

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE

Thera Buttarro





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Thera Buttaro is a woman who knows what she wants, is resourceful when need be, and perseveres even in the face of life-threatening circumstances.

In 1976, Thera wanted more than just a job, she wanted a profession. After dedicating her time to the raising of her three children, she needed something for herself; something that would allow her to interact with people on an intellectual level. Real estate gave her the career and the interaction she craved.

Then the 1980s hit and with interest rates at astronomical levels, real estate took an ugly turn.

In her search to find something that provided income, Thera, always attuned to the market, couldn't help but notice the growing popularity of the personal computer. She quickly enrolled in a local college to study computer technology and found herself not only being able to write programs and build a computer from scratch but also to sell computer equipment, which she did for the next 10 years.

Then, as Thera points out, "life changes our plans." Thera was diagnosed with breast cancer. In a moment of reflection, after going through treatment and nearly dying of pneumonia, she made another life-changing move. "I needed to

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get back in control,” she says. “I thought if I’m going to work this hard, I’m going to sell real estate and not work for anyone else again.”

With the support of her husband, Thera built Sonoma Coast Living, a residential sales company specializing in her favorite waterfront area and the place she’s proud to call home. While most of her customers are retirees, many more are just like Thera and her husband were just 23 years ago. They are working Monday through Friday in the stifling city areas, escaping to the beach whenever they can to relax, enjoy a bottle of wine, and soak up the peaceful feeling that only the coast can provide. “Everything along the coast has a certain appeal to it,” she says.

Thera can relate to the draw of the coast, since she and her husband succumbed to it many years ago, and her customers appreciate that. But Thera doesn’t just take their initial love of the area at face value; she really tries to understand what her customers’ real motivation is for wanting to live along Sonoma’s coast.

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But there’s another facet to Thera’s business that’s equally intriguing. Early on, Thera saw that buyers would come to the area, look around and then go away for a couple of years. In an effort to capture those potential customers, she created a separate entity that focuses on vacation rentals.

Currently that side of the business manages 80 homes from quaint beach cottages to expansive oceanfront residences catering to families traveling together, couples wanting a beach getaway, and kids looking for some coastal fun. What does this do for Thera? It allows her to see consumer trends early on and share them with her buyers and sellers.

As Thera points out, “survival is good,” and her vacation rental company has helped fill in the gaps when real estate suffered. “Just because you make the most one year does not make you immune to making the least the next,” she says.

When it comes down it, trust is everything to Thera, whether it’s among her customers or among her fellow real estate professionals. “The professional standard of behavior is so critical. The more of it there is the better the market is going to be, the better the buyers will behave, the better the environment for sellers.”

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To learn more about Thera Buttaro,
please call her directly on her cell at (707) 849-5241
or her Sonoma Coast Living office at (707) 875-2500,
or email her at Thera@sonomacoastliving.com
You can also visit www.sonomacoastliving.com