

# DANA LIFE

Issue #8 | March 2022 | Dana Point, CA

## Hello SPRING

- New Home Listings
- Featured Local Businesses
- Home Loans
- Dana Point Real Estate Stats



Digital Version

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your phone camera



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Spring is here! What do you think of when you think of Spring and what does it mean to you? I think of the joy and opportunity in longer days, flowers blooming and time for fresh starts. Spring means growth, taking a long hard look at what needs attention in my world and the beginning of new projects.

This issue is about growth, change and new beginnings. Maybe it's time to improve your home by giving it a new life with plants, a beautiful new landscape or by creating an outdoor sanctuary or "vacation destination" in your own backyard. Elizabeth Leland from Private Gardens can help you do just that. Or maybe it is finally time to consult with an attorney and arrange for the protection of your estate. Nicole Vettrano of Vettrano Law, specializing in estate planning, probate and trust law, can help you strategize and plan for your family's future.

I hope you enjoy this issue as you dream of a new front or back yard, or become inspired to pick up the phone and finally take care of that will and trust you have been putting off.

Happy Spring! Go out there and live your best Dana Life!

**LEILANI**  
SERRAO-BAKER

*Leilani Serrao-Baker*



# LEILANI SERRAO-BAKER

PERFORMANCE  
REVIEW

**21.5**

Average days on market

**102.3%**

Average list to sales price

**100%**

OF APPRAISALS AT  
OR ABOVE LIST PRICE

**100%**

SOLD LISTINGS



See what your  
neighbors are saying  
about Leilani and  
the Baker Real  
Estate Group here:

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**949.444.9175**

DRE 01908226

Leilani@leilanibakerhomes.com

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 **Douglas Elliman**  
REAL ESTATE

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# Homeownership The Secure Choice to Building Wealth

Historically, one of the most efficient and effective ways to build wealth over time is by purchasing a home.

The Mazzo Group can help you create that wealth by providing you with the perfect loan program & payment.

We also offer guarantees to the seller to get your offer accepted, so you can put the key to your new home in the door.

If you're still waiting, now is the time to build your financial future. Call us today for a home purchase evaluation.



 JJ Mazzo - Senior Vice President NMLS186548

CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC. NMLS3029, 31351 Rancho Viejo Rd., Suite 201, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 NMLS1790854. CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC guarantees that we will close your loan based on the escrow date reflected on the purchase contract dated or we will pay the seller/buyer at a rate of \$500 per diem and ensure a deposit protection up to the amount of \$100,000. Offer can only be redeemed by closing a loan with the JJ Mazzo Group of CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC. Guarantee is void where prohibited. Guarantee terms apply to the loan set forth on the purchase contract and is good for a one-time payment only. If the loan is not closed, payment will be made to the seller within 15 days of the contract expiration date/buyer in the form of a lender credit. In order to qualify for this guarantee, all of the following conditions must be met: • All conditions listed in your purchase contract must be met. • The loan must close by the expiration date listed on the purchase contract, or the borrower must qualify for an extension and the loan must close by the extended expiration date. • This guarantee is not valid if borrower or seller chooses not to close this loan or if the delay is caused in whole or in part by reasons beyond CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC's control. Additional Terms and Conditions: This guarantee is not an offer or an inducement by CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC to enter into an agreement to make a loan, nor a guarantee or lock of a specific interest rate or number of discount points. An offer to make a loan is neither binding nor enforceable unless it is in writing and signed by both the borrower and CrossCountry Mortgage or unless an oral agreement is offered and accepted no greater than ten (10) days before closing. Guarantee is contingent upon: 1) the borrower(s) satisfying all underwriting guidelines and loan preapproval conditions, providing all required pre-closing and closing documentation and any applicable upfront fees within required timeframes; 2) the property appraising at or above the sales price, and 3) CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC's mortgage have a first place lien position. Equal Housing Opportunity. All loans subject to underwriting approval. Certain restrictions apply. Call for details. CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC. NMLS3029 ([www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org](http://www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org)). Licensed by the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act.

