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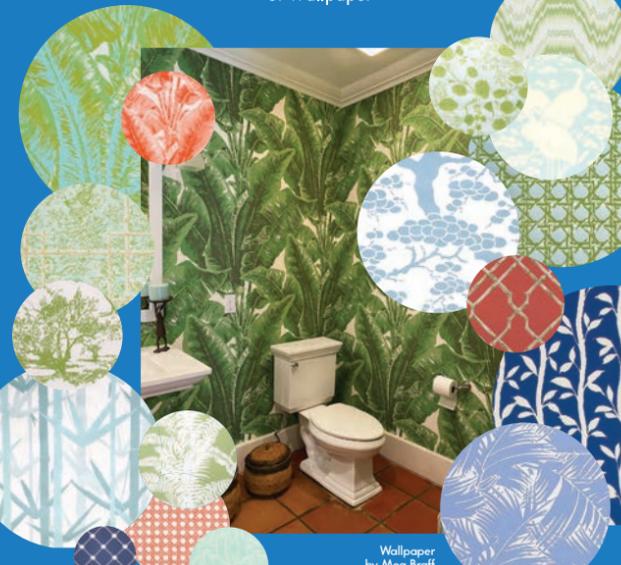



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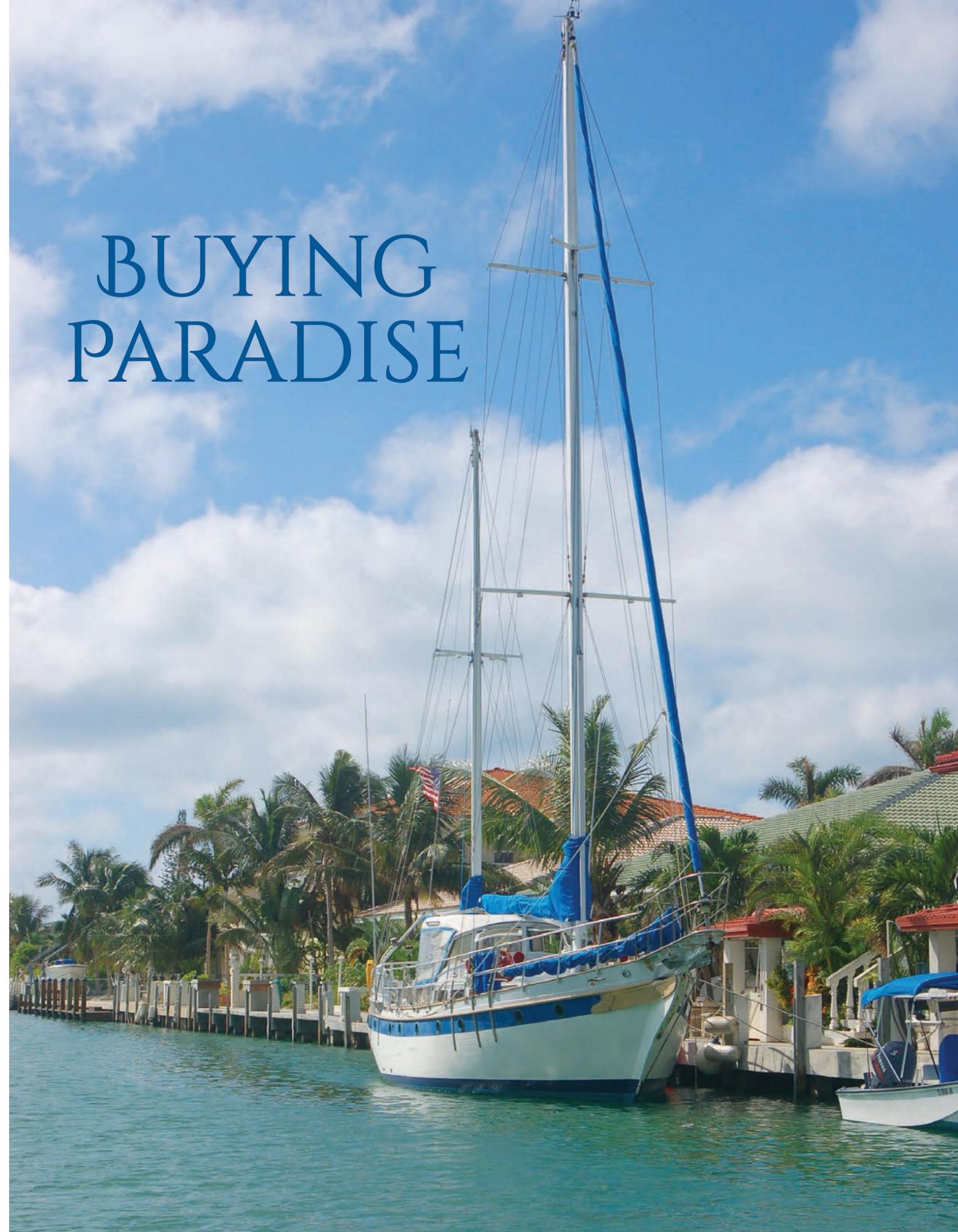
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# BUYING PARADISE

