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BUY | SELL | RENT

Compliments of Les Twarog

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Hello again valued clients!

We get many requests for information on Strata Hotels for investment, so here are the facts:

1. Very hard to finance - so be ready to pay all cash.
2. You don't have the same control as condo ownership.
3. Personal use is 10-30 days each year, per hotel.
4. If your unit is occupied you have to use another.
5. Most are without kitchens, except for the Rosedale.
6. They are difficult to resell.
7. Rate of return is around 1%, despite claims of 7-10%.

Short List of Vancouver Strata Hotels:

1. Rosedale - 838 Hamilton
2. Westin Grand - 433 Robson
3. Le Soleil - 567 Hornby
4. Marriott - 1128 W Hastings

So it's a buyer beware situation.

In gratitude,

Les Twarog

www.CallRealEstate.ca



STEADY MARKET ACTIVITY PERSISTS

The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver (REBGV) reported that residential property sales in Greater Vancouver reached 2,771 on the Multiple Listing Service® (MLS®) in August 2014. This represents a 10.2 percent increase over sales recorded in August 2013, and a 4.3 percent rise over the 10-year sales average for August.

"Activity this summer has been strong but not unusual for our region," Ray Harris, REBGV president, said. "The volume of home sales has been higher than we've seen in the last three years, yet below the record-breaking levels of the past decade."

The MLS® Home Price Index composite benchmark price for all residential properties in Metro Vancouver came in at \$631,600 in August 2014 - a five percent increase compared to the same month last year.

"Broadly speaking, home prices in the region are continuing to experience modest, incremental gains," Harris said.

New listings for detached, attached and apartment properties in Metro Vancouver totaled 3,940 in August, while the total number of properties currently listed for sale on the MLS® system in Metro Vancouver was 14,768 - 7.9 percent less than in August 2013.

There were 1,158 detached properties sold in August 2014 at a benchmark price of \$984,300, while 1,126 apartment properties sold at a benchmark price of \$379,200 and 487 attached properties sold at a benchmark price of \$474,900.

Wondering how your property price compares? Please call today for an update on the latest pricing and market activity in your area!



VREB

A CLEAN SWEEP!



While just about everyone enjoys a clean house, there are precious few who enjoy the work involved. Even the most hygienic of homeowners would rather spend their time doing something else. Make cleaning your home an easier, faster and less unpleasant process with the following tips.

First things first, have the right tools – your cleaning equipment should be easy to maintain while making your task easier. For instance, brooms with angled heads and dusters with telescopic handles make it easier to clean hard-to-reach places; mops with removable heads are easier to clean, and those with looped (as opposed to cut) ends are more effective and durable.

Be sure to keep your cleaning equipment in good working order, too. You'll spend considerably more time passing a poorly maintained vacuum over the same area of carpeting – and still leave more dirt behind – than you will with a vacuum whose filter you've regularly cleaned/replaced or belt you've changed as needed.

Now that you're well equipped, it's time to get organized. Gather all your essential cleaning supplies – your all-purpose cleaner, sponges, microfiber cloths and gloves, for example – into some kind of caddy that can travel with you from room to room. Having everything you need within handy reach will help prevent you from wasting time or getting distracted as you retrieve that forgotten item.

Organize a plan of attack, too. Figure out what chores need to be done, when and by whom. Create cleaning checklists and/or schedules that will work for your particular family/

lifestyle. You might have a different checklist for each room or person in your home, for example, or checklists for each day, week, and/or month.

When it comes time to get down to business, do whatever you need to do to get in the right headspace. That might mean cranking up the high-energy music, playing that newly downloaded podcast or streaming your favorite TV show. For those who need to see the light at the end of the tunnel, that may mean setting a timer – when your 15 or 30 minutes are over, so is your work. For parents, that may mean setting up a cleaning game like musical chores for children – when the music changes, the kids switch chores. If it helps motivate you (or your spouse or children) have a reward ready for when the chores are done.