## Five Reasons to Purchase a Home in 2022

- Equity building every month
- Hedge against inflation
- Long-term appreciation
- Fixed monthly payments
- Rates remain historically low



877.237.9694  
[support@mazzogroup.com](mailto:support@mazzogroup.com)



# Featured Listing

34415 Calle Carmelita, Dana Point, CA 92624

Sold for **\$1,300,000**

3 bd | 2.5 ba | 1,732 sqft



This is the opportunity you have been waiting for! Turnkey, quintessential beach house in the heart of Capistrano Beach, there is nothing to do but move in and enjoy. Overlooking Sunset Park and ideally situated a few short blocks from beaches, Dana Point Harbor shopping, restaurants, Palisades Elementary School, Pines Park and more, lifestyle reigns supreme in this South Orange County enclave nestled between Lantern Village/Dana Point Harbor, San Clemente, and San Juan Capistrano. Your slice of paradise begins with an oversized driveway, charming front yard shaded by mature trees, and nautical curb appeal. Enter through the double door to be greeted by new, modern finishes throughout. Light and bright wide plank flooring featured throughout the first and second levels marry form and function, while thoughtful accents elevate the laid back, beachy neighborhood backdrop.



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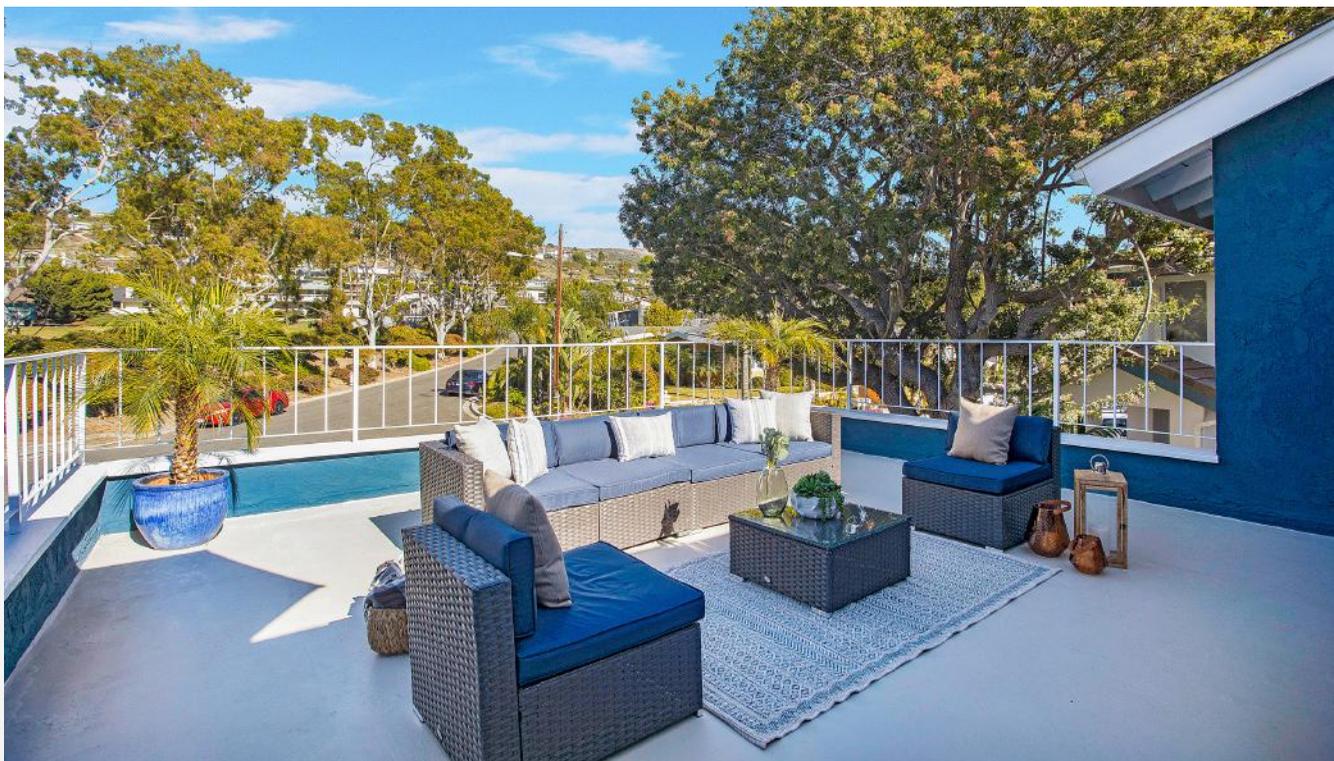


