



**Anthony  
NEWMAN**

Thinking of buying  
or selling a home  
in the near future,  
please call

**ANTHONY  
NEWMAN**

for a personal interview  
and property  
assessment with  
no obligation.

**310-338-1245**

**E-mail:**

**Anthony@neirealty.com**

# NEI's Real Estate Report

**NEIRealty.com**

*Published Monthly By Anthony Newman of NEI Realty*

**MAY 2005**

## **Out In The Open: Outdoor Rooms Are A Must-Have For Most**

by Michele Dawson

Homebuyers aren't just clamoring for the upgraded kitchen and bathroom amenities when they look at and ultimately buy a new house. Climbing up the priority list is the outdoor room.

Indeed, nearly 60 percent of the 1.8 million new homes built last year have a patio, porch or deck, according to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association. In addition, outdoor hearth products were sold in record numbers for the second straight year.

An independent 2003 survey of gas grill owners with household incomes of \$75,000, or more, revealed that half have an outdoor room.

And what makes up an outdoor room? A good barbecue grill, a dining table and chairs, lighting for night, a patio umbrella for shade and a portable heater, chiminea or fireplace.

Outdoor rooms with just the basics can cost as little as \$2,500, the HPBA says. An extreme outdoor room can cost up to \$100,000 or more if homeowners want high-end landscaping, an in-ground pool, and a premium built-in grill housed in an exotic island, then the price tag will rise.

The National Association of Home Builders, in a consumer preferences survey released last year, found that outdoor features are very important for buyers in all price ranges.

Buyers in the \$250,000 to \$500,000 and the \$500,000 to \$1 million ranges both said rear decks, patios, exterior lighting, and a lot with trees were "must haves."

A screened rear porch is preferred by both groups; a fenced yard was strongly preferred. And when it comes to lawn sprinklers, the group in the lower price bracket "strongly preferred" while the upper group considered them a "must have."

Many say outdoor spaces promote family unity.

**CONT'D ON PAGE 2**

## **Avoiding 7 Costly Mistakes of Selling Your Home**

by M. Anthony Carr

There are always appropriate steps to investing in real estate and hopefully, you've garnered many of them right on these pages. However, there are also inappropriate steps sellers can walk down when it comes time to put their house on the market.

**Mistake 1:** Putting the home on the market before it's ready. Most times this happens because the seller gets impatient or is a procrastinator and has pushed himself up against a moving deadline without getting the pre-sale work done. So it comes on the market with the horrible carpet (that gets replaced during the marketing of the home); or they are painting it while it goes on the market. Presentation is everything -- so get the work done before marketing the property.

**Mistake 2:** Over improving the home for the neighborhood. This happens with additions, bump outs, and upgrades that make the home stick out from among its competitors so much that it's an anomaly, instead of a nice addition to the community.

**Mistake 3:** Pricing the home based on what the seller wants to net. This pricing strategy always ends in failure. Sellers can control the "asking" price, but they don't control the "sales" price. The market does. It doesn't matter what the seller wants, the price is determined by the black-and-white, matter-of-fact reality of the market.

**Mistake 4:** Hiring an agent based on non-business factors. Make sure you're hiring a professional with a proven track record. It might be nice to hand over your largest asset to your nephew who just got his license -- but make sure he has a mentor to keep your deal from going south.

**Mistake 5:** Getting emotionally involved in the sale of the home. This is one of the biggest challenges home sellers face when putting their house on the market. Once you decide to sell your house, it's no longer a home, but a commodity. It needs to be prepared as a commodity, marketed as a commodity, and priced as a commodity. It doesn't matter what you "want," only what the market can bear on pricing. People are going to come in to kick the tires, so to speak, and you can't get emotional about how they may or may not appreciate the nuances of your home of seven years.

**Mistake 6:** Trying to cover up problems, or not disclosing them. Most states have a property disclosure/disclaimer form -- use it wisely. Just because you disclaim doesn't mean you cannot be sued later for the leaky basement, or dilapidated heating/air system that's discovered 30 days after settlement.

**CONT'D ON PAGE 2**

## **MAY AT A GLANCE...**



**5 Cinco De Mayo**



**8 Mother's Day**



**21 Armed Forces Day**



**30 Memorial Day**

Thinking of buying  
or selling a home  
in the near future,  
please call

**ANTHONY  
NEWMAN**

for a personal interview  
and property  
assessment with  
no obligation.

**310-338-1245**

**E-mail:**

**Anthony@neirealty.com**

**NEIRealty.com**

#### OUTDOOR ROOMS (CONT'D)

"If well-designed, outdoor living areas can greatly expand the usable square footage of a home," said Anne Olson, owner of Olson Architecture in Niwot, Colorado, in a March 20 Chicago Tribune article.

In the same article, Mary Cook, a Chicago interior decorator who spoke at the International Builders Show, said outdoor rooms are increasingly popular.

"Outdoor grilling is a big trend, even in colder climates. A built-in gas grill can be located just outside the kitchen to allow for year-round grilling."

Meanwhile, the HPBA says the facts don't lie -- consumers are spending money outdoors:

Consumers spent \$3.2 billion on new outdoor furniture last year.

Some \$40 billion was spent on landscaping and garden upgrades.

One-third of the \$200 billion spent on home remodeling last year was for outdoor amenities.

Many new outdoor rooms come with elaborate kitchen components, like cabinets and storage areas, countertops and cooking islands, refrigerators, sinks and running water, electrical outlets and lighting.

Almost 70 percent of gas grill owners cook out throughout the year an average of one to two times a week. Chimineas, portable heaters and firepits help make it comfortable outside in the colder weather.

In the survey of gas grill owners, half of those with outdoor rooms have a stereo system, 10 percent have TVs, 28 percent have swimming pools and 18 percent a hot tub or spa.

Mosquito eliminators are also gaining in popularity -- another sign that outdoor comfort is key.



**Newman's Enterprises, Incorporated**  
6820 La Tijera Blvd. #109  
Los Angeles, California 90045

**NEIRealty.com**

#### SEVEN MISTAKES (CONT'D)

**Mistake 7:** Not getting your ducks lined up before trying to sell. This would involve financing, reading the fine print on your current mortgage to ensure no pre-payment penalties, not listening to the particulars of your local market, etc. If your local market is dictating lower home prices, then lower it early, not later -- it will cost you more. If the local market dictates selling your home first, then buying second, do it in that order, or vice versa.

Avoiding these mistakes is not that difficult. There are plenty of resources (like this publication) and professionals, who are there to help you step over the pitfalls. Do the research early, and listen to that voice in your head (it's probably the whispers of the finance, real estate, insurance person who's warning you of a hole you're about to step into). Sell well.

#### **Mother's Day Brunch in a Cast Iron Skillet: Oysters, Tasso, Bacon and Grits**

1/4 pound bacon, chopped  
1/4 pound tasso, chopped  
1 cup chopped yellow onions  
1/2 cup chopped green bell peppers  
1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic  
1 cup sliced mushrooms  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon cayenne  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh tarragon leaves  
1 pint oysters, drained, 1/2 cup liquor reserved, and cut in 1/2 if large  
4 cups milk  
1 cup regular grits (not instant)  
1/4 cup heavy cream  
1/2 cup grated white cheddar cheese, garnish  
Chopped chives, garnish

In a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat, cook the bacon, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add the tasso and cook until the bacon is brown and the fat is rendered. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Drain off all the fat but 2 tablespoons. Add the onions and bell peppers to the fat in the pan and cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add the mushrooms, salt, cayenne, and herbs, cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the 1/2 cup of the reserved oyster liquor and the milk, and bring to a boil. Slowly add the grits, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the grits have absorbed the liquid and are plump, 20 to 30 minutes. Add the cream, oysters, and reserved bacon and tasso, and stir well. Cook over medium heat, stirring, until the edges of the oysters curl and the additional liquid is absorbed, about 5 minutes.

Spoon onto plates or into a large casserole dish to serve tableside. Sprinkle with the cheddar cheese, garnish with chopped chives, and serve.

PRESORTED  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 92  
LOS ANGELES, CA



**Anthony  
NEWMAN**

**Call ANTHONY today for your FREE Market Analysis:  
310-338-1245 - E-mail: Anthony@neirealty.com**

Not intended as solicitation if your property is currently listed with another broker.