

# TRACY ELLIS

A GUIDE TO LUXURY REAL ESTATE



Rick &  
Tracy Ellis

In Home Interview with star of Bravo's  
*Real Housewives of Orange County*,

Meghan King  
Edmonds



*The*  
**RICK & TRACY ELLIS**  
*Team*



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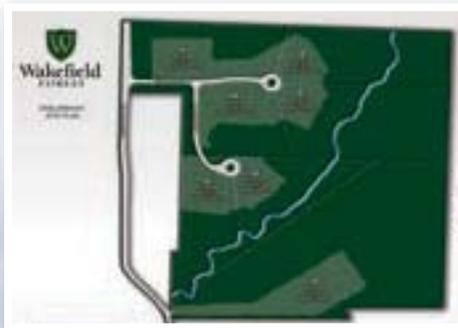


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# What a year

it has been both personally and professionally! When I was writing my

last editorial in honor of my Grandma, I never dreamed that I'd be doing it again so soon. My last magazine went to print on Mother's Day weekend, and at the same time my mother-in-law was diagnosed with terminal Cancer. It didn't seem real then, and in some ways, it still doesn't.

My mother-in-law, Patricia Ann Davis, was a dedicated wife, mother of five children, and an amazing Grandma and Great Grandma. She loved her dividends, as she liked to call them, and spoiling them. She always made sure each grandbaby got their Raggedy Ann or Andy doll on their first Christmas, along with their special ornaments. What an amazing cook she was, and regardless of whether or not I took the recipe word for word, it never tasted as good as hers (my poor husband). Pat loved to feel needed, and even now, we still need her here with us.

Unfortunately, God decided he needed her more. After only a seven-week fight, she went to Heaven to join her parents, and we are left with all of our incredible memories. My husband loved his mother and enjoyed his time at home with her while his older siblings were at school. Although it was an incredibly difficult time for our family, through it all, Rick was right there for our clients. Most of all, our clients and business partners were there for us. For that, we truly appreciate each and every one of you.

That is one of the reasons why Rick and I love real estate. It's the relationships we build with our clients. We are so involved with our clients and their day-to-day lives, that most of them become close friends. One of those clients, Nicole Gruber, touched my

heart like no other. I met Nicole three years ago when she called me to sell her home after recently being diagnosed with cancer. We instantly became friends. Nicole was an incredible Mother to her two beautiful children, and in her short time here on Earth, she made an impact on everyone she met. She was one of the most selfless people I've ever known. She never complained and always found the positive in everyone. Unfortunately, Nicole also lost her battle to cancer this summer, but as she said best, she'll have victory in Heaven.

After losing three very important people in our lives to cancer, we're even more determined to do everything we can to help find a cure. Our team will continue to donate a portion from every closing to cancer research in their memory.

Although it's been a difficult year personally, there are so many things to be thankful for. The Rick and Tracy Ellis Team is on track to have our best year in real estate, and our team is growing. Recently, we added a new member to our team, Vince Cafazza. My magazine is also expanding, adding new contributing writers and distributing the magazine to new Schnucks and Dierbergs stores. I also had the honor of being featured in Real Trends LORE magazine. You can read the story in the back of this edition. Our youngest son Drake is our latest contributor, giving advice to kids on moving and decorating. We recently found out we were selected as "The Best of The Best" by STREETScape Magazine. There are so many exciting things happening everyday and for that we are grateful.

After the year we've had, Rick and I realize more than ever the responsibility and importance of doing a great job for our clients. You aren't just buying a house—you're making a home and creating memories that will last a lifetime. We may have lost some precious people in our lives, but most of the amazing memories we made were in their homes. We will have those memories forever and it's important to us that we help our clients do the same. ∞



## *To My Other Mother*

You are the other Mother I received, the day I wed your son  
And I want to thank you Mom, for the loving things you've done.

You've given me a gracious Man, with whom I share my life  
You are his lovely Mother, and I his lucky Wife.

You used to pat his little head, and now I hold his hand  
You raised in love a little boy, and then gave me the Man.

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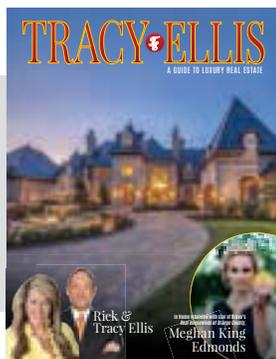
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**Creator & Publisher:** Tracy and Rick Ellis with the Tracy Ellis Team

**Art Direction:** Tracy Ellis

**Contributing Writer:** Katie Schlimpert, *Tracy Ellis Team*

**Design:** Laura Merchant, *lauramerchantdesign.com*

TracyEllis.com

Tracy@TracyEllis.com

C: 636.299.3702

O: 636.720.3833



TracyEllisTeam



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Festus, MO 63028  
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\$999,900



3428 Edgemont St  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
\$410,000



20983 Highlands,  
Marthasville, MO 63357  
\$240,000



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Foristell, MO 63348  
\$999,900



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O'Fallon, MO 63366  
\$1,400,000



1617 Harness Rd.  
Festus, MO  
\$999,900



11827 Cynthia Dr.  
Maryland Heights, MO 63043  
\$139,900



173 Jackson  
Augusta, MO 63332  
\$289,900



3429 Edgemont  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
\$465,000



619 Autumnwood Forest Dr  
Lake St. Louis, MO 63367  
\$259,900



284 Gentry Edwin Ct  
Wentzville, MO 63385  
\$192,000



708 Pecan Hill Dr  
St. Charles, MO 63304  
\$200,000



3250 Country Knoll Dr  
St. Charles, MO 63303  
\$230,000



1380 Belleau Creek  
St. Peters, MO 63366  
\$179,900



2613 Black Cherry Dr  
O'Fallon, MO 63368  
\$150,000



# RICK AND TRACY ELLIS TEAM



# 2015 CURRENT VOLUME



212 El Pescado Dr  
St. Peters, MO 63376  
**\$144,900**



1 El Gato  
St. Peters, MO 63376  
**\$139,900**



7449 Cinnamon Teal Dr  
O'Fallon, MO 63368  
**\$171,500**



672 Walnut Ridge  
Fenton, MO 63026  
**\$165,000**



14545 Appalachian Trail  
Chesterfield, MO 63017  
**\$320,000**



3001 Smiley Rd  
Maryland Heights, MO  
**\$79,500**



755 Devonshire Ave  
St. Louis, MO 63109  
**\$250,000**



720 Borgia Lane  
Florissant, MO 63031  
**\$94,000**



260 Madison Park  
Cottleville, MO 63376  
**\$400,000**



390 Shadow Pines  
Wentzville, MO 63385  
**\$173,000**



1721 Briarmanor Dr  
O'Fallon, MO 63367  
**\$229,900**



1520 Forest Springs Dr  
Ballwin, MO 63031  
**\$162,500**



4 Saint Libory Ct.  
O'fallon, MO 63366  
**\$249,900**



701 North 3rd St  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
**\$389,900**



3209 Country knoll Dr  
St. Charles, MO 63303  
**\$249,900**



2202 Saint Richard  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
**\$129,000**

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Mary Kay  
Schlimpert  
636.751.4435



Vince  
Cafazza  
314.369.8554





RICK AND TRACY ELLIS TEAM



2015 CURRENT VOLUME



220 Coachman Way  
O'Fallon, 63368  
\$120,000



3 Democracy Circle  
O'fallon, MO  
\$214,900



3600 North New Town Ave  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
\$145,000



2915 Sandtrap Dr  
O'Fallon, MO 63368  
\$314,900



3437 Riverchase Parkway  
St. Charles, MO  
\$199,900



712 Obrecht Lane  
O'Fallon, MO 63366  
\$257,500



1217 Briarchase Dr  
Lake St. Louis, MO 63367  
\$229,900



3937 Lake Shore  
New Haven, MO  
\$89,900



2020 Crimson Meadows Dr  
O'Fallon, MO 63366  
\$400,000



1223 Kennington Ct  
Lake St. Louis, MO 63367  
\$289,900



28 Muirfield Hill Ct South,  
St. Charles, MO 63304  
\$425,000



3701 Bluff Spring Dr  
St. Charles, MO 63303  
\$349,900



3598 North New Town Ave  
St. Charles, MO 63301  
\$220,000



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CONDOS/VILLAS:



**ACTIVE**

4956 Hurstborough  
Hazelwood, MO 63042  
\$108,000



**PENDING**

207 Park Ridge Dr  
O'Fallon, MO 63366  
\$215,000



**SOLD!**

713 Hyde  
O'Fallon, MO 63366  
\$115,000



**SOLD!**

224 Crystal Ridge Dr  
O'Fallon, MO 63366  
\$134,500



**SOLD!**

1520 Forest Springs Dr  
Ballwin, MO 63021  
\$162,500



**SOLD!**

1251 Strassner Dr #2113  
Brentwood, MO 63144  
\$195,000



**SOLD!**

1388 Hampton Rd  
St. Charles, MO 63303  
\$159,900



**SOLD!**

63 Country Field Ct  
O'Fallon, MO 63367  
\$164,900

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Wildwood, MO  
\$599,900



**ACTIVE**

NANTUCKET II  
Wildwood, MO  
\$649,900



**ACTIVE**

WATERFORD  
Wildwood, MO  
\$669,900



**ACTIVE**

NANTUCKET  
Wildwood, MO  
\$679,900



**ACTIVE**

WYNDHAM  
Wildwood, MO  
\$685,900



**ACTIVE**

PARKVIEW II  
Wildwood, MO  
\$695,900



**ACTIVE**

WESTBROOKE  
Wildwood, MO  
\$715,900



Tracy  
Ellis  
636.299.3702



Rick  
Ellis  
636.699.2197



Mary Kay  
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Vince  
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314.369.8554

# How it All Began with *John Fischer*



**T**he Rick and Tracy Ellis team are proud to represent Fischer & Frichtel, arguably one of the best home builders in the St. Louis and St. Charles areas, in one of their latest developments, Wakefield Forest in Wildwood, Missouri. With the start of this new partnership, Rick and I wanted to use this opportunity to learn the history behind Fischer and Frichtel from one of the men who's helped to make the company into what it is today—John Fischer.

