year based on our New Year's resolutions. For a fresh look at resolutions, change and new beginnings, read clinical social worker, author, family caregiving expert and media commentator Stephanie Erickson's perspective on pages 12 and 13.

As you embrace a new year and new beginnings, we at Civitas Realty wish you a happy, healthy and successful 2023.

LEILANI
SERRAO-BAKER

Leilani Serrao-Baker

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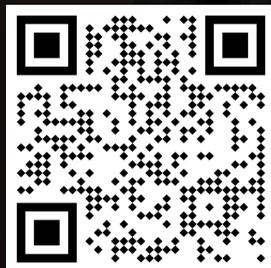
In all of Orange
County

OrangeCoast
THE MAGAZINE OF ORANGE COUNTY

Orange Coast has commissioned Professional Research Services (PRS) to conduct a survey of all Orange County. Real estate agents who were chosen as "All-Stars" had an annual sales volume in the top 1% of all agents in the county. Inclusion in the Orange Coast Real Estate All-Stars is based solely upon merit; there is no commercial relationship to the listings and listings cannot be purchased.

See what your neighbors are saying about Leilani and Civitas Realty here:

Scan with
your phone camera



**LEILANI
SERRAO-BAKER**

CIVITAS
REALTY

2022 Real Estate
All-Stars

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CivitasRealtyCa.com

Dana Point Housing Stats

How much are homes in Dana Point, CA selling for?

Median Sold Price

\$1,501,312

\$841/sqft

Based on all homes sold in the last 12 months.



Difference Since November 2021

+\$200,312 (+15.4%) ↑

Homes in Dana Point have sold for 15.4% more than they did a year ago.

How many homes are available in Dana Point, CA?

Number of Homes For Sale

OCT 2022

109

NOV 2022

112

%

+2.8% ↑

Number of Homes Sold

OCT 2022

24

NOV 2022

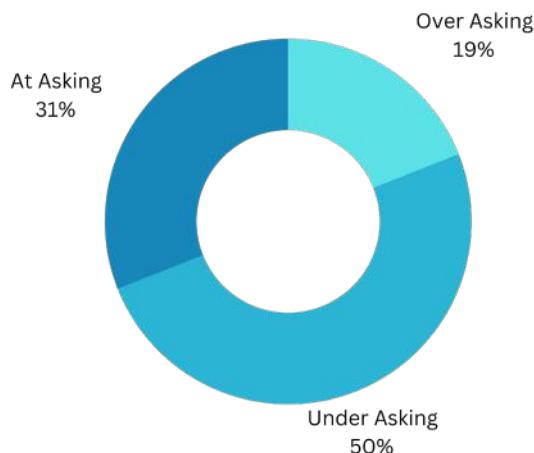
16

%

-33.3% ↓

Asking Price vs. Sold Price

If you're buying a home in Dana Point, now may be the time to purchase. 50% of homes here sold below asking price last month.



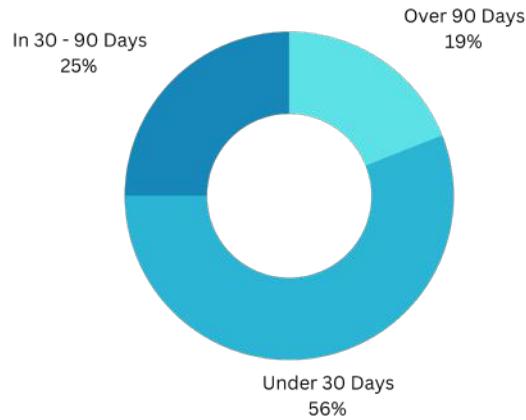
Average Sale Time

NOV 2021 NOV 2022 %

18 Days **36 Days** **+100% ↑**

Breakdown of days on market

Average days on market for a Dana Point home has doubled in the last year.



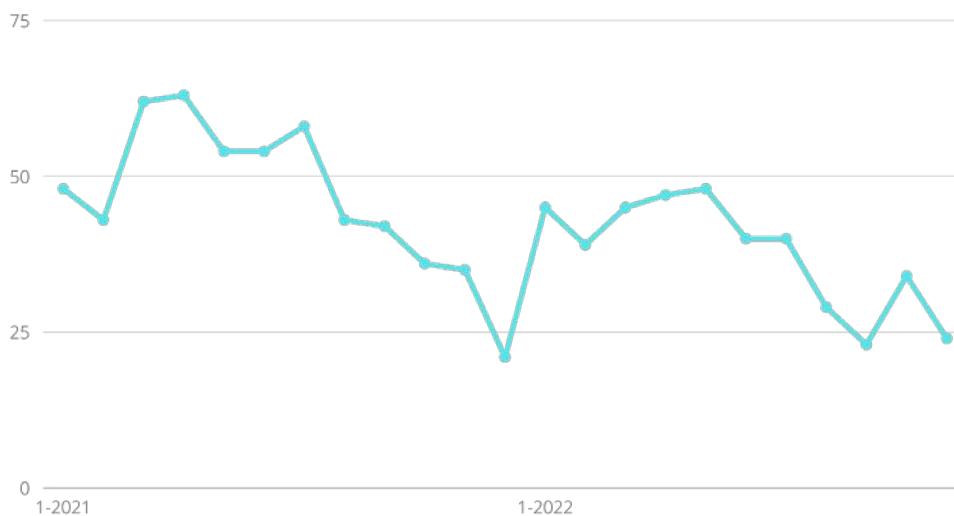
The average sale price per square foot



Homes with price drops



New Listings



JUST SOLD - Off Market

33152 Santiago Dr., Dana Point, CA 92629

Sold for **\$1,500,000**

3 bed | 2 Bath | Approx. 1,382 SQFT | Lot 7,192 SQFT



Our client wanted to sell her home in Los Angeles and buy a single-level detached home, specifically in the Dana Point neighborhood of Sea Canyon. After consulting with us, she put her trust in Baker Real Estate Group to sell her Los Angeles home and find her that dream home. At the time, no home on the market fit her wants and needs, but with our determination, perseverance, hard work and skillful coordination of several moving parts, we found her the perfect home in Sea Canyon, sold her home in Marina Del Rey and closed both on the same day. We are thrilled that we played a part in making our client's dream come true. If you are thinking of buying or selling and would like to learn more about how we can get the same results for you, please reach out to us today. We are happy to sit down with you and show you our proven process.



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Featured Listing

If you would like to see your home featured here, contact Leilani.

TESTIMONIALS

“ The decision to move from Venice to Dana Point was easy, to buy and sell with a contingency not so easy. Having said that, using Leilani Serrao-Baker as my realtor was my best decision. To complicate matters, the transaction involved a 1031 Exchange and having to give a 2 month notice to tenants. Leilani took charge and navigated each obstacle with great professional knowledge and confidence. Leilani is not only a person with integrity, but her attention to detail and solving problems made the experience less stressful. She is 150% dedicated to her clients to make sure their dream home becomes a reality. Leilani is not the typical pushy agent, but an agent not only with integrity but also with kindness and honesty.

-Elsa Zamparelli

”



“ Leilani is a gem. She knows the real estate market, the trends, and the process, which can be quite complicated once escrow begins. Not only is she knowledgeable, but she is professional, kind, compassionate, and funny - taking very stressful situations and finding the silver lining and positive aspects. She put our needs before her own and would tell us when a property was not right for us and seek out the ones that fit our priorities. She takes her job seriously and we could tell that finding a dream home for our family meant as much to her as it did to us!!! You cannot go wrong with Leilani by your side.

-Stephanie Erickson

”

On Point

DOING THE DEED

(The Importance of a Good Title)



Do you remember when you bought your house? I realize it's probably a blur because it is one of the most stressful times in your life. During escrow, you were presented with a document, known as the vesting worksheet. This is the document that instructs escrow how you would like the title of your property to be held. It looked a bit like a multiple-choice, pop quiz question that you never studied for. You knew it was important and that there were consequences for answering wrong. Escrow said they needed it DocuSigned by the end of the day. During this quiz, you thought you would call your parents to see if they knew the

answer. They said they didn't remember what they chose in 1991. Then you called your Realtor who apologized that they were unable to give legal advice on this topic. Escrow said the same thing. This is when you thought, "Eh, I'll just pick one and deal with it after we move in."

Now, flash forward to today and a new pop quiz: Which answer did you pick?! In my experience, people do not remember what they picked and perhaps don't even remember what the choices were. The following are the choices and the meanings and consequences for each:

Single Ownership:

1. Married [man/woman] as [his/her] separate property—You are married but you own this property separately. Separate property in California is defined as anything that you acquired before marriage or from a gift or inheritance.
2. Domestic Partner as his/her separate property—Same as above, but for domestic partnership
3. Unmarried [man/woman]—You have been married previously and your marriage ended in divorce.
4. Widow—Your spouse predeceased you.
5. Single [man/woman]—You have no previous marriages

Side note: All of the above types of vesting will result in a probate or court proceeding upon your death.