Of course, another helpful way to make your home easy to clean is to design it that way. When you have the opportunity to redecorate, opt for finishes and materials that will help reduce the amount of time you need to spend cleaning, rather than adding to it. Walls need a fresh coat? Choose a paint with a high scrubbability rating. Carpeting looking worse for wear? Consider replacing it with carpet tiles rather than the wall-to-wall variety. Ditching those outdated appliances for new models? Avoid stainless steel unless you want to spend more time erasing fingerprints.

GETTING SETTLED

Moving day has come and gone; you'll be unpacking and decorating for months. In the meantime, there are a few things you can do to make your new house or condo feel a little more like home.

- **Maintain your routines.** When your surroundings change, it's important for you, your kids and even your pets to remember you haven't changed. So be consistent: make a point of honoring the same rituals – bedtime(s), mealtimes, appointments such as date night or family game night – in your new home as you did in your old one.
- **Make sure everybody's "comfort items" are at the ready upon arrival in your new home.** For a toddler, that may be a certain stuffed animal and for you it could be a favorite coffee mug. This tip is a lot easier to follow if you pay these items special attention while packing for your move – make sure they're easily accessible!
- **Carve out a sanctuary space.** Setting up your new home is a lengthy process. In the short term, make a priority of establishing one room, or even a corner of a room, with all the creature comforts. Ideally, this space is a relaxing retreat from cleaning, repairing, unpacking and all the other stresses that are part of settling into a new home.
- **Get outside and explore – on foot.** Walking is the best way to get your bearings in a new setting; you won't be distracted, you can dawdle, and you'll be able to go places you can't by car, all of which means you'll see more. Discover your new favorite café or find the local gym so you can return to your pre-move routines.



LEAVE IT

Much is said about what should go when you list your home – clutter, odor – but what should *stay*? Here are some things a savvy seller might consider leaving in their for-sale home.

- **Some furniture.** Without it, potential buyers may get confused as to a room's purpose, and have difficulty remembering the details of your property and envisioning themselves living in it. As well, imperfections in your walls and floors (like scuffs and stains) will be all the more noticeable in an empty room. Consider having your home staged if you can't leave your own furniture in it.
- **Paperwork.** For sellers of houses, this could mean an explanation of any improvements you've made that lower utility or other costs of running the home. For condo dwellers, this could mean a current condo newsletter and/or activity schedule, so buyers can see what life in your condominium has to offer. You can even consider leaving a note about a few things you've particularly enjoyed about living in this home and this area. Tell them, for instance, about those tucked-away hiking trails and that fantastic little restaurant nearby that they might not know about otherwise.
- **Photographs.** If you've done any renovation work, you might want to put some before and after photos in an album so buyers can see the value you've added to the property. Similarly, provide some photos of your property's exterior on a sunny spring day, for example, so buyers can see it at its best no matter what the conditions are like on the day they come to view it.

Les' Lessons

Water Awareness – Our Most Precious Resource

Human beings can survive only 2-3 days without water. If you don't want to drink bottled water for the rest of your life, we need to be aware of and protect our local freshwater ecosystem. Here are some tips to keep our water safe...

1. Use plants, grass & gravel instead of concrete, asphalt and paving stones around your home to reduce water runoff.
2. Use native plants and natural fertilizers instead of fertilizers and pesticides.
3. Don't over water your lawns and gardens.
4. Recycle and safely dispose of garbage and hazardous or toxic household products.
5. Toilets and sinks are not chemical and waste receptacles.
6. Use non-toxic household products whenever possible.
7. Recycle used motor oil. 1 Litre can contaminate 1 million litres of drinking water.
8. Report any polluters to the authorities.

Vancouver Downtown

Penthouse on 31st Floor
Prime Location
1,870 sq ft on 2 Levels
2 Bed / 2 Full Bath
Rooftop deck with hot tub



Vancouver West Side

3.5 Floors of Elegant Luxury
South Granville
5,385 sq ft
Excellent school catchment
5 Bed & 6 Bath



Shaughnessy

Prime location in Shaughnessy
21,888 sq ft Lot Size
6,479 sq ft with finished bsmt
3 Bed / 4 Bath
Former Georgie Winner Home



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Check out all our websites at www.AllianceFirstCall.ca