The Fischer family has been in the home building business for over 70 years. After returning home from World War II, John's father, along with both his brother and his brother-in-law, started building homes, and for the tradition to have survived for the past 70 years makes quite a statement.

At just 14-years-old, John Fischer began working for his father in the building business. From carpentry to working on the labor force or the concrete team, John always knew he'd be a builder.

"It never crossed my mind that I'd be anything other than a builder," said Fischer. His passion and knowledge about the building industry is reflected in the company's reputation for value and high standards.

Even through the tough economy of the past few years, Fischer & Frichtel has maintained a level of quality many other builders sacrificed to stay in business, and it hasn't gone unnoticed. From design and community development to the finer details, Fischer & Frichtel inherited its reputation for quality from start to finish, and it's a reputation that has managed to withstand the test of time.

In St. Louis and St. Charles County, Fischer & Frichtel has 18 developments, and counting. It's not uncommon for people in the area to associate Fischer & Frichtel with incredible luxury homes valued at over a million dollars, but the company caters to just about anyone who's looking to build or purchase a home. They have a wide variety of homes starting from the mid-\$100 thousands to \$2 million, and everything in between.

Fischer & Frichtel is the only builder in the St. Louis area with a design center. The Home Center is a dedicated space in their main headquarters where all of their customers come to complete any structural changes or layout customization and to select colors, features and finishes. It's where they come to truly customize their dream home. Not only is Fischer & Frichtel willing to bump out a wall or totally revise a kitchen or bathroom layout, they're also concerned about helping their customers select cohesive cabinetry, knobs, hardware, features, railings, stain colors, paint colors, and more.

"One of our missions is to make that a fun experience, not a headache experience," said Fischer.

To help customers see their dream homes become reality, Fischer & Frichtel has on-site staff and professional interior designers in The Home Center. Their job is to make sure each detail has a truly personalized touch and that every aspect of a home comes together beautifully. Fischer & Frichtel customers have the ability to customize each detail from layouts to finishes. This ensures each home is able to fit specific needs and lifestyles and creates a unique building experience for both customer and builder.

With Fischer & Frichtel's dedication to quality standards and home customization, it's not uncommon to see new Fischer & Frichtel communities with no available lots, even at the beginning stages of construction. This success is due in part to their focus on good locations around the right school districts and churches. With quality, individualized homes in high-demand areas, Fischer knows they offer the best of the best, and he also knows how fortunate they are to have homebuyers simply gravitate toward their homes.

Wakefield Forest, one of their newest and most impressive developments, is sure to be no different. This is one of the reasons why we're so excited to partner with Fischer & Frichtel. Offering wooded home sites, ranging from three to twelve plus acres, the Wakefield Forest development caters to those buyers who are looking for a little more room to spread out.

Wakefield Forest has seven different lots in private enclaves spanning a total of 35.8 acres. Less than two miles west of HWY 109 and approximately 2.5 miles from the Wildwood Town Center, this development is in a prime location in Wildwood, Missouri. Fischer & Frichtel offers seven different impressive floor plans from their popular Estate Collection for Wakefield Forest, ranging from a gorgeous ranch plan starting at 2,653 sq. ft. to an elegant 1.5 story floor plan with 4,109 sq. ft.

For more information about Fischer & Frichtel's building sites at Wakefield Forest, send me an email at [tracy@tracyellis.com](mailto:tracy@tracyellis.com), or visit Fischer & Frichtel's website, [fandfhomes.com](http://fandfhomes.com). ∞





## Wakefield Forest Floor Plans



### Arlington II

The lovely Arlington II offers 2,653 sq. ft., three bedrooms, two baths, and a bonus room or fourth bedroom. A very popular ranch floor plan with a gourmet kitchen featuring a double oven, large island, and a spacious hearth room. Just wait until you see the expansive master suite with a luxury walk-in closet and luxury master bathroom.



### Nantucket II

The Nantucket II is an expansive ranch home with 2,797 sq. ft., three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a gorgeous great room with an incredible window wall. The kitchen is a chef's delight with a center island, breakfast bar, and a walk-in pantry. You'll be ready to entertain with an elegant formal dining room and beautiful hearth room.



### Waterford

At 3,612 sq. ft. with the popular side staircase design, the two story Waterford plan has four bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, a huge loft with a second floor laundry, and walk-in closets in every bedroom.



### Nantucket

An amazing ranch plan with 3,292 sq. ft., three bedroom, 2.5 baths, and a study, the Nantucket offers an incredible space for entertainment, Jack and Jill style bathrooms, and walk-in closets in all bedrooms. The house is an open floor plan including an incredible kitchen layout with a center island and a gorgeous hearth room.



### Wyndham

This popular 1.5 story plan is expansive at 3,752 sq. ft. With four bedrooms, 3.5 baths, a main floor master suite with a luxury master bath, and a gorgeous window wall in the great room, this home is simply elegant. There's a room for everyone in the family, plus a hearth room, loft, study, and a huge bonus room. Each bedroom features a walk-in closet.

## Fischer & Frichtel's Estate Collection Exceptional Features

- ∞ Three-car side entry garages
- ∞ Hardwood floors in entries, kitchens, breakfast rooms, and hearth rooms
- ∞ Granite counter tops with tile backsplashes
- ∞ Built-in stainless steel appliances
- ∞ Gas fireplaces
- ∞ 9 foot ceilings
- ∞ 42 inch cabinets
- ∞ James Hardie siding
- ∞ 30-year architectural shingles and much, much more.



### Parkview II

The executive Parkview II is spacious with 3,840 sq. ft., four bedrooms, 3.5 baths, and a main floor master suite. This elegant 1.5 story home offers a room for everyone in the family as well as a hearth room, loft, study, and bonus room.



### Westbrooke

The enormous Westbrooke plan offers 4,109 sq. ft. with four bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, and a huge main floor master suite, including a luxury master bath, but that's just the start in this incredible 1.5 story home. This luxury estate offers a study, loft, bonus room, and walk-in closets in every bedroom.



# In Home Interview with star of Bravo's *Real Housewives of Orange County*, *Meghan King Edmonds*

**B**ravo's hit *Real Housewives* multi-series has given us spin-offs in New Jersey, Atlanta, and New York, but there's nothing that can quite compare to the original series—the *Real Housewives of Orange County*. Onto its 10<sup>th</sup> season, the OC housewives are at it again, giving us viewers the drama we crave.

This season, there's a new housewife on the scene, and for Cardinal fans like myself, she's a pretty important one. Meghan King Edmonds, the wife of one of St. Louis' greatest Cardinal players, Jim Edmonds, has thrown her hat into the housewife circus. She's fashionable, adorable, and pretty feisty, but it's really her age that sets her apart from the other housewives on the show. At 30-years-old, Meghan has taken on of the role of both wife, stepmother, and the role of youngest housewife on the OC series.

Meghan is one of those TV personalities you either like her, or you don't. After her fights and strong opinions have aired episode after episode, I wanted her to be able to show her side of the story and give us a bit of who she is away from the *Real Housewives* drama. No matter who you are, you have to give her kudos for giving up her life to the cameras, not knowing what's going to end up on the show. After having her on my radio show and spending the day at her St. Louis home, here's what I've come to know and admire about Meghan King Edmonds.

A Crestwood, Missouri, native, Meghan was born and raised in Missouri, and attended Nerinx Hall in Webster Groves. She cites her time at Nerinx as one of the reasons why she's such an empowered wom-

an. She has two younger sisters, one who plays professional soccer in Boston, and a younger brother. Her younger brother was just named one of the top male super models in the world and is on the cover of *Details* magazine. Now that's one successful family!

Speaking of success, along with Meghan's role on the *Real Housewives of Orange County*, she also has a few entrepreneurial pursuits she's in the process of growing. I mentioned earlier that her sister is a professional soccer player, so former teammates and friends are also the co-creators of *Sweat*, a new make-up line created for both workout and weather protection, along with Meghan.

Launched at the Women's World Cup earlier this year in Canada, *Sweat* is a mineral powder foundation that's both sweat and water resistant. It even has SPF 30! The lightweight foundation is workout, beach, and weather proof. Of the six people spear-heading the make-up line, there are two Olympic gold medalists. If there's anyone I'm going to trust to sell me sweat-proof make up, it's going to be an Olympic medalist.

*Sweat* foundation is also pretty perfect for those hot St. Louis summer Cardinal games. For now, we'll have to be happy with sweat resistant foundation and translucent powder, but don't worry. The sweat team is looking into creating more products for their successful line in the future.

Another one of her ventures is her line of #Hashtag Hats. She started the project after the mother of her stepchildren, Lauren and Hayley, passed away from colon cancer. 100% of the profits from the blue #fightcancer hats goes to Fight Colorectal Cancer (CRC). The hats sold

out, and raised \$1500 in sales in just three short weeks. She also has a hat supporting the fight against breast cancer.

At the Teen Choice Awards gifting suite this year, her hats were a huge hit. Both Jordyn Sparks and Ryan Cabrera were seen sporting her hats. With hashtags like #overit and #coolstepmom, her line of hats are both fun and versatile. Not only are they funny, but they can sum up everything Meghan wants to say in just one word. For future projects, she's working on creating fine hashtag jewelry, cell phone cases, and maybe even apparel. Needless to say, her snappy line of hashtag must-haves are really taking off.

Think that's all? Think again. This firecracker entrepreneur is also in the process of developing a hair extension line full of fun colors. Right now, Meghan's showing off her super adorable pink hair, and this new project, like her many others, is sure to be just as successful.

Participating in the *Real Housewives of Orange County* has certainly opened many doors for Meghan, but it's also brought a lot of negative thoughts toward her personality, including her role as a wife and stepmother.

The first year of marriage can be a tough one, but being on the show has helped Meghan and Jim come together even more. It's no secret Jim's scenes on the *Real Housewives* don't always portray him in the greatest light, but at the end of the day, Meghan and Jim know the bond they share. In Meghan's eyes, Jim is a sweet, kind-hearted man. He's never been one to turn down a fan for an autograph or picture, and he always goes out of his way to help the charities he's involved with.

During filming, cameras follow them around five days a week. Though they always know when the crew will be around, it's a tough

gig. Sometimes the days are long, and it's not uncommon for conversations to have to be repeated. According to Jim, once you've had the same conversation for the 14<sup>th</sup> time, sometimes it's hard to give the cameras exactly what they want after a 12 hour day. You know what I say to that, Jim? #overit.

The other housewives on the show have no problem reminding Meghan that she's the youngest on the show. Fortunately, Meghan has the thick skin necessary to let the negative comments roll off her back. However, when it comes to her stepchildren, that's a completely different story.

"If you talk about my step kids, we're going to go to war," said Meghan regarding a bit of drama on the show involving one of the other housewives and her role as a stepmother.

She's received numerous letters and emails detailing heart wrenching stories from stepmoms, moms of adopted children—you name it. The outreach from other non-biological parents has been really helpful.

"As a stepmom, we kind of hide our voice." Meghan's proud to give a public voice to her demographic, and she's always willing to go to bat for the stepmoms out there. Meghan is the kind of woman who says what she thinks, even if what she has to say gets her into trouble on camera.

"I'm just trying to be myself, but there's a lot I find out from the show that I had no idea even hap-



pened,” said Meghan. She only knows what comes out of her own mouth and what happens in the scenes she’s involved in. Otherwise, she finds out what Bravo has deemed suitable television, just like everyone else.

This is Meghan’s first season on the show, and I believe she’s given this show back a little bit of fire it was lacking. It seems like everyone has something to say about the newest housewife in the OC, but you can’t trust everything you see on TV. I’ll say she certainly has brought some excitement back to the show and isn’t afraid to say what I believe a lot of viewers are thinking.

I hope we see Meghan on the next season of *The Real Housewives of Orange County*. Rick and I are personally hoping to see all of the ladies from the show attend a Cardinals game and experience Cardinal Nation with the best fans around. With or without the show, Meghan King Edmonds will continue to succeed and is working on several new businesses with incredible ideas and opportunities.

Rick and I had the enormous pleasure of visiting with Meghan King Edmonds at the Edmonds home here in St. Louis, Missouri. I was thrilled to meet and talk with the both of them about their experience with *Real Housewives of Orange County*, and of course, their incredible home. Not only was I impressed by their beautiful home, I was so happy to get to talk to Meghan away from the microphones and cameras. The day we spent with Meghan, we found she was genuine and good-hearted, like the girl next door, with one of the most beautiful smiles.

Their home is a traditional colonial style home with black shutters. From the street, you feel like you’ve been transported to a plantation

home in the south, but that doesn’t even give you the slightest clue as to what’s going on inside.

For their St. Louis home, Meghan really focused on rustic lighting and a bit of a clean, homey style. Their living area has a comfortable, family, easy-breezy feel, with vases filled with sand and sea shells, inviting furniture, a stone fireplace, and gorgeous grey walls. Set right in the middle of the room, they’ve set up a solid wood farm table. It’s almost the length of the room and it’s perfect for their family dinners.

This house even has its own little secret. Off of the main floor there’s a door, hidden in plain sight, leading to Meghan’s favorite room in the house—her master bedroom closet. The closet actually used to be





a sunroom, of all things. Jim and Meghan transformed it into a dream closet by enclosing the space and adding an interior staircase up to the master bedroom. The closet is complete with floor-to-ceiling custom cabinets, a fabulous granite counter in the middle of the room, and a beautiful chandelier hanging right over the counter, creating the perfect space for getting all made up for the day.

Jim's office is like St. Louis Cardinal Headquarters, making it every Cardinal fan's dream office. Of course, with Jim's Golden Gloves, jerseys, baseballs, and even seats from the stadium—how could it not be? The office is open and spacious with great natural lighting and beautiful large-panel wood floors. It's the right fit for one of our most beloved Cardinal players.

Though their house certainly is beautiful, the outdoor area is to die for. When you enter their backyard, you feel like you stepped straight out of the Missouri heat and right into a tropical island paradise. Jim designed the landscaping himself with lush vegetation, a beautiful rock waterfall that spills right into the pool, with an outdoor kitchen, and a stone walkway leading to an open grassy area for the kids to play.

The trampoline may have seemed a bit out of place in their breezy paradise next to the waterfall and gorgeous, high-backed wooden chairs that looked as if they'd been sitting next to the beach for ages, but even odder were the few pink flamingos floating around the pool. Apparently, they have a running joke with the neighbors, and pink flamingos often

make visits to their yard and pool.

The Edmonds home was lovely to visit, flamingos included. That running joke with the neighbors reminded me of how simple and fun life is, even if you're a television or baseball star. Their house in St. Louis is homey, comfortable, and inviting. It's the place they go to settle down and reconnect with the things and people they love. Meghan and Jim both consider St. Louis their home, and we're so very glad they do. ∞



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Wings Road  
SOLD: \$1,413,750



Pointe Conway  
SOLD: \$1,800,000

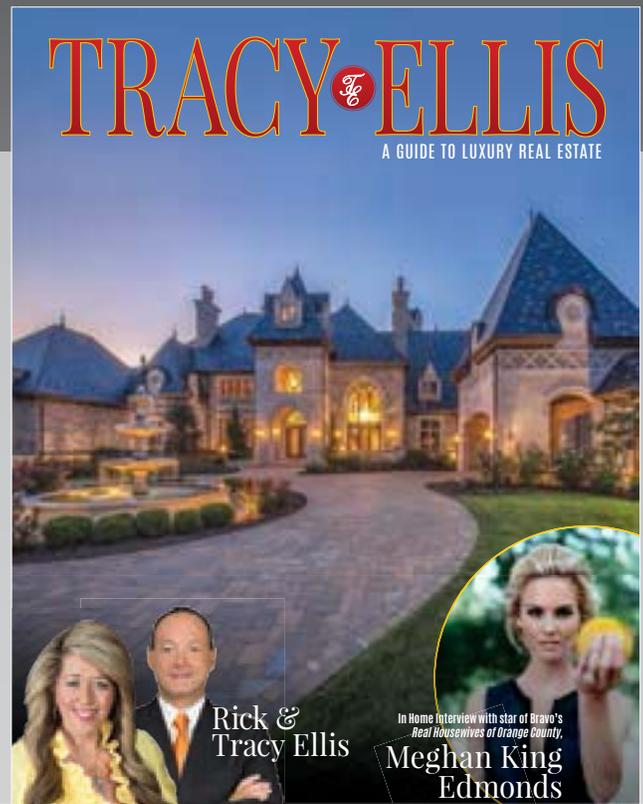


Thornhill Drive  
Listed: \$1,500,000 SOLD: \$1,493,000

Currently look for a home for the next cover!

*“Tracy is very accessible, knowledgeable, dedicated, and professional. She always answers questions within seconds, day or night. During an intense back & forth of negotiations, she recently worked right through her son’s graduation ceremony to get our deal put together. Now that’s dedication! Our home was on the market for a lengthy time a while ago with another big name local agent. We did not receive even a single offer, so we finally gave up and took it off the market. After listing it with Tracy Ellis, she was able to negotiate a sale at very close to our asking price. Even after the sale, she works hard to ensure that we are informed and updated throughout the process. I would highly recommend Tracy for any of your real estate needs, she’s the best!”*

- Review on Zillow by seller of Thornhill Drive



cell: 636.299.3702  
office: 636.720.3833  
Tracy@TracyEllis.com



cell: 636.699.2197  
office: 636.720.3834  
Rick@TracyEllis.com



www.TracyEllis.com



# Redwood Wine Cellars

Everything you need to know to convince your spouse you need a wine cellar.

“**H**oney, you know how you enjoy those wines with a long, smooth finish? If we had a wine cellar we could drink those *much* more often.”

Wine is very complex, and long polymer chains form with the tannins as it ages, causing the smooth sensation on the palette. Vibrations typical of a standard refrigerator will inhibit these long polymer chains from forming correctly. A wine cellar provides the perfect environment for aging wines. Aging wine in a controlled environment causes the tart fruit flavors and bitterness from the tannins to soften, enhancing the flavor experience.

Almost all wines not only taste better with age, but also increase in value. For example, Bordeaux is particularly famous for its value with age. Good vintages typically occur in dryer years, resulting in a lower production. With a wine cellar at

your disposal, you can purchase more top vintages and squirrel them away for special occasions, and you can also collect birth year and anniversary wines for the family. By taking your favorite wines to restaurants and paying a small corkage fee, which is typically only \$10-20 per bottle, you could potentially save some money.

“Since we’re always wanting to learn more about wine, we could plan vacations to wine country!”

With a wine cellar, you’ll have a great excuse for trips to France, Italy, Spain, Oregon, Washington and California—to fill up your cellar and experience impeccable shopping. Wine is produced in all 50 states, so you wouldn’t even have to leave to country to enjoy fine wines and build your collection. Missouri itself has over 100 wineries we could explore for just the day.

Enjoying wine is a huge part of home entertainment, and wine cellars are a must in houses situated in upscale neighborhoods. A cellar can give your home a modern or old world look. Imagine a dimly lit room, a wine barrel, and stone and wood accents combined to create the perfect nest for your wine. A few modern touches, like a granite tasting table and a glass window, could invite your guests to drool over your vino as they walk by the cellar.

Redwood Wine Cellars custom manufactures the racking, doors, and cabinetry used in all of our projects. This helps keep costs down, and decreases the lead-time on projects. We primarily construct wine cellars from beautiful Sapele heartwood, a member of the mahogany family. Sapele is an extremely durable wood, and is often used for guitar faces, Cadillac interiors, and exterior doors.

Many homeowners wonder whether or not wine cellar add value to a home. If the next potential owner of your home isn't into wine, the racks can easily be removed and the room repurposed. The cellars we install all come with locks, which makes them ideal for storing liquor out of the reach of curious young ones. Avoiding a lawsuit by adding a lock is priceless.

Builders often offer wine cellars as an option when first designing a home. Redwood Wine Cellars recently completed a display wine cellar for Simon Homes located on Wythe House Ct. in the Enclave Bellerive. The subdivision is located at the intersection of Mason and Ladue Roads, next to Bellerive

Country Club. Designer Jeanne Huber did an incredible job selecting lighting, paint, and decorations, creating a very inviting environment.

If you're interested in checking out our work, you can stop by the display cellar anytime from 11 am to 5 pm, seven days a week. To contact Redwood Wine Cellars and start designing the wine cellar of your dreams, call Brian Hartsfield at 314-910-2428 or send him an email at [brian@redwoodwinecellars.com](mailto:brian@redwoodwinecellars.com).

## REDWOOD *Wine Cellars*

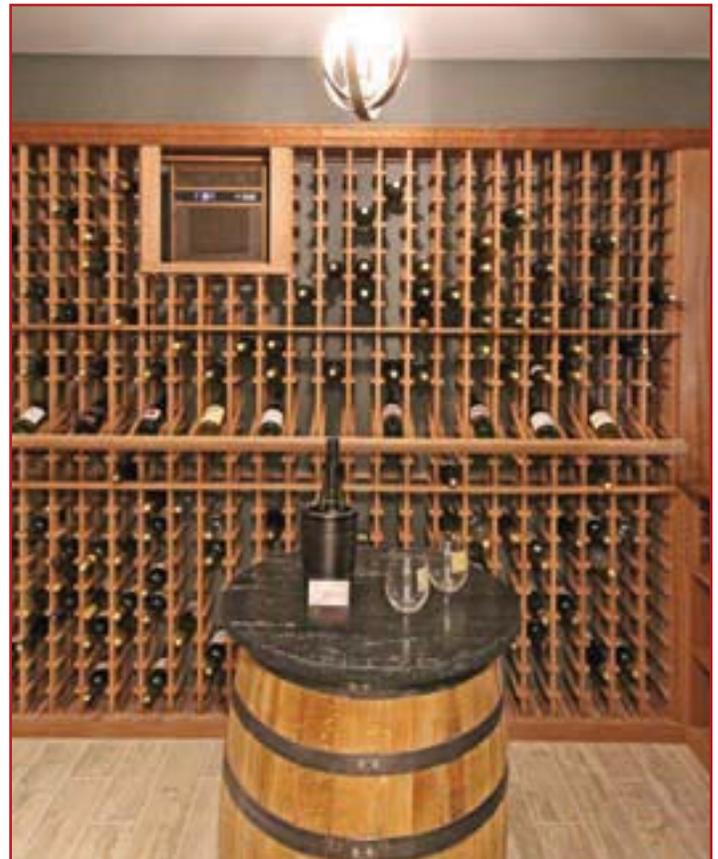
Brian Hartsfield, Owner

Redwood Wine Cellars

Phone: 314 910-2428

Email: [brian@redwoodwinecellars.com](mailto:brian@redwoodwinecellars.com)

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# Designing Your Closet Space

by

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**S**ince walk-ins are larger, as large as another entire bedroom. They create a design and storage opportunity by allowing the space to highlight and maximize shoes, purses, and hang with bringing emphasis on these by lighting each space with LED lighting and glass shelving.

Along with custom drawer, canvas pull out bins are they new alternative to wire baskets that can sometimes leave lines on your favorite clothing.



Choosing the right finish defines your space and your home, whether you opt for light or dark, wood-grained or solid. This can be accomplished by mixing two to three in the same space.

California Closets' sliding doors are modern, up-to-date, and incredibly stylish. In fact, they're more often an ideal solution for closets than a standard hinged door. Creating visual texture and depth in a room is an easy task with sliding doors.

Simply put, wardrobes can create a closet where there wasn't one before. Whereas traditional closets are cut into the wall, a wardrobe from California Closets is a finished piece, or series of pieces, installing along the wall. An armoire or wardrobe organizing system creates a feeling of open space and keeps things tidy behind closed doors that are beautifully designed with Italian designer glass and heavy textured material.



Reach in closets require creative thinking, but you can be sure California Closets has the custom closet solutions, expertise and accessories to help maximize the store of your limited space.

Our Ecoresin panels can be used in myriad ways: Use them as a dramatic accent on drawer or door fronts and decorative back panels. Ecoresin is made from a specially formulated co-polyester resin that's as environmentally responsible as it is beautiful and durable.

Virtuoso is an excellent solution for those who like to display their favorite objects d'art or who appreciate and elegant, built in profile. With strong horizontal lines, rich finishes, and a lack of vertical partitions, Virtuoso makes a dramatic and sophisticated statement in closets with the custom storage functionality

The appearance of your accessories is as flexible as their arrangement: hardware can look as traditional or modern as you like incorporating natural materials like leather and glass. ∞



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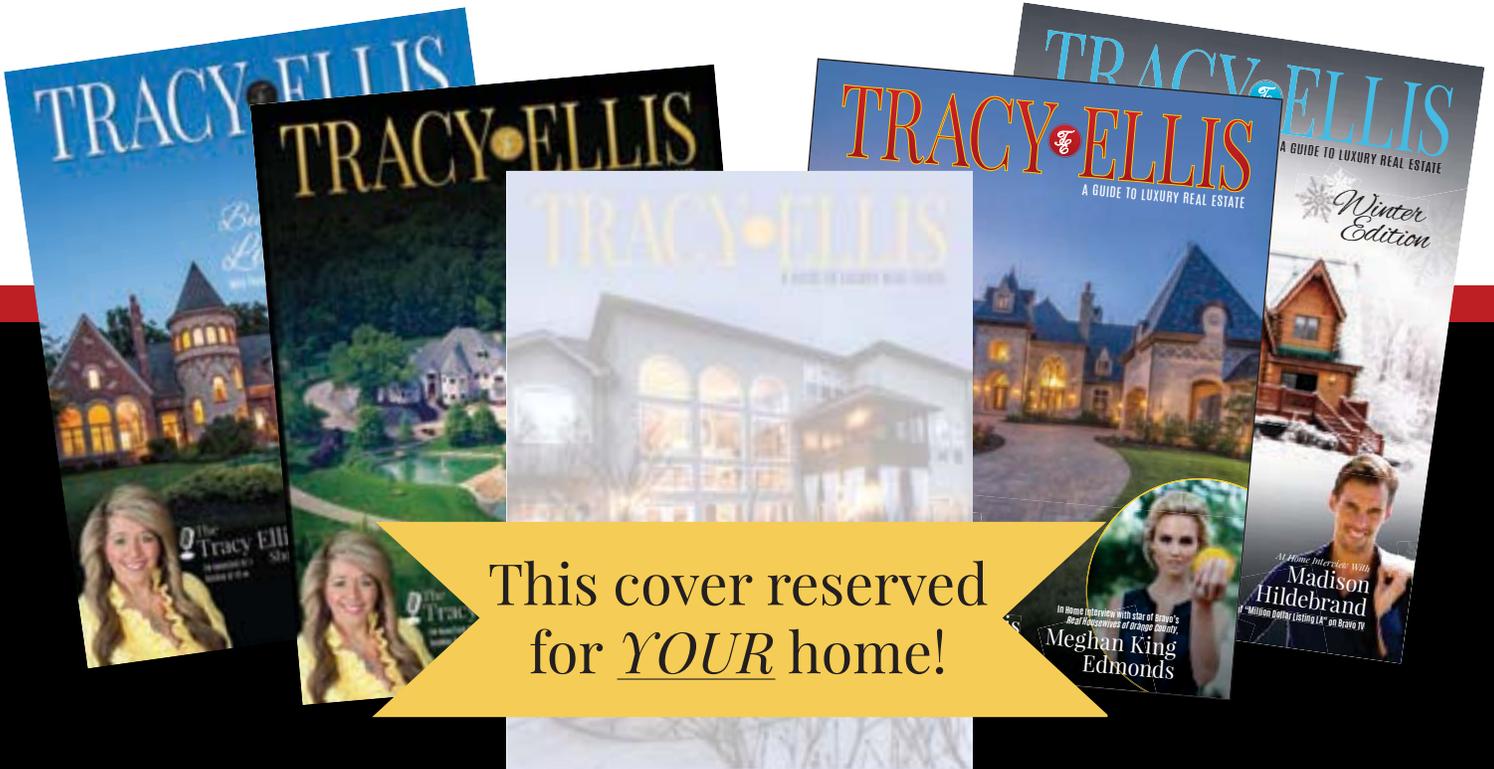
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An Inside Look with  
*Justin Fichelson &  
Andrew Greenwell*

stars of “Million Dollar Listing San Francisco” on Bravo TV

Bravo TV has launched yet another entertaining installment of the Million Dollar Listing franchise set in one of the world’s leading technological hotspots—San Francisco, California. The fourth of it’s kind, Million Dollar Listing San Francisco follows the real estate careers of three of the areas top agents: Justin Fichelson, Andrew Greenwell, and Roh Habibi. The series is known for showcasing unbelievable luxury properties and incredible views, all wrapped up in the juiciest of real estate drama. Million Dollar Listing San Francisco promises no less.



**S**an Francisco is home to some of the country's quirkiest people and most unique, sought-after real estate. The area has an incredible social and consumer based technology culture and is where social media giants like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have built their empires. It's up-and-coming status as a technology capital of the world has housing prices skyrocketing, making for a cutthroat real estate market. There's no room for negotiating or cutting corners when both sellers and buyers are expected to put their best foot forward.



*The average property in the San Francisco market receives anywhere from five to seven cash offers. It's so competitive, buyer's actually wave inspections. To give you a bit of perspective, in my twenty years as an agent, I've only had one person wave an inspection. Watching their hectic, fast-paced lives gives me back a little of my own sanity knowing they too deal with chaotic situations—even if it is on a much larger scale.*

The exposure from the show provides marketing opportunities for the agents as well as their clients, and in real estate—it's all about marketing. After six to eight months of filming, drama, and deals these guys truly understand what it means to go above and beyond to market your business in this industry.

I had the privilege of speaking with both Justin Fichelson and Andrew Greenwell on my weekly radio show, which airs every Sunday at 10 AM on FM News Talk 97.1. These two are full of passion, business savvy, and creativity—the perfect formula that makes them two of the most ambitious and successful real estate agents in the industry today.

**Be sure to tune into  
*Million Dollar Listing San Francisco*  
every Wednesday at 10/9c on Bravo TV.**



### Justin Fichelson

A native San Franciscan, Justin Fichelson lives only 10 minutes away from where he grew up in the heart of the city. His thirty years in the area gives him expert knowledge of all things San Francisco, and a leg-up on the competition. With such a successful career, I doubt he'll be digging up those deep roots any time soon.

Fichelson discovered how much he loved flipping houses and his passion for real estate as a whole after graduating from college. According to him, even if you're not directly involved in the housing market, it's a conversation everyone's having in San Francisco. From housing affordability to investment values, the young millionaires that live in the area are a large part of the city's technology explosion, and they live and breathe business—real estate included.

"It makes for a really interesting selling environment," said Fichelson. He's only been a Realtor for the last three and a half years, but he's done more with his career than most agents accomplish over a lifetime.

Fichelson is a luxury broker at Climb Real Estate, a boutique firm that's in tune with the area's technology culture. A starter home in San Francisco could cost around \$2 million, and even at those prices, you'd be hard pressed to get over 2,000 square feet. For that reason alone, working with a flexible firm that doesn't only understand technology but is also inspired by it has helped him on his way to becoming a real estate mogul.

On the show, you'll see a lot of Fichelson's tousled locks and smooth demeanor—but don't let those stylish salmon colored pants fool you. To him, real estate requires round the clock dedication. It's an industry that's serious and intense, but vastly rewarding. He services the San Francisco area along with a number of surrounding regions such as Silicon Valley, Hillsboro, Napa Valley, and Carmel—and much of the luxury market in northern California.

Fichelson is young, lively, and free-spirited with a wonderful light-hearted laugh. *On Million Dollar Listing San Francisco*, it's easy to see his tendency to take things personally and his worries of disappointing his father, but it's his big heart that makes him so passionate about selling real estate. Even with his happy and bright personality, he's always ready to take things seriously and get the job done, making him an incredible asset to the show and the real estate industry.

To contact Justin Fichelson, visit the Agents page on Climb's website [www.climbsf.com](http://www.climbsf.com) and be sure to follow him on Twitter @JustinFichelson. ∞

**The following properties are listed by Justin Fichelson**



## 26 Joice

Located on a charming European-like alley in prestigious Nob Hill, this exceptionally rare San Francisco triple-mint renovated single-family home presents the ultimate in quality, modernity and innovation. Nestled between the city's downtown and historic landmarks like Grace Cathedral, the modern facade of this contemporary sculpture alludes to the infusion of abundant natural light, sleek interior spaces, and green urban outdoor spaces that become the signature characteristics of the design within.

This 4-story single-family home on a charming tree-lined cul-de-sac block is showcased by a modern facade of distinctive clean design that also defines the interior spaces. This special Nob Hill residence includes impressive outdoor spaces, three full bedrooms, four full bathrooms and one half bathroom, a media room, a laundry room, and private garage with space for two vehicles. ∞



## 38 Lusk

Filmed for Million Dollar Listing San Francisco, this is truly a one-of-a-kind loft. Indulge in San Francisco city living in the heart of exciting South Beach. As you enter you are immediately greeted by an immense living space filled with light and featuring soaring ceilings, large windows, a modern fireplace and doors to a patio. This space is ideal for entertaining, as it offers an open floor plan with many seating and entertaining areas. Just off the living and dining room enjoy your morning coffee, an evening cocktail, or just the fresh air on your private patio. ∞



## 21 Fountain

### Completely Detached Home with Stunning Views As Seen on Million Dollar Listing San Francisco

21 Fountain Street is a 4 bedroom, 3.5 bathroom fully detached contemporary Craftsman home in Noe Valley with incredible city and bay views and luxurious designer finishes. Outdoor spaces on all three levels of the home allow for ideal indoor/outdoor living, especially on the expansive view deck that runs the full width of the great room. The home also features a formal living room with a fireplace and built-in bookcases, a remodeled kitchen with Thermador appliances, a gorgeous master suite, and spa-like bathrooms as well as a large garage and backyard. Additional features include quarter-sawn oak floors and cabinetry, solar panels, and radiant heat. It was also featured on Bravo's Million Dollar Listing San Francisco! ∞



## Andrew Greenwell

After selling nearly \$4 billion in real estate over his career, Andrew Greenwell is known as a bit of a real estate shark, especially in his role as a top agent on *Million Dollar Listing San Francisco*. With those numbers, it's hard to deny Greenwell has an incredible talent for selling ultra-luxury real estate. From the ripe age of just 12-years-old, Greenwell was drawn toward the real estate industry. Though he may

not have been the most popular kid in school for his real estate aspirations growing up, his passion is what has secured him a spot at the top of the game.

His accomplishments are impressive. As a freshman in college, he opened his own brokerage in Sarasota, Florida at the age of 19. In 2006 he sold \$11 million in individual sales, and he was chosen as the youngest ever honoree of the 2007 "30 Under 30" program at the age of 23 by Realtor's Magazine, which consists of the top 30 realtors in America under the age of 30. His quick rise to success makes a serious statement about where his career is now, and where it's sure to head in the future.

Greenwell has worked with both Keller Williams Tri-Valley Realty, but today he's known as

the Broker and CEO of Venture Sotheby's International Realty, based in Pleasanton, California. His philosophy is this—"go big, or don't go at all." I'm pretty convinced he lives and breathes this mantra, contributing to his ever-growing business. Truth be told, I'm thinking about adopting the phrase myself. Bring on the success!

Recently, Greenwell visited St. Louis and was completely blown away by the area's real estate market. Compared to housing prices in San Francisco, homes in St. Louis are a total steal with incredible square footage and beautiful, diverse architecture. To impress an incredible agent such as him makes me proud to service the St. Louis area.

Greenwell's savvy and aggressive business ideals have earned him the role of villain on the newest Million Dollar Listing series. Probably one of the more controversial bits of his business practices so far was his decision to purchase the domain names of both Justin Fichelson and Roh Habibi, the two other agents on the show. According to Greenwell, it started as a joke that ended up getting a little messy. He received a barrage of phone calls saying his actions were unethical and immoral, but he continues to stress he didn't intend to use the domain names, he just couldn't believe they hadn't purchased them with such a huge show on the horizon.

"Just because you're a shark doesn't mean you're a nasty person," said Greenwell.

He's a strong, levelheaded businessman who's willing to fight for his clients. He understands buyers are looking for what's unique and how buyers want what everyone else *doesn't* have. He's a tireless worker, always taking phone calls day and night (unless he's with a client, of course) and servicing a wide area as a broker. He may come across cold and tough on the show, but homeowners have admitted if they were going to sell, they'd want Greenwell on their side of the negotiation table.

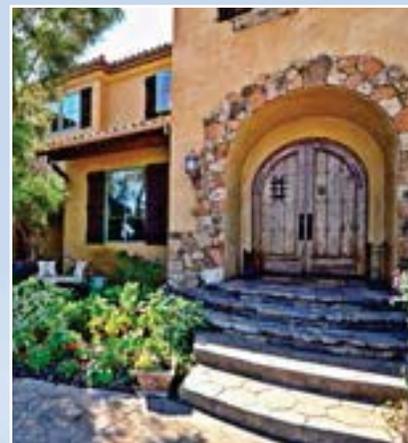
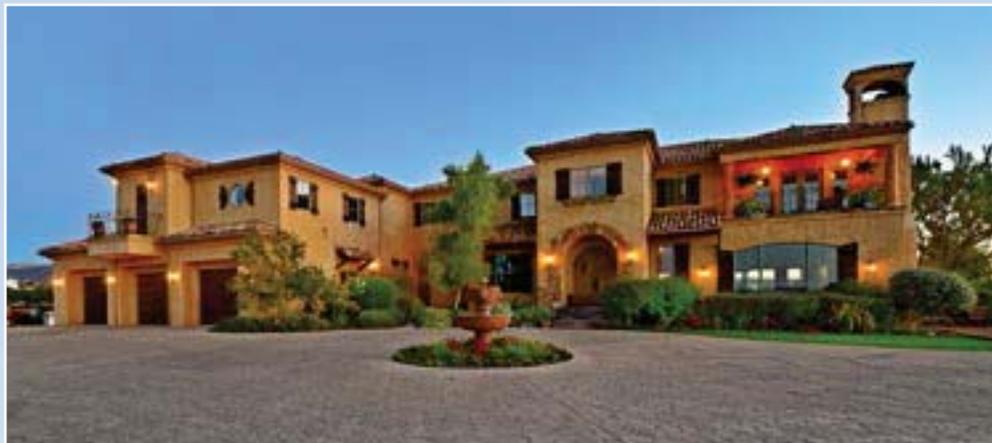
If you'd like to contact Andrew Greenwell, visit [AndrewGreenwell.com](http://AndrewGreenwell.com) (a domain name he purchased well in advance of his good fortune). ∞

**The following properties are listed by Andrew Greenwell**

## 7795 Cedar Mountain Road

**7795 Cedar Mountain Road, \$3,750,000**  
**6671 sq feet**

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## 70 De Sabla Road

**70 De Sabla Road, \$5,380,000**  
**3133 sq ft**

A True Legacy Property! One of a Kind and irreplaceable with authentic Japanese Gardens, Koi pond and an original Japanese Tea House dating from 1894. On the Hillsborough/San Mateo border, this property has a rich history and the charm and character will transport you to another time and place. Beautiful separate Guest House with full kitchen, bath, incl. in sq.ft. Enjoy the serenity and tranquility of this property; own a work of art. ∞



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**Welcome!**

The Rick & Tracy Ellis Team  
is happy to welcome the  
newest member: **VINCE CAFAZZA!**

As an accomplished Project Manager, Vince observed the world through discerning eyes, sensed nuances and appreciated both attention to detail and follow through. His was a position requiring perseverance, tenacity and effective communication skills as he worked between executive level and team level peers on a daily basis. Today, as a real estate professional, he is bringing those same skills and talents to an equally broad spectrum of discriminating clients.

A focused listener, able advisor and strong yet fair advocate, Vince is known for his diligence while employing encouragement and genuine concern as he creates a positive experience for both sides in any property transaction. His business approach is direct and successful: He listens to his client's needs and matches them to the right property, then assures an honest and efficient transaction.



**Congratulations!**

The Tracy Ellis Team is very excited to announce that last month our contributing writer to the Tracy Ellis Team and magazine, Kathryn Schlimpert, was chosen out of over 300 applicants to participate in a travel writing internship in Bali, Indonesia. Over the course of one month, Kathryn will be traveling all over Bali, learning everything there is to know about the most beautiful views and hottest party spots on the island. In collaboration with 30 other writers from around the world, she'll be contributing to comprehensive travel guide about all things Bali. During her time, she'll also be learning Bahasa Indonesian, taking writing workshop classes, and becoming fully immersed in the culture of the island.

**We always knew you were an amazing writer Kathryn. We are so very proud of you!**



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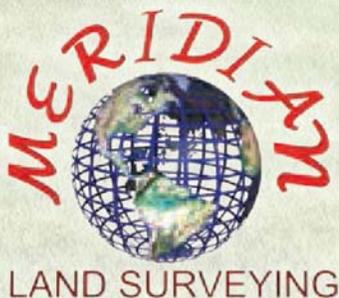
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Owner, Bill DeBord



# The Advantages & Disadvantages of Building a Custom Home

## **A**dvantages of building a custom home

*You can choose to build according to your lifestyle.*

Whether you're a new couple looking to start your new life together or a blossoming family of five, building a custom home gives you the opportunity to build for function. It's not always about having the latest up-and-coming home trends. Sometimes, the most value in your home can come from building to best fit your family and lifestyle. Do you work out a lot? Include a fitness room. From media rooms to gourmet kitchens, building custom means building around what matters to you.

*You can handpick your site.*

Choosing where to build your home is just as important as the home itself. When building custom, there's no need to worry about sacrificing location for the right builder, or vice versa. A lot of my buyers are looking for some space to spread out, and that's not always an option when buying an existing home. By choosing your site, you'll be in control of how many trees surround your home, school districts, and how cozy you'll be with your neighbors.

*You're in charge, right down to the smallest detail.*

When you're building a custom home, everything from your light fixtures to the size of your breakfast room are in your control. You have a chance to build to fit your personality and style without having to jump through hoops. Creating a scrapbook of everything you'd ever want in your dream home can really help organize ideas and get you on the right track.

## Disadvantages of building custom.

*Building custom will have its ups and down.*

If you've never built custom before, be prepared for some stress. You're building a home from scratch, and I'm not just talking ground up. First, a home has to be conceptualized and designed, which can take months all on its own. All of those details can really start to add up and get out of control, but don't worry too much. Many custom builders offer different options where you can be as involved as you'd like, or take more of a backseat. There's no doubt building a custom home will come with a few challenges, but that first step into your dream home makes it all worth it.

*If you're not careful, costs can add up quickly.*

Most people assume if you build custom, it's going to cost an arm and a leg, but that's just not the case. With proper budgeting and understanding of your finances, building custom can actually help save you money. It's all about keeping your list of needs and wants realistic and building to compliment your lifestyle to the best of your ability. However, it's easy to get carried away. If you don't have the time to spend really focusing on details and budget, building custom might not be your best option.

*Buying existing offers more predictability.*

When building custom, things can get off track. You may plan to move-in within six months, but there are times when your move-in date has to be extended for whatever reason. There are plenty of luxury homes that offer incredible features and would make perfect homes for you and your family. If you need a little more predictability, buying a previously-owned luxury home is a perfect option. ∞



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# Blog with Tracy

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## Top Hardwood Flooring Trends

**W**hen I'm showing luxury properties to buyers, floor choices always come into play. There are so many different styles to choose from, and on top of style, you also have to consider possible wear and tear. Choosing the right flooring can really make your rooms and decor pop, but the wrong choice can send buyers away in a fright. Here are a few of my favorite hardwood flooring trends for 2015 to help buyers fall in love, feet first.



### The Darker the Better

In 2015, dark hardwood is more popular than ever. The darker the wood, the better the look. Shades that are black or almost black are super contemporary, and they really make a statement. You'd be hard pressed to find someone who wouldn't walk into a room and immediately notice the beautiful contrast dark floors can make with bright walls.

### Sleek and Contemporary

If you're really looking for something of-the-moment, switch the dark colors to the walls and brighten up your floor space with a beautiful shade of grey. Grey hardwood is a subtle type of wow-factor, and neutrals are always in, but be careful. This flooring choice might be a little too contemporary for more conservative buyers.

### Coastal Vibes

In Missouri, we're always looking for a way to get closer to the beach. With white washed hardwood, that dream can manifest right in your living room. Sure, you might be missing the waves and the beach, but at the very least, you can let those resort vibes wash all over you. It's fresh, it's modern, and incredibly relaxing.



### Sometimes Bigger Really is Better

One of my very favorite trends are wide plank hardwood floors. The color choices are endless. Stay traditional with light to medium traditional hardwood shades, or shake it up with the more modern grey color I mentioned earlier. It's one small change to traditional hardwood that adds depth and style to any room.

### Tropical Paradise

Again, we gravitate towards the beach with bamboo flooring. Bamboo is practical and simple. It can be dressed up with modern furniture, or made to be a little bit more free-spirited with tropical decor.

### Rustic Feel

The trend towards rustic is growing strong as ever. The natural look and feel of reclaimed wood help bring a little of the peace of the outdoors right into your home. By showing the natural imperfections of the wood, reclaimed wood (or even machine stressed wood) has a really homey, comfortable feel that's perfect for getting cozy by the fire or enjoying a rainy day indoors. ∞

## Laundry Room Must Haves

**I**n my opinion, there's no laundry room too big or too tricked out. Sometimes it feels like I need a completely separate house for my laundry room alone, but instead of taking things to the extreme, here are a few ideas to help make your time in the laundry room a bit easier.

### Utility Sink

If your laundry room doesn't have a utility sink, I'd say it's time for a little renovation! Not only is it a great place to wash up after working outside, it's the perfect place to soak solid garments. With an addition like a farm sink, you might even be able to get away with giving a small dog a bath!

### Task Lighting

Lighting in small spaces is a huge trend this year, especially in laundry rooms. Sometimes, one overhead light isn't enough to brighten the space, and no one wants to feel like they're doing laundry in a cave.

Add a few under-cabinet lights, an extra lamp, or even a window to give your working space a pick-me-up.

### Custom Cabinetry

Today's cabinetry options are endless. Not only are cabinets great for storing away detergent and other cleaning supplies, they're perfect for helping to organize clutter. Shoes, towels, backpacks--you name it. Open cabinets can also be a great decorating opportunity. One of my very favorite ideas? Installing a pull-out hamper. Need I say more?

### Work Counter

When I'm doing laundry, it seems like there's never enough room. Having a work counter can give you a bit of extra space most of us need in the laundry room. Fold clothes, store supplies, and help alleviate the cramped-laundry-room blues. ∞

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# Financing your *Dream Home*

**W**hat does the phrase “dream home” conjure up for you? Maybe it’s a rolling green lawn, or maybe it’s a back deck overlooking the greens of the country club. Maybe it’s a sprawling colonial with gable windows winking at the world, or maybe it’s a luxury cabin on 10 wooded acres.

Or unfortunately it’s thinking about the headache and hassle of going through the approval process to finance that dream home.

If, instead of the excitement of moving into the home of your dreams you’re dreading the maze of paperwork and hoops of red tape let’s talk about how to keep those nightmares from becoming a reality.

First, remember that credit scores aren’t cut and dry. Nor is your credit score the first thing a seasoned Loan Officer is concerned with. The Loan Officers at Vinson Mortgage have seen it all, and they know how to find a way to finance your dream home even when you’ve been refused credit elsewhere. We know how to adjust for investment or self-employment income, recognizing that what you legally report as taxable income doesn’t always represent your full ability to manage a mortgage payment. Ultimately, we’re here to help you solve any credit issues so that you can get the loan you need for the house you want.

Second, a loan officer who is both accessible and approachable can increase the likelihood of an ideal outcome and reduce the level of stress for you. It’s a headache to work with someone who only knows you as a file in their system and only communicates through emails and phone calls.

Getting the right loan structure can depend on a lot of variables, and those details don’t all come to light when you fill out a standardized form. At Vinson, you’ll work with a personal Loan Officer who values the relationship and approaches you as a person instead of an application

for a loan. You can come and put your paperwork on the desk and go over it over coffee instead of wrestling with all the forms and requirements. It’s often during those across-the-desk discussions that we learn how to really serve you.

Working with someone who is local also helps ease the headache. The Vinson family has been part of the mortgage industry and a member of the St. Louis community for more than 25 years. We know that having an experienced and licensed Loan Officer available to you is an important part of keeping those nightmares at bay and putting your dream home within reach.

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# Top *Luxury* Appliances

**T**he kitchen is a home's heart. It's where everyone comes together and where some of the best memories are made. Most of us do spend quite a lot of time in the kitchen, which means having appliances with the best style and performance available are a definite must. Especially in luxury homes, designer kitchens should never have to sacrifice one for the other, and there are a few items a luxury kitchen simply can't go without. Here are six stylish and efficient luxury kitchen must-have appliances to keep your kitchen running at peak performance.

## Sub-Zero Refrigerators

When talking refrigeration, Sub-Zero is one of the most versatile luxury refrigerator lines available. They've been working to perfect the art of freshness for almost 70 years, and when freshness pairs with impeccable design, you're certain to find a refrigeration system that fits your style. From built-ins to models that take a backseat in your kitchen's decor, Sub-Zero's got it all figured out, always keeping luxury at the forefront.



## French-Door Wall Ovens

I'm especially in love with 2015's newest trend in kitchen must-haves—the French-door wall oven. If you've got the space to incorporate one of these incredible appliances in your kitchen, then you're one of the lucky ones. They're stunning, sleek, and definitely a stand-out piece for any kitchen. On top of their French kitchen style, a la Julia Child, they're also known to be a little safer than conventional ovens. You can get much closer to the front, and there's no need to sacrifice your arm to a fiery oven just for the sake of pie.

## Thermador Dishwashers

After a load of dishes is finished, no one wants to have to repeat the process over by hand. Thermador dishwashers use some seriously hot water and high water pressure to get the job done the first time. Their line of dishwashers has both custom panel and stainless steel styles, with great features like a chef's tool drawer and a large capacity for wine glasses. Talk about luxury.

## Thermador Induction Cooktops

Thermador induction cooktops provide unmatched flexibility and responsiveness in the kitchen. They have an ultra-modern design built for quality and made to last. Induction cooktops are super powerful and have the ability to heat up to 50% faster than the standard gas cooktop. If you've got little kids in the house, this is the cooktop for you. This cooktop actually stays cool to the touch, preventing burns and making cooking for much safer for you and your little ones. Thermador's newest induction cooktop gives cooks the flexibility to use up to four pots or pans anywhere on its surface, hence the name The Freedom Induction Cooktop

## Wolf Range

If your dream kitchen involves the best of the best gourmet appliances, there's no substitute for a Wolf range. They're not your traditional stoves, so having a little culinary prowess to operate these professional style appliances is a good thing if you're thinking of adding one of these bad boys to your kitchen. If you're set on having a Wolf with dual-stacked burners and incredible style, don't let lack of cooking skills scare you away. They just take a little getting used to. Hey, even if you don't do much cooking at all, that sure is one good-looking appliance.



## Wine Chillers

You can certainly have a luxury kitchen without a wine chiller, but why would you want to? Even if you don't drink a lot of wine, adding a built-in wine chiller can add value to your home. If you do drink wine, you simply shouldn't go without. In order to successfully allow your favorite wines to age, they need to be stored in a stable, uniform temperature with controlled humidity. Wine chillers provide the perfect environment to entertain your guests with a delicious selection of vino. ∞

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# The Definition of Staging

by Sandra Harms, Home Decor Contributor

## Definition of Staging

{Stey-jing} | **Verb**

**D**efinition of Staging  
1. The act of preparing a private residence for sale in the real estate market place. The goal of staging is to make a home appealing to the highest number of potential buyers, thereby selling a property more swiftly and for more money.

While staging won't make your home sell for more than it's worth, it can set your home apart from the rest, and staging can even help boost the selling price of your home to the top of the range for comparable homes. It can also cut down time on the market. According to Kiplinger, 90% of buyers start their search on the Internet. It is vital to stage a home, whether it is vacant or occupied. Staging is a great way to make sure your online photos pop. On average, home sellers spend \$1800.00 to stage a home, but the costs can range from a couple of hundred dollars to \$5,000.00, or more. The expenses can include everything from bedding, furniture and accessories, to updated lighting, bathroom fixtures, paint, refinished kitchen cabinets, hardware, and landscaping.

Hiring a consultant to help you along the way can help save you money. Stagers can provide suggestions on the best way to present your house and offer professional advice on how to de-clutter, neutralize, and decorate your home to appeal to any buyer. In addition, stagers are professional shoppers with one goal in mind—to help you get the most for your dollar. They're focused on setting up your home to be picture ready and to keep your house on the market for the shortest amount of time.

If you're planning to stage your home on your own, here are seven staging tips you can use to help get your home market ready.

### 1. Utilize curb appeal.

A buyer's first impression is important, which makes good curb appeal absolutely essential. Many people will drive by a home before they even set an appointment to tour the inside.

Power wash the house and walkways, plant blooming flowers and greenery to spruce up planters, mow your lawn and get rid of weeds, purchase a new doormat, and illuminate your front walk with solar lights. If you have the space, add outdoor furniture with colorful accent pillows, and make sure to leave the porch light on at night.

### 2. De-clutter and De-personalize.

Stow away all family photos, magazines, mail, toys, counter appliances, and grooming supplies. Purge cupboards, cabinets, and closets of anything that is not absolutely essential. It may be necessary to rent a storage unit. In the bathroom, hang decorative towels, always have a fresh bar of soap, and a new shower curtain and liner is always a nice touch. Be sure to keep your trash cans empty, or out of sight, if possible.

### 3. Make it Sparkle.

Deep clean everything. Have your carpets professionally steam cleaned, refinish hardwood floors if necessary, scrub grout in tiled areas, wipe down baseboards, clean windows, dust everything (including win-

dow treatments). Beware of pet odors! Everyone loves a fresh smelling home. Plug-in room refreshers work great to give your home a welcoming scent. If the job is too big for you to handle alone, hire a service. Don't skimp on cleanliness. It's the most important aspect of staging.

### 4. Choose neutral Colors.

Rich monotone shades create a sophisticated backdrop that makes everything come together. Neutral colors help buyers to visualize how their furnishings might look in your home more easily. Try Sherwin Williams SW7038 Tony Taupe, or SW6073 Perfect Greige. Remember to touch up your trim with a bright white paint.

### 5. Rearrange your furniture.

Symmetrical arrangements work best for staging a home. Make sure to pull your furniture away from the walls. In the living room, try pairing sofas, chairs, and lamps. This will help create a cozy conversation area. You can also use an area rug to pull it the space together. Keep accessories simple. Lean a picture on the mantel with tall candleholders on either side. Limit live plants. Fresh cut flowers or a bowl of fresh fruit could also be a nice touch.

### 6. Use Extra rooms wisely.

Each room should have a clearly defined purpose. Think about what a buyer might want to see. An office? Guest room? An additional kids room? Pull furniture from other areas, purchase inexpensive furnishings, new bedding, or anything that will help give the area a specific purpose. No buyer ever wants to see a "junk room."

### 7. Entice people to explore the entire house.

By placing something that draws the eye to the top of the stairs or down hallways, you can pique curiosity and keep potential buyers interested throughout the whole house tour. A piece of artwork, a painted accent wall, a window seat, a colorful rug, or even a vase of flowers can all work to draw the eye.

Whether you stage your home yourself or hire a professional to do the work for you, the effort will be worth it. Not only will you have enticing photographs that will bring clients to your residence, you'll surely impress them with a home they can see themselves living in. Create a style for your home that people are looking for, and a quick sale is sure to follow. ∞



House in Style Owner and Interior Decorator  
Sandra Garrett Harms has been a Designer in the St. Louis area for over 16 years. Enjoying a referral based business she has developed many friendships and clients that return time & time again.

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contributing writer:

*Financial Advisor:*  
Thomas F. Helbig

**T**homas, a Retirement Planning Specialist, is a native of St. Louis, Missouri, and founder and CEO of Retirement Advisory Group. For 28 years he has focused on helping retirees and pre-retirees preserve and protect their wealth and generate more guaranteed lifetime income regardless of Wall Street's performance. Today, Thomas is a nationally recognized trainer and keynote speaker on the subject.

Thomas is no stranger to recognition and accolades. He was recently featured as an expert guest on the TV show "America's PremierExperts." The Show, filmed in Orlando, Florida, was seen on NBC, CBS, ABC and Fox network affiliates around the country. Helbig discussed how he is helping his clients achieve a worry-free retirement.

Helbig is the best-selling author of "The Boomer's Guild to a Worry-Free Retirement." He has been featured in USA today, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, St. Louis magazine and The St. Louis Post-Dispatch as one of the leading retirement planning specialists in the country.

Additionally, because of his expertise and significant contributions to his industry, he was recently featured in The Wall Street Journal as one of the country's leading "Trendsetters" in the financial services and retirement planning world. Thomas was also featured in Forbes magazine in the January 21, 2013 national edition as one of America's top 20 premier experts in the country.

Helbig is also an approved financial advisor through the National Ethics Bureau and has been named a Five Star Best in Client Satisfaction Wealth Manager three years in a row in the St. Louis magazine. This is an honor less than 7 percent of all the wealth managers in his area have achieved. ∞



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# Drake's Kids Cove

## How to make moving easier for kids!

**H**ello, I'm Drake Ellis, and I'm 11 years old. I enjoy sports and my dog Yanni. He likes to wake me up for school in the morning. Recently, I've started making YouTube videos with my best friend Ben. My parents are Rick and Tracy Ellis, and they sell a lot of houses.

I wasn't very happy when my parents told us we were moving a couple years ago. Actually, I was pretty mad. I mean, I lived next door to my best friend in the only house I'd ever known. I knew most of the kids in my neighborhood, and it was hard to leave them, but I'm glad my parents made sure we stayed in the same school. I love our new house now! After my Mom started her magazine last year, I started thinking it would be cool to write my own section helping kids when they have to move like I did. I hope these tips help make your move easier for you and your kids.

- Make sure you tell your kids as early as possible about the move.
- Let the kids be involved in picking paint colors and decorating their rooms.

- Show them cool places to visit around the new house. Walk the neighborhood and introduce them to their new friends.
- Help your child make a scrapbook about their old house with photos of their friends and have everyone sign it.
- Little kids may not understand all of their toys are going with them. Show them by packing a box of toys and telling them the movers will drive the box to the new house to be unloaded there.
- Remind your kids that not everything will change when they move. They'll still have their bed, clothes, and all their things.
- After you move, remind your children it's okay to be sad, but make sure they know they'll still get to visit their old friends and neighborhood. If you move to another state, they can call each other and talk on the phone.
- My mom and dad made sure we stayed busy after the move, and that we had many play dates with the kids from the old neighborhood. Even after the move, my old neighbor, Ben, is still my best friend! ∞



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# MARKETING WHIZ

Tracy Ellis  
RE/MAX Edge  
Weldon Spring, Mo.

With a strong background in sales and marketing, this sales associate has marketing products that will knock your socks off.

In 1996, Tracy Ellis was a mom determined not to send her children to daycare. "I worked for other real estate professionals doing their marketing and making cold calls," says Ellis, who is married to Rick and mom to four boys, Brett (25), Austin (19), Zack (13) and Drake (11).

Ellis, now a top-producing sales associate with RE/MAX Edge in Weldon Spring and Chesterfield, Mo., was doing more than a few cold calls. In fact, working from her home for a top RE/MAX agent, she would page through the Haines Directory, a huge marketing database, and obtain 10 to 15 listing appointments each week. "Business was so good that the agent wouldn't even follow through with half of the leads," says Ellis. "I thought I should be doing this for myself instead of for someone else."

So in 2000, she did just that.

This article was originally published in *LORE Magazine!*





“In my first month, I had three closings from cold calling FSBOs,” she said. “I was making great money without a lot of time away from my kids.”

### **A Booming Business**

In 2000, husband Rick also earned his license. “Although he had a great career with an IT company, we realized that if he were to enter real estate full time, I could push to the next level,” she says. “Rick finally quit his IT job in December 2014 and joined my real estate team.”

Like most working moms, Ellis felt the pressure that role entails. Balancing work and family is never easy. “I felt like a failure a lot of days, but at the same time, I wanted to teach my boys the importance of a strong work ethic.” That meant including them in the business, doing things such as putting up signs, handing out fliers and more.



### **Say My Name**

When it comes to marketing, says Ellis, “I think one of my clients said it best when he interviewed me along with more than 10 other real estate professionals for his listing. He told me that if an agent isn’t marketing him- or herself, how could that person market his home?” The truth is that Ellis is a marketing idea machine. “I love marketing, and I’m thinking of new ideas daily. My poor husband! He knows when I get that look in my eye, the next big idea is coming,” she laughs.

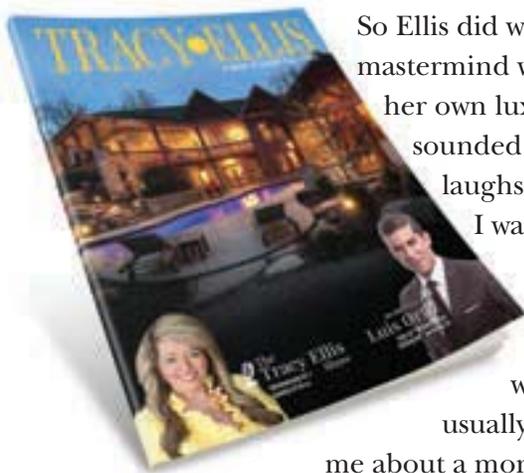
**A Radio Star Is Born**

While marketing was always a priority for Ellis, it became even more important during the market downturn of the mid 2000s. “I knew I had to do something different to get the word out about my listings. I started doing a weekly radio show with my current broker, and we’d discuss our listings and what was happening in the real estate market,” she says. After a couple of years, she and Rick moved the show to a local talk station.

The show features local experts who discuss homebuying strategies, and Ellis talks about her listings. She allows charities to promote fundraising events on the show, as well. “I also try to keep the show personal. My husband frequently co-hosts,” she says. Because of the personal nature of the show, Ellis has been surprised at the number of calls that come from people reaching out for help. “I’ve had women in abusive situations who call me asking for help. They say that they can tell I care,” says Ellis. “And I do care. I will help anyone who calls.”

**Print Is Not Dead**

Although radio has been a great marketing outlet, Ellis says, “I realized that not everyone listens to talk radio and that, therefore, I needed more print marketing. When you are selling a \$2 million dollar property, the owners aren’t going to be content with an ad in the paper every once in a while.”



So Ellis did what any other marketing mastermind would do: in 2013, she started her own luxury property magazine. “It sounded like a great idea at the time,” laughs Ellis, “but I had no idea what I was getting myself into.”

Producing a magazine is a huge time commitment. “I sell real estate during the day, and when I’m in magazine mode, I usually work on it until 3 a.m. It takes me about a month to complete each issue.

Despite the commitment, Ellis says it’s well worth it. Since launching, she hired a writer “to help me tell the perfect



I KNEW I HAD TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

to get the word out about my listings. I started doing a weekly radio show with my current broker, and we’d discuss our listings and what was happening in the real estate market.

— Tracy Ellis



Three of Ellis' boys, Drake (11), Austin (19), and Zack (13) hanging out with "Million Dollar Listing" star Madison Hildebrand (in tan sweater.)

Below: Not content with a radio show and a magazine, Ellis joined forces with a local homebuilder to shoot a television series.



story," she says. Rick and a photographer, Karl Lund, take photos for her listings and the magazine. The magazine is a hit, and she's gone from twice a year to quarterly publication. The magazines are distributed to local businesses. Ellis also pays to have magazine racks in local grocery stores.

In addition to highlighting her listings, she also features stories about charities and "our newest addition, where we will recognize a teacher, veteran or first responder," she says. The magazine's reach goes far beyond the Missouri borders, according to Ellis. "It's allowed me to network with top-producing real estate professionals all over the world, including Madison Hildebrand, Bravo's "Million Dollar Listing" star. "We featured his Malibu home in the last issue. I've also partnered with a style magazine in St. Louis, called Gazelle & Gazelle West. I'm the real estate contributor for their magazine, and they're contributing their expert style advice in mine."

### The Missing Link

Now that Ellis could check off radio marketing and a magazine, she decided to explore television. "A local homebuilder asked me about being in a TV show," she says. Ellis collaborated on the project. "We shot four different episodes to appear over three months on the local ABC affiliate, Sunday mornings," she says. The show features a local custom homebuilder who explains the different stages of building a home. A representative of a local mortgage company explains the different types of loans available. "Some of my clients' listings are featured on the show, and I interview past clients," she says.

Exhausted yet? Not Ellis. “I work all the time, so it doesn’t leave a lot of time for hobbies. Having a radio show is pretty entertaining and being able to pick what I want to put in my magazine is a lot of fun,” she says. “I’m blessed to have a supportive husband I’ve been with since I was 15 years old.”

For the time being, Ellis is content with her marketing projects; however, the wheels continue to turn. Something new is sure to be just around the bend. ◀



## MY MOST INTERESTING TRANSACTION

“I listed a \$1.5 million home in a gated community on a bluff overlooking the Missouri River,” says Ellis. “The property was behind a gate, making it difficult for people to view it.

“I decided to plan an event, offering tours of the home to the public. Rick and I sold tickets for \$50 apiece. All the money was donated to the Missouri Military Memorial Foundation.

“I had no idea what an undertaking this would be. For starters, cars couldn’t drive behind the gate out of respect to other homeowners. So we asked Enterprise Rent-A-Car to donate passenger vans to shuttle

guests to the mansion. Next, I needed drivers. I was able to get people to donate their time. I also arranged for a nearby lot to allow the guests to park there. Anheuser-Busch and Glazers Distributors of Missouri donated all of the alcohol. I had a company come in with different types of wine. Restaurants donated food. I had live entertainment, and we raised almost \$2,000 for the Foundation.

“We didn’t sell the home that night, but I did get it sold. That buyer listed his house with me as well.”





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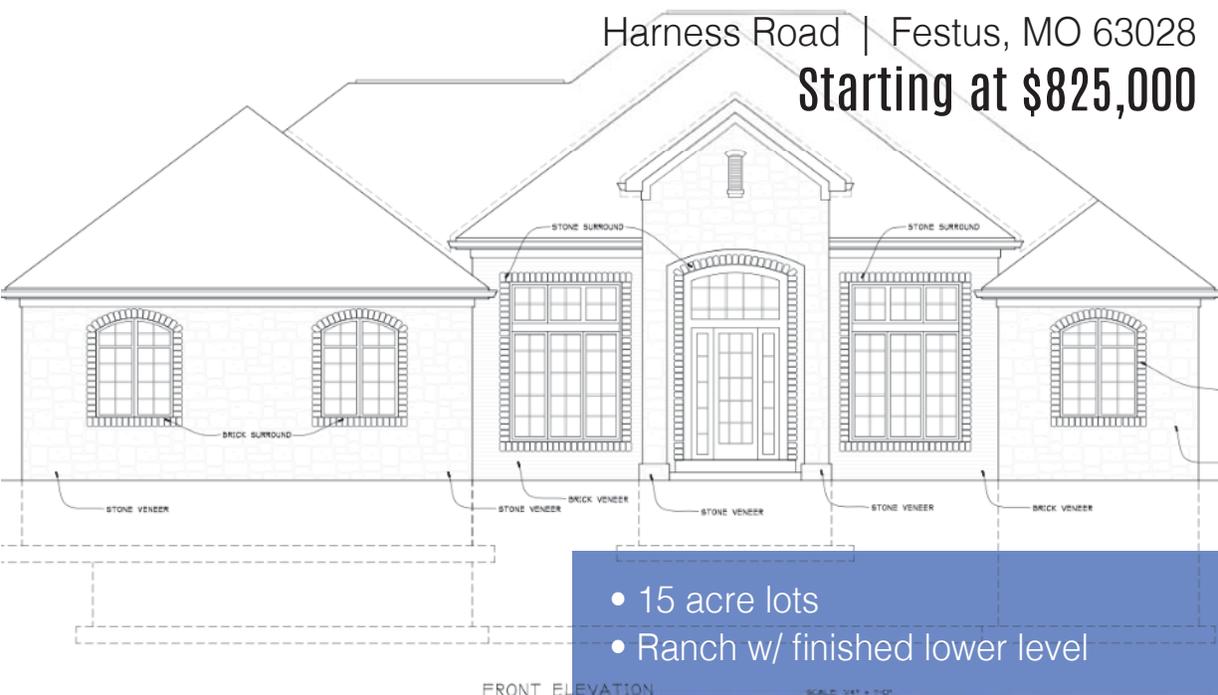


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