## Featured Listing

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



Serving as the heart of the home, this contemporary kitchen will delight the chef and entertainer in your life. Waterfall white quartz island with bar seating, farmhouse sink, custom cabinetry, new stainless-steel appliances, and designer backsplash lend themselves to thoughtful is the perfect respite for R & R. Direct garage access, spacious backyard with peek-a-boo view, as well as an updated powder room, complete the main level. Continuing on to the second level, you will find a spacious master suite outfitted with beautifully updated bathroom and walk in closet. Two additional bedrooms, along with second fully updated bathroom afford a place and a space for everyone – kids, home office, guests or whatever works for YOU. Not to be overlooked is the 436 sq ft deck overlooking Sunset Park.



# Getting to know...

## Elizabeth Leland of Private Gardens

I first meet Liz when we started working together on a project to improve the entry of our community, Sea Canyon, here in Dana Point. It didn't take long to see that she is very passionate about her work in landscape design and it became clear immediately that she is a great collaborator and is extremely good at what she does! It was evident I couldn't keep her a secret and needed to share with others her amazing talent. Read along and learn all about Liz and see what makes her different than most.

### **What is your background and where did you grow up?**

I was born and raised in Southern California and I grew up in North Hollywood and Studio City. I lived there until I moved to northern California after high school, then I went to Santa Rosa Junior College, where I discovered Landscape Design. I always had an affinity for home and vegetable gardens and open spaces. I later transferred to Utah State University to study Landscape Architecture. I worked for interior design and landscape architecture offices while I was in college during the summers.

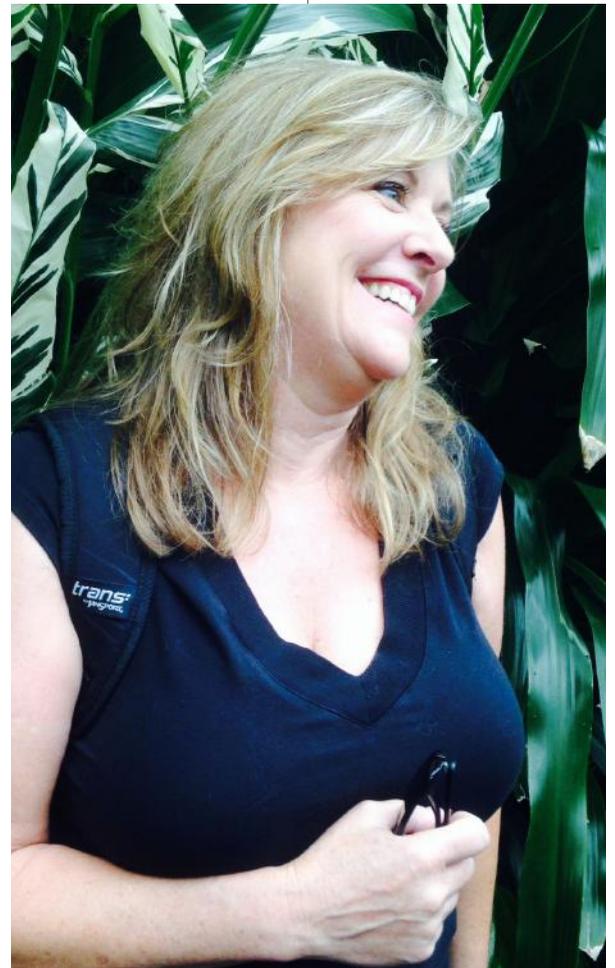
### **How did you get started in this business?**

After graduation, I worked a couple of years at offices specializing in designing new housing tracts for developers in Southern California. An opportunity came my way to work with Fred Lang, ASLA, and Ann Christoph, ASLA, at their studio in Laguna Beach. They specialized in public university projects and large residential estate design. The residential work piqued my interest and in 1993, I started my own business, Private Gardens, focusing mainly on residential design, both for estate and small gardens. In the early years of Private Gardens, I was asked to participate in the Pasadena Showcase House of Design. It was a big commute, but the design work was amazing, and the teams of collaborators were all very talented. I met some great interior designers and architects. Work picked up in our area, Dana Point and Laguna Beach, and I was no longer able to manage projects that far from home.

