



*... because
your move
matters!*



Sheila Dowell

Broker-Associate

Distinctive Homes ~

Distinctive Lifestyles

Cell: 713-594-7391

Sheila@SheilaDowell.com

www.SheilaDowell.com

Sheila Dowell's “Home News”

*News To Help You Save
Time, Money and Have Some Fun!*

From the Desk of Sheila Dowell ...

I grew up in Europe... France, to be specific. My family rented...1st in a high rise apartment building, then in a 200 year old home in Fontainebleau, just outside of Versailles. This felt “normal to us”, since neither parent had grown up in “their own house”. Their families had always rented.

When my father retired and we returned to Texas, he and my mother bought a very small home...no game room, media room or outdoor kitchen!

When my husband and I bought our 1st home in Southern California, we were thrilled to have a garage come along with it! Moving to Texas for jobs in 1982 and buying in The Woodlands catapulted us into a new “normalcy”... 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, big kitchen... all on a 10,000 sqft lot! Michael’s parents came to visit one year and were both amazed and impressed!

We... like many of our friends... moved up to the BIG house... 4 bedrooms, game room, swimming pool, summer kitchen. We hired landscapers, cleaning crews, and more to maintain that house. It worked! SO well, that builders began to build even bigger... 5000-10,000 sqft with more amenities, bigger yards to accommodate basketball and tennis courts.

Today, in our neighborhoods, we are seeing a change: smaller homes and more townhomes are being built. Walking communities are in high demand.

Forbes, in their recent Real Estate Trends Update, went 1 step further: some the trends their experts detailed here are already in place... others are up-coming... all will make an impact on us.

1. Co-Working Space As A Shared Amenity: With more and more people working from home, whether part-time or full-time, the need for a flexible co-working space is growing. A trend we see in apartments is the carving out of space in the clubhouse and turning it into co-working space (adding chairs, communal tables, plugs and a coffee machine). It’s not complicated or expensive and tenants simply love it. - Ellie Perlman, Blue Lake Capital LLC (Sheila: Hughes Corp is currently building something similar in Town Center, The Woodlands-adding townhomes to the mix-to be completed in 2020.)

2. Growing Sense Of Community: I think all types of real estate, with the exception of industrial, are being reevaluated right now to figure out how to provide a larger sense of community. We’re already starting to see it with the rise of co-working and, to a lesser extent, co-living. And on the retail side, you’re seeing major mall developers demolishing rentable space just to add more common-area amenities. Robin Bhalla, The Festival Companies (Sheila: And some of the Mall tenants are downsizing those stores and building smaller ones within Neighborhood Shopping Centers.)

3. Spread Of Shared Living Spaces: With the price of real estate always going up over time accompanied by the growing population, younger adults are finding it harder to buy in trendy populated areas. The answer to this problem is building more micro-communities. The younger generations are opting out of big mortgages and utility bills for more travel and play time. So build small, as this is the new call!! - Chris Ryan, Beyond Properties Group (eXp Realty)

So many choices.... Thinking about making a move in 2020 or 2021? Call Me. Let’s plan it together!

~ Sheila



“Master Chef-in-Training”

Michael is Sheila's husband of 30+years. His hobbies include ballroom dancing (Still Dancing!), gourmet cooking - especially baking, and -just added- GOLF! We played golf 15 years ago (Michael, the natural athlete and Sheila... not so), so the return to this sport has been a bit slow. Fortunately, we aren't thinking of competing with this sport!

I have always loved to bake but -honestly- having to prepare a Dinner Meal 6 nights a week can make anyone want to pull out their “Easy To Make Dinners” as often as possible!

Michael's Roast

Ingredients

- 1 3-3.5 lb bottom round roast
- 1 large onion, sliced thick
- 6 celery stalks (more if you wish!)
- ½ lb of carrots, chopped into large chunks (more if you wish!)
- 6 red potatoes, quartered
- Olive Oil for searing meat and sweating onions

Preheat Oven to 325 degrees.

Dry the roast, add salt and pepper to it - to your taste. Sear roast in large Dutch oven or pot on all sides, then remove to a large baking pan. Add onions to the Dutch Oven/pot and turn quickly, coating them in roast's juices. Add onions and all other vegetables to the large baking pan containing the roast. Add 2 cups of beef broth (I like Herb Ox beef broth & seasoning). