

# realestatefor realpeople

By Mara Muller

## Do Open Houses Really Sell Homes?

You have decided to sell your home and hired a great Realtor. One of the items you will discuss with your Realtor is whether or not to have Open Houses. First let me explain that there are two very different types of Open Houses, serving two distinct purposes.

The first is for Realtors and called a Broker's Open House. It is typically on a weekday morning, as soon as the house is on the market, and its purpose is to introduce new listings to local Realtors. The chance that a home will sell as a result of a Broker's Open House can be relatively high. Serious buyers usually work closely with buyer agents in order to find a home. By exposing a listing to more agents, you increase the number of showings to bone fide buyers. Just last month I held a Broker's Open for a home in Pelican Marsh and the owner received two offers from clients of agents who had come to the Wednesday morning Broker's Open!

In Naples, especially during season, the Open House has become an integral part of Sunday afternoon, whether or not the browsers are buying. Some owners worry that Sunday open houses are more of a hit-and-miss proposition. When a home is open, not everyone who walks through the door will be a legitimate buyer.

When I am holding a house open, I require that every person through the door signs in. If someone is unwilling to give me their name, I do not feel that it would be wise to allow that person access to my clients' house. I heartily welcome neighbors who want to see the home—perhaps they have friends or family relocating from other areas.

An open house puts the sellers on their toes—the house should be as pretty as a picture. Cleaning off all counter tops in the bathroom and kitchen is a definite must.

It can be a difficult thing to pack up the kids and or animals and vacate the house for the whole afternoon. For that reason, I recommend that Open Houses not be a weekly event. It is most important to open the house to the public early in the listing. Open houses create an excitement about a new listing, and are good for feedback. Last spring in Saturnia Lakes, we had a perfect example of the excitement that an Open House can create. An agent had shown buyers a beautiful home we had listed there. The buyers asked to come back to see the house again, so I suggested they come that evening when we were having a special Evening Open House to accommodate prospects after work. There were so many visitors to the Open House that the agent's buyers felt compelled to submit a strong offer that evening! We successfully negotiated the contract and our sellers set a record for highest unfurnished selling price in that neighborhood that still stands!

**Mara Muller** has lived in Naples since 1996 with her husband and two daughters. She is a CRS (Certified Residential Specialist—only 3% of Realtors nationwide!). Contact her at [www.MaraSellsNaples.com](http://www.MaraSellsNaples.com) or 272-6170 with all your real estate questions.

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