Co-Ownership:

1. Joint Tenancy—Any number of people, or married individuals, related or unrelated to each other, can hold title in this manner. The important thing to note about this type of ownership is that the parties own the property as a whole unit. For example, you and I both own 100%. If I die, you, the survivor, own the entire property interest without a probate process. How could that be a bad thing? For example, you and I are friends and we own a property in joint tenancy. You pass away and the property passes to me. What about your family? Did you expect that they would get your share upon your death? Too late. It is now LEGALLY mine. This is called unintentional disinheritance!
2. Tenants in common—Any number of people can own this property with you. Unlike joint tenancy, there can be unequal ownership interests. Your interest is transferrable to others such as through a will or trust. Your interest will be subject to probate upon your death. Normally this is used by single or unmarried individuals or entities.
3. Community Property with Rights of Survivorship—This type of ownership can only be held between parties who are married to each other. This is similar to owning a property in joint tenancy. The interest of a deceased spouse goes automatically to the surviving spouse without the need for probate. Advantage: there is a step up in basis to establish

the value of the deceased spouse's interest for capital gains purposes. I will explain this when we meet! How can any of that be bad? For example, both spouses could die at the same time. Then we have a probate (or two). The other example would be similar to the example above for joint tenancy. Husband could die first, leaving his share to wife, who then gets remarried and her new husband inherits the property at wife's death. Yes, that may be a long shot, but it COULD happen! See unintentional disinheritance, above.

Alright, so what IS the best way to hold title? In my opinion, the best way to hold title to your residential property is in your living trust. No matter how many people own the property, married or unmarried, there is a way to use a trust or multiple trusts to ensure that your property passes (without probate) to the people you intended it to. The most important thing about having a trust is titling your assets properly. Your property should be properly titled in the name of your trust. If you have a trust and your home is not properly titled, your beneficiaries or heirs could still have to appear in court for some type of probate proceeding.

Let's go back to the pop quiz above: HOW IS YOUR PROPERTY TITLED? If you still don't know the answer to this question, you are in luck. We have access to title reports and you can use this opportunity to e-mail Leilani at leilani@civitasrealtyca.com or myself at nicole@vettrainolaw.com. Please include your address and we will respond quickly and at no cost to you, with the answer to today's POP QUIZ!

Please remember that this article was written for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be personalized legal advice since everyone's situation is different. Please make an appointment with me or another attorney in order to get specific legal advice based on your situation.

Would you like to be a featured business for free?