### **What is your favorite part about landscape design?**

I love enhancing people's environments and making their home life better. I have focused on residential all these years, which I really love, and it allows me the ability to create new fresh designs for each person. I love the collaboration process; it always works best when everyone brings something to the table. I feel fortunate to get to work in so many beautiful neighborhoods. I can point to a long list of great experiences from Newport Beach down to San Clemente. There is so much diversity in architectural styles and clientele, coastal to equestrian.

In my career, I've watched garden styles evolve from those detail-oriented gardens of Pasadena to a post-9/11 'create a vacation destination' in my backyard, to the current day awareness of water usage and streamlined simplicity.





I primarily work with homeowners, but I also work with developers/builders. I look at every client as a personal relationship and partnership. It's a collaboration and I'm there to help them bring their vision to life. It works best when we share fresh ideas. I never want to work from a strict agenda. I also love a client that shares my love of plants.

### **Do you specialize in a specific style?**

I hope not. I like to feel I have adapted and evolved through the years. I was lucky to provide designs for many different clients with many different tastes, lifestyles and architectural styles. Over the years, I've worked on English cottage, Tudor, Mediterranean, tropical, classic mid-century modern, ranch, rustic, eclectic, European traditional and East Coast traditional.

But if you were to push me, I do tend to lean towards a more contemporary landscape design style, combining different materials with clean lines. I like to focus on how the spaces will be used, which will be the key to the success of how the spaces are designed.

### **What is the most memorable client or design you have ever had?**

Projects that stand out are the designs where I worked closely with my client, and sometimes architect, and everything came together beautifully. Those are definitely the most memorable projects. It's great to be part of an experience when everything fits; the right plants in the right place, based on soil, light conditions, water requirements and the client's goals.

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to have some great experiences. I learned so much from working with legendary landscape architect Fred Lang, a true plantsman. When he arrived in Laguna in the 1930s, he truly set the vibe for both Laguna Beach and Dana Point in terms of celebrating the landscape and his nuances in plant combinations, plants that live well together and provide beauty throughout the seasons. Laguna Beach's Bluff Park and Sculpture Gardens, Dana Point Harbor and Emerald Bay were Fred's design work. I worked with Fred on many memorable projects.

### **Why did you choose Dana Point to call home and what do you love about Dana Point?**

I met my soon-to-be husband while working at an office in Irvine. He would later get a job in San Clemente and I took the position with Fred Lang in Laguna Beach. Dana Point seemed like a great place for us to start our lives together. We lived in the condos at Strands and had access to an amazing beach with our dog. My husband surfed a lot back then.

When we first moved here in 1988, Dana was a sleepy surf town. Finding restaurants or looking for a fun night on the town required a drive into Laguna or Newport. Now, those restaurants and nights out have come to our community.

Our little beach town has grown in so many ways: new roads connecting neighborhoods, a new downtown and soon to be new Dana Point Harbor. My husband doesn't surf much these days, but has discovered the local hiking and mountain biking trails enjoying the big views out to Catalina or back toward Saddleback Mountain. He and I often take our dog down to Salt Creek and walk through the gardens at The Ritz Carlton. Now that more and more people are allowing dogs at restaurants, we've found our favorite little places to bring our dog so we can have coffee and freshly baked goods, or a lovely dinner out.

### **How can people best find you if they are interested in your services?**

Web site [www.private-gardens.com](http://www.private-gardens.com)  
Houzz.com [www.houzz.com/pro/leland/private-gardens](http://www.houzz.com/pro/leland/private-gardens)  
Email [elizabeth@private-gardens.com](mailto:elizabeth@private-gardens.com)  
Phone 949-338-6311

Would you like to be a featured business for free?

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# Just Listed

26431 Via California, Dana Point, CA 92624

**\$899,999**

5,663 sqft (Lot)



Amazing ocean view opportunity in the coveted Lantern Village of Dana Point primed and ready to build your dream home. The grading plan is approved and ready to start. All you need is your contractor! The house plans are also approved pending final grading completion approval. Located near fantastic beaches, schools, restaurants, and Dana Point Harbor, this is a special parcel of land. In today's home buying feeding frenzy, why not skip the crowds and build your own? Don't miss out on this extremely rare and unique lot in the heart of Dana Point. Lantern Village and Dana Point Harbor renovations offer incredible future upside potential in one of the most desirable locations in South Orange County. Whether you are an investor or building for yourself, do not leave this stone unturned.