# Selling the Sunny Florida Lifestyle

WRITTEN BY SAM SCHUNK  
VENICE GULF COAST LIVING MAGAZINE

**H**ome is where the heart is, as the saying goes, and that seems to hold especially true in the Gulf Coast. As those of us who live here can attest, whether we're seasonal or year-round residents, it's a uniquely beautiful place with a lifestyle that's beyond compare. It's no wonder, then, that our area attracts repeat and new visitors each year who come to experience the best this region has to offer, including excursions on the Gulf or any number of waterways, journeys along the trails at a score of parks, or a daytrip to one of the picturesque beaches that stretch along our shoreline. The fact is that, for thousands of visitors each year, once they discover what a dynamic place this is, they want to find their own place in the sun here. And for those visiting during the summer months—which often includes families with children or grandchildren—this is the season in which they fall in love with all these attributes and decide to make their move to the Suncoast.



If you're looking to sell a home, summer may be an opportune time to move forward with those plans. According to a study by HomeLight.com, 67.6% of top agents found that selling a home in the summer is easier than in the fall. When asked why, the most cited reasons were that families want to move before the new school year begins and companies relocate employees at this time. Additionally, natural factors can also have a positive impact. Daylight hours tend to be longer in the summer months, so a home can still be seen to its best advantage in the evening by potential buyers, expanding the opportunity to showcase properties. Also, as a season when trees and flowers are in full bloom, lawns and gardens may look fresher and more visually appealing.





## *Delight in the benefits of outdoor kitchens*

**A**nother reason why real estate professionals recommend selling homes during this period is that summer buyers may be more motivated than those seeking a home in fall. Statistics support this: the HomeLight.com study reported that 47.6% of agents found that summer homebuyers were more driven to achieve their goals than their autumn counterparts, with 91.5% of buyers wanting to get settled before school is in session. This timing makes sense when you consider that these transitions can be more challenging for families to coordinate and more disruptive to their children's studies during the school year. In addition to families, those who work in education or auxiliary fields may also find it easier to schedule a move at this time. That's why for a significant percentage of summer house hunters, the start of school looms as a major deadline by which they want to find and move into the home of their dreams.

With so many active buyers on the lookout for properties, how does that impact the market? In this case, as the HomeLight.com study supports, the increased buyer demand is usually met by a greater supply of homes: when asked to weigh in on summer trends, 55.9% of real estate professionals agreed that they saw higher buyer demand and 57% attested that they observed heightened competition from other sellers. Current market conditions in our area seem to indicate fewer listings being available at this time, which tends to result in more of a sellers' market in which the demand exceeds supply of homes, so it may be even better timing to put your home up for sale. Setting these factors aside for a moment, it's advised that no matter what time of the year you choose to list your home for sale, that you want to ensure that it stands out, making a positive impression both in terms of its pricing and appearance.

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*Create  
Memories*

**H**aving your home competitively priced is advantageous to you and ultimately, any potential buyers. When the price is right, buyers are more likely to respond positively, recognizing the value, which can translate to less time on the market, multiple offers, and more. Pricing it too high or too low can be a costly error: overvaluing it can result in a longer stay on market, less showings, and fewer offers, while underestimating its worth can mean missing out on a larger potential return. According to the HomeLight.com report, 70.8% of agents found that the most common mistake sellers have made in their markets is to overprice their properties. But don't worry; when you rely on a skilled real estate professional, they can draw upon expertise, knowledge, and connections, helping you pinpoint a solid asking price for your home.

When it comes to preparing your home for sale, there are numerous things you can do to set your home apart from other properties. Before you make the leap to listing your home, you'll want to address any necessary repairs because doing so helps buyers to focus on all of your home's positive



*Even our furry friends love the Florida lifestyle!*



*Relax while enjoying a meal poolside*

attributes. Completing these projects prior to putting a home on the market not only increases the odds of ending up with a higher sale price, but also reduces the chances that a buyer will request any repairs be made after a home inspection. Some of the most common items to tend to are damaged roofs, broken windows, and peeling siding.

A pro tip to consider is having a pre-listing home inspection so that your home can best be evaluated for any potential repairs. In most cases, experts have found that it can be worth the cost for several reasons. It is possible that homes, even those that have been constructed more recently, may have issues that an owner is unaware of, so finding out up front gives you the opportunity to correct any potential problems before listing your home. Also, if your home passes this type of inspection, that knowledge may give buyers extra peace of mind. If you're not sure whether you want to take this step, you may want to check with your real estate professional who can advise you on whether it is a good investment, given your situation.

After completing any repairs, the next area to focus on is your home's exterior and curb appeal because a home that makes a positive first impression is likely to sell more quickly and to command a higher asking price. The care shown to the outside areas also gives potential buyers a sense of what to expect inside the home; when these spaces are crisp, clean, and attractive, they will want to keep looking and see what else is in store for them. Among the many tasks to add to your to-do list for a successful home sale are the following: tend to regular lawn maintenance (mowing, watering, etc.); trim bushes and shrubs; water plants; weed and mulch flowerbeds; touch up or repaint exterior areas including the front door; pressure wash sidewalks, pool areas, and siding; and seal pavers, driveways, and other areas. If you would like more information about heightening your property's curb appeal, visit our website, [VeniceGulfCoastLivingMagazine.com](http://VeniceGulfCoastLivingMagazine.com), locate our Buying Paradise page in the Gulf Coast Home section, and read the article "Enhancing Your Home's First Impression."

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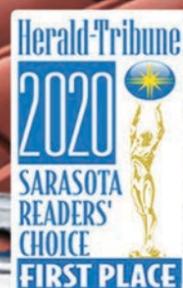
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## GULF COAST HOME- BUYING PARADISE

Along the same lines—especially in our area, where outdoor living is such an important part of our lifestyle throughout the year—you'll want to focus on exterior areas such as the lanai, pool, porch, or similar spaces. When people get to know this region, much of what they love about it centers on activities we can do outside, such as swimming, soaking in a jacuzzi, grilling a meal, or resting in a hammock between trees, to name a few. As such, Floridians tend to put a premium on residences with these features, so if your home has an amazing outdoor living space with a bar that's ideal for entertaining family and friends, it is wise to showcase that asset to its greatest advantage. When these parts of the home are given extra attention, it helps to ensure that prospective buyers can better envision themselves living and relaxing in your abode.

Experts recommend having your outdoor areas staged or at least furnished since buyers can then have a better sense of how large the space is. Conversely, a room or space like a patio that lacks furniture can come across as being smaller than it actually is, possibly dissuading buyers who like to entertain larger groups of people. When you're selling your home during the summer, it affords the opportunity to decorate it to reflect the season in all its glory. A few simple ideas to get you started are to arrange bright flowers in a vase on a table, in window boxes, or in decorative containers around the lanai. Next, update your chaise and other chairs with vividly hued cushions and pillows for a pop of color, and then place some candles in summery fragrances along the bar.



After making these changes, it's time to depersonalize and declutter your home. As those in the know advise, these tasks are imperative: putting away our family portraits, figurines, and other objects, and filing away papers helps to provide buyers with a clean slate, so to speak, enabling them to see themselves living within a particular space more easily. Storing these items is also recommended for safety and security purposes, since this ensures that a seller's private information and personal details are concealed from visitors to the home.

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## GULF COAST HOME

### BUYING PARADISE

Summertime means warmer temperatures, so keeping your home cool during any showings or open houses is another part of providing a proper welcome to potential buyers. When the home is comfortably cool, guests feel like they can take their time and look at everything at their own pace; whereas if it's warm, they may be less likely to linger. If your home has a central air-conditioning system, make sure it's performing efficiently and has been recently serviced by a professional HVAC technician. Plenty of alternatives exist for keeping the space cool in homes without these systems, such as installing window air conditioners, turning on ceiling fans, and placing floor fans around the home.

When it's time for a showing, there are a few things you can do to make potential buyers feel welcome. Consider putting out a refreshing beverage such as lemonade, iced tea, or cold water, especially if it's a warmer day. Next, try to take advantage of any natural light, so open the drapes and pull up the blinds to let the sunshine pour in. This type of lighting helps buyers to see more clearly and reduces eye strain. For areas that lack natural sources of brightness, lamps and ceiling lights can provide additional illumination. Remember to set your thermostat to a comfortable temperature. Finally, before you head out the door, make sure to clean up after your pets or children, and stash away any clutter.

Like anything in life, timing is key when listing your home for sale. Among the



*Swing into your new lifestyle and celebrate!*

real estate agents participating in the HomeLight.com study, 71% reported that the beginning of summer was the optimal time for putting a home on the market, while 18.4% found that the season's start and end were equally effective times to list a home. If that schedule doesn't allow you enough time to prepare, however, don't be discouraged: 36.6% of the respondents said that buyers were equally motivated during summer and fall.

Another key to success when selling a home is to not go it alone. That's why, no matter what time of year you seek to put your home on the market, seeking out the help of a talented real estate professional is such an important part of the process. With their knowledge and expertise, they can guide you every step along the way, ensuring that the transaction runs smoothly and that you can effortlessly move into the next season of your life as soon as possible.