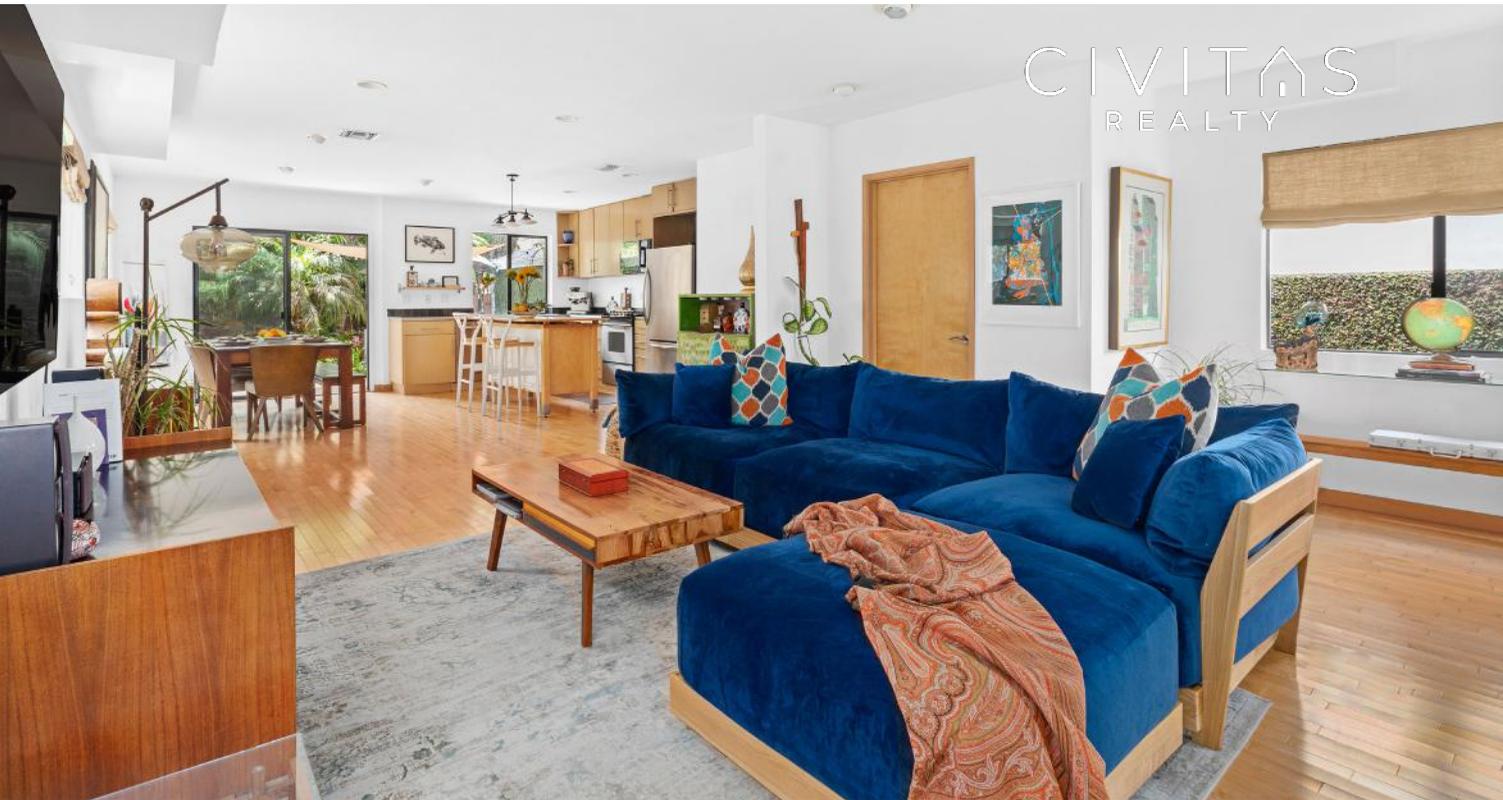
Contact us to learn how: 
support@MaginTouch.com

JUST SOLD

3211 Thatcher Ave, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292

Sold for **\$1,860,000**

3 Bed | 2.5 Bath | Approx. 1,880 SQFT | Lot 2,448 SQFT



WELCOME TO YOUR PRIVATE OASIS IN THE HEART OF SILICON BEACH! This bright and airy 3bed/3bath two story open floor plan home, with an abundance of natural light and wonderful ocean breezes, is located in the highly desirable Oxford Triangle neighborhood of Marina Del Rey. As you enter the home you are greeted by dramatic vaulted ceilings which accentuate the feeling of openness and space. The main floor includes a living room, chef's kitchen with stainless appliances and countertops, an open breakfast bar and dining area that are all perfect for entertaining. The dining area leads into a lovely backyard which features a waterfall and koi pond, perfect for those who enjoy indoor-outdoor living.



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The primary bedroom is located on the second floor and includes a full ensuite bathroom, with a spa hot tub, and a spacious walk-in closet. There are also two additional bedrooms upstairs, which can be well-suited for a live/work lifestyle, a second full bathroom, and a balcony. In addition, this home includes a gated driveway, a garage with direct access, and ample street parking. Close to everything that Silicon Beach has to offer, including the Marina Yacht Harbor, Abbott Kinney, Venice Beach, restaurants, cafes, shops, parks and pedestrian/biking trails, enjoy California coastal living at its finest!



A New Beginning

I was born and raised in Southern Cali and always thought of myself as a Cali girl. Never in my life did I think I would leave California, let alone the United States. But I did. I moved to Montreal, Canada. I got married, had two children, launched a business and created a beautiful life in Montreal. At first it felt so strange to live in another country, away from my family, immersed in another language and dropped into some very big weather changes. There were moments, many moments, in which I was filled with fear and doubt.

In June 2022 I returned to California, my family in tow. The amount of planning it took was insane. Jobs. School. Immigration (for my Canadian husband). Selling a home. Buying a home...and all of the little steps in between.