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# TESTIMONIALS



Hands down, the most amazing, energetic and positive agent! Leilani is very easy to work with and as a team we were able to get the max for my listing. After attempting a sale with 2 different agents and being unsuccessful, I wasn't sure what to expect. I was expecting \$1,375,000 and after walking me through the process of preparing my home to look its best and her marketing strategies, she got me \$1,500,000. Thank you, Leilani and I'm sure we will work together again.

**Gilbert Kharrat, Seller of  
32931 Buccaneer Street, Dana Point, CA**



Look no longer! Leilani has an extreme ability to study the market and analyze the exact sweet spot your house should sell for. She is able to tell you how to enhance your property so it can sell at the highest price. Other Realtors told us we might be able to recoup our investment and were ready to just stick a for sale sign on the front lawn. Leilani came along and gave us tips and recommendations to enhance our property. As soon as the week was over, she listed our property as "coming soon". In 5 days, we had multiple offers, including an all-cash offer for a gain of \$600,000 profit.

**Diane Marcus, Seller of  
31381 Paseo Riobo, San Juan Capistrano, CA**



Leilani Serrao-Baker is a quintessentially professional real estate agent. We interviewed several agents to find just the right person to represent us in selling our Dana Point home of thirty years. Leilani listened to our expectations and concerns and immediately made us comfortable with her professional approach. She is vibrant, energetic, personable, and very knowledgeable. Upon selecting her as our agent, Leilani took care of the logistics of selling our home. She immediately arranged the services required to prepare our house for market, including the floor contractor, roofer, landscaper, carpenter, painter, and stagers. Her photographer took beautiful exterior and interior photographs for the real estate advertisements that highlighted our home's best features. Although our escrow was short, it was stress free due to her ability to handle any issue that arose. Leilani was always available by phone, text or email and she regularly checked in to guide and comfort us during the sale. We have been through several real estate transactions and Leilani is by far the very best agent we have ever worked with! We are grateful that Leilani Serrao-Baker represented us in the sale of our beloved Dana Point home and without reservation, highly recommend her!

**Debra Miyamoto, Seller of  
32821 Leah Dr, Dana Point, CA**



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## On Point with

Nicole A. Vettraino, Attorney at Law,  
California Bar Certified Specialist in  
Estate Planning, Trust, and Probate Law

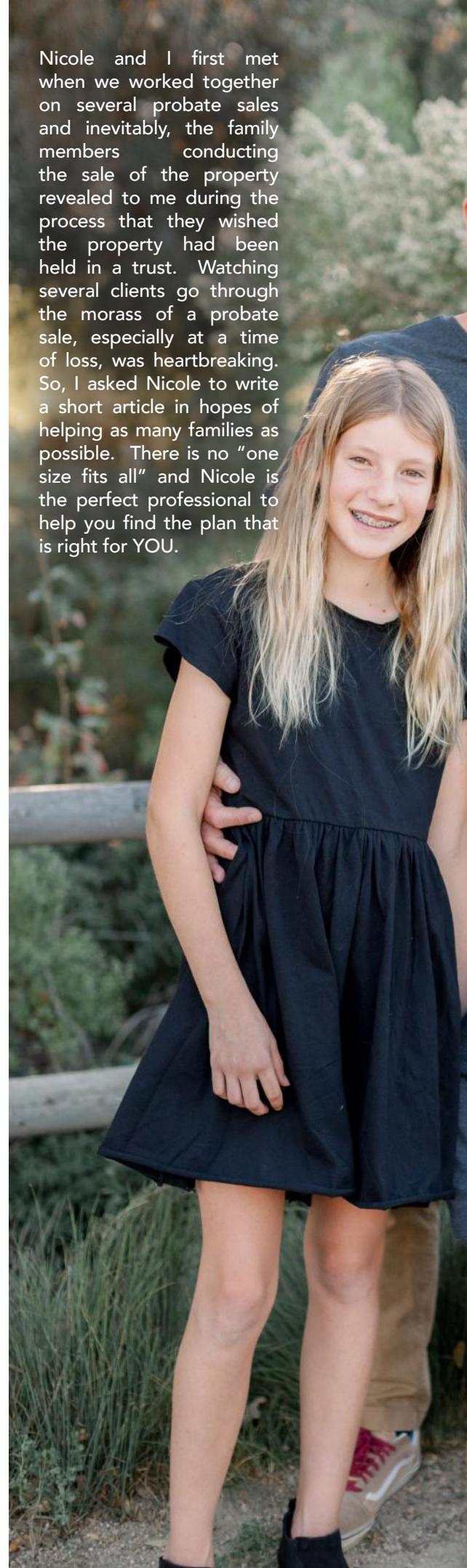
If you are reading this, I can guess a few things about you: You live in Dana Point. There's a 64% chance that you own your own home. Your home is worth over a million dollars because the median home price in Dana Point is \$1.6 million today. You don't have your home in a Living Trust...YET, but you know you need one. Whether my guesses are right or wrong, you're welcome to continue reading!

Assuming the above facts and numbers are correct, your estate is at risk of going through a costly probate process that could take years to complete. Even worse would be a conservatorship process upon your incapacity. A probate of a \$1,000,000 home would cost over \$40,000 in attorney and executor fees, even if there is a loan on your house. So why not avoid all of that by creating a trust?

There are a few reasons why people don't have an estate plan, which consists of a living trust, a will, powers of attorney, and health care directives. Most of the time people avoid it because they don't want to face the thought of dying. I have been doing this a long time and I can tell you that most of the tears shed in my office are by grieving family members of a person without a plan. Clients who visit me to plan for their death or incapacity normally leave smiling while they celebrate a huge milestone in their lives.

Some people think about doing it after tax season, after retirement, after their re-finance is finished, after the kids move out, after their trip, after – well, you get it. It's easy to procrastinate on something that has no defined deadline. One big caveat to this is that there is a deadline, but we don't know when that is. That makes NOW a good time to plan. Other people want to create a trust, but they think it will be an overwhelming amount of work or that it will make their lives more complicated. It's easier than you think! My promise to potential clients is that I will make this process as easy as possible for you. I am a working parent of three kids, so I understand busy. I will not intimidate you with legal gobbledygoo. My job is to learn and understand the goop and then interpret the relevant parts to my clients. My favorite part of estate planning is educating people. The more people I educate, the less business the Court gets. That is a good thing.

Nicole and I first met when we worked together on several probate sales and inevitably, the family members conducting the sale of the property revealed to me during the process that they wished the property had been held in a trust. Watching several clients go through the morass of a probate sale, especially at a time of loss, was heartbreaking. So, I asked Nicole to write a short article in hopes of helping as many families as possible. There is no "one size fits all" and Nicole is the perfect professional to help you find the plan that is right for YOU.





A trust not only prevents the complicated court process, but it will allow you to design the way your beneficiaries receive their inheritance. If you are like many people, you dread the thought of your twenty-something child inheriting millions of dollars. You have the ability to design your plan to spread out their inheritance over a long period of time, or to have it managed by a trusted individual. You can put provisions in place to pay for the education of children and grandchildren. What about leaving money for a special needs child? Or even for a pet? If you own a business, your trust should have provisions for the disposition and/or continuation of that business. If you have minor children, it is imperative that you name guardians and back up guardians in case you and your spouse have the same expiration date. You also know there are rules regarding transfers of ownership of your home. Prop 19 took away our parent-child and grandparent-grandchild property tax exclusion from reassessment, which could have a huge effect on how you will transfer your wealth.

Estate taxes are another subject. This year we are each "allowed" to die with \$11.7 million before being taxed. Even if we fall short of that today, that number is extremely likely to be significantly lower than that upon our deaths. Yes, there's a plan to avoid those taxes too. You just need to make it. Even if you fall \$12 million short of the current estate tax exemption, you need to plan for incapacity with powers of attorney and health care directives.

"A legacy is planting seeds in a garden you'll never get to see," so why not make sure your garden has a chance of being exactly how you want it to be? Without a plan, all you can do is hope it works out in the end, which usually isn't the case. I am a California Bar Certified Specialist in Estate Planning, Trust, and Probate Law. With almost 20 years of experience in this area of law, I am sure I can help you design the perfect plan. My office is in Mission Viejo next to the Kaleidoscope. Consultations are always free. I hope you will come visit me soon!

**You can reach Nicole and set up that appointment for your fee consultation at 949-412-1547. Nicole's office is located at 27201 Puerta Real, Suite 300, Mission Viejo, CA 92691**

# Dana Point

Data*	Jan 2021	6 Month	3 Month	Jan 2022	% Change
Median Price .....	\$1,398,750	\$1,755,000	\$2,100,000	\$1,900,000	35.8%
Average Price per Square Foot .....	\$841	\$950	\$1,207	\$968	15.1%
Properties Sold .....	32	33	21	15	-53.1%
Properties Pending Sale .....	32	38	32	14	-56.2%
Properties For Sale .....	123	91	91	51	-58.5%
Days on Market (Pending Sale) .....	70	20	28	55	-20.9%
Percent Under Contract .....	26.0%	41.8%	35.2%	27.5%	5.5%
Average Median Price for Last 12 Months	\$1,338,856	\$1,837,917	\$1,780,000	\$1,770,404	32.2%

\*Information obtained from Broker Metrics, The MLS and Foreclosure Radar for all areas in Dana Point Micro Market Report. Statistics are subject to change due to individual real estate company reporting disciplines.

## Current Market Snapshot

**\$1,900,000**

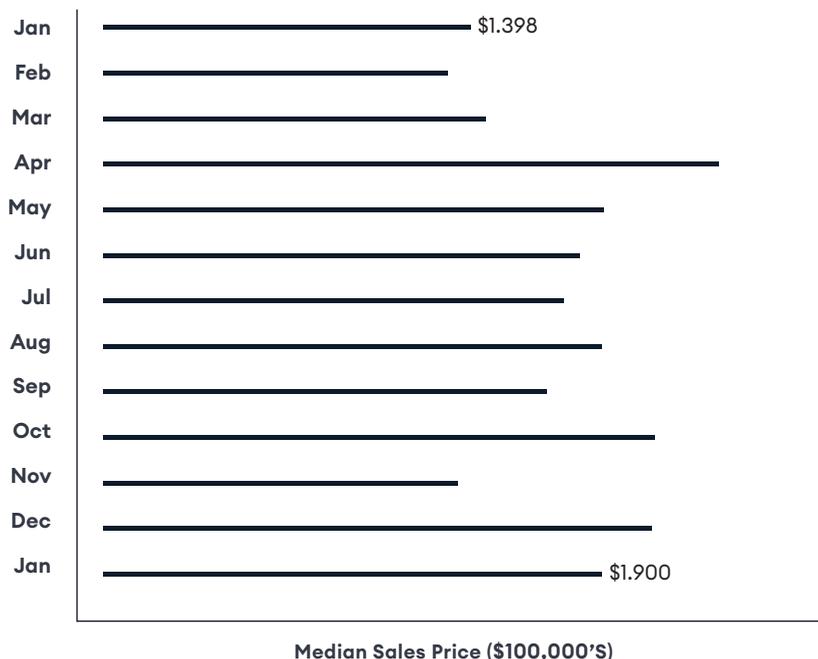
Median sales price.

**\$968**

Average price per square foot.

**51**

Properties for sale.



# Just Listed

26431 Via California, Dana Point, CA 92624

**\$1,100,000**

3 bd | 2.5 ba | 1,879 sqft



Ocean Breeze Bungalow! This endlessly charming 3 bed/3 bath home is less than a mile from the ocean in the desirable Capistrano Beach area of Dana Point! The street-to-street lot offers tons of potential to build up or out and make it your own. Welcome home to your 2-car garage, tranquil front garden and covered entry. Inside, the living area is filled with appeal and character including open-beam ceilings and a cozy fireplace. The thoughtful layout flows into a bright dining area and all-white kitchen with breakfast bar. Dedicated laundry room has room for full-size appliances plus storage. Enjoy ultimate privacy and convenience with a full bath next to each downstairs bedroom, one en-suite, plus vaulted ceilings and sliding glass doors offering light and access to the yard. Grill, entertain and dine al fresco on two wood decks, and relax in the enchanting garden surrounded by lush landscaping and privacy fencing! The whole upper level is your primary suite retreat, complete with cathedral ceilings, walk-in closet, 3/4 en-suite bath, and ocean views from the bedroom and sunny, private balcony. The home also features upgraded wood blinds and laminate flooring. All just a short stroll to the beach, freeway accessible, with great shopping and dining nearby. A truly special property in an amazing location!



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