But when change and discomfort rears its head humans have an innate ability to dig deep and rise up. We are able to find beauty, see the positives of a situation and exhibit courage and strength to not only pull through but to shine. So here we are, happy, warmer and fortunate to see the ocean every day!

All of these changes coupled with the new year approaching have led to my reflection on what it means to change. To start anew. To step out of what we know and to take small and big risks in order to evolve and build. Have all of these recent and massive changes I lived equate to a fresh start? A clean slate? A new beginning?

These expressions "new beginnings", "clean slate" or "fresh start" generally refers to situations in which we move forward with a change and completely let go of the past. We usually use that expression after something went wrong or needed a complete overhaul. This seems to be who we have become. If all else fails, shut down and reboot.





As we enter 2023 many will take a minute to reflect on the past year and make resolutions to change something. To let go of something in the past, a relationship, a behavior, a thought pattern, a habit, and replace it with something different. I urge you to pause before doing this.

We are not compartmentalized beings. Every piece of you is you. Every experience you have is a part of you. Every relationship you have influences who you are. Humans are sponges and we absorb all that happens around us and to us, in order to provide for us. Are you trying to cut ties with a part of yourself and ignore all of the lessons and gifts your past has provided?

I suggest you avoid the urge to make statements about giving up this or that, or changing some behavior or habit, or cutting off a relationship. Instead, take the moment to reflect and highlight all of the life altering moments you have had, good and bad, and take inventory on how this has shaped you. Then take those gifts of insight with you into the new year. Don't dispose of them along with your empty champagne bottles.

There was a time when I tried to forget the past and move forward as if it didn't exist. Like most of us, I have been through some major events that have swayed the course of my life, including this most recent move from Montreal to Orange County. But why do my challenging moments get the boot but my good ones, like my life in Montreal, get to stay?

What I know is that all of it, even the most horrific moments, have helped me gain capacities to endure, survive and evolve as a person. Once I embraced those challenging experiences and expressed gratitude for the lessons they provided for me, my personal happiness growth chart, despite its unpredictable and unavoidable dips, kept rising. Trying to discard those times impeded my growth.

There are no real fresh starts and clean slates. Life is like the game Upwords. You have a complete word and you just build on one letter or two and it's a brand-new word with a brand-new meaning. Keep all of what you have with you and build on it. Don't destroy the foundation. Take this forward with you into 2023 as part of who you are and encourage yourself to adapt, adjust, and calibrate, not dispose. Life is fluid and so are we.

www.stepherickson.com

Local Legends

By David Allen Baker

Dan Lefler

Dan Lefler is a music man. For over 35 years, Dan has been a fixture on the Dana Point music scene as a performer, recording artist, music teacher and music school owner. As a performer, Dan held long-term solo gigs at favorite local spots such as the Villa, Wind and Sea, Harpoon Henry's, Hennessey's and Renaissance, all the while teaching 40+ music students each week. In the early days, Dan taught students out of his home, but on a handshake deal in 1999 leased and opened his retail store and music school on Del Prado, where he continues in operation today. Over the last almost 24 years, 10,000 music students have taken lessons at Danman's, and the children of some of his early students now study music there.

Dan's career stats are truly legendary! He has performed over 5,000 shows and gigs, released 10 CDs, held a 24-year-long residency performing at Dana Point Wine Bar-Renaissance-Stillwater, taught over 40,000 private music lessons, created Danman's Music Library, consisting of over 7,000 music lessons online, hosted over 150 student concerts at Stillwater, and provided teaching jobs to over 300 local musicians and music teachers.

Today, Danman's Music School has 275 music students with more than 20 teachers giving weekly lessons. In addition, Danman's is a full-service retail music and instrument repair store, selling, renting and repairing a wide variety of instruments.

With all of his amazing accomplishments over a long and continuing career, Dan says his most important legacy is his 5 grandkids, whom he adores. We at Dana Life, and no doubt thousands upon thousands of Dana Point residents recognize how fortunate we are to have Dan Lefler as a Local Legend.

If you know a local legend who should be featured, email David at david@civitasrealtyca.com



"Dana Point has been nothing but good fortune for me. I am able to teach kids to play music by the hundreds. I am able to captain my sailboat in this ultimate harbor. I am able to realize my life's dreams. I am so grateful to live and work here. A lucky man I am." -Dan Lefler

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2. Equity building every month
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4. Fixed monthly payments
5. No cost rate buy down programs
6. Refi FREE when rates drop

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JJ Mazzo - Senior Vice President NMLS186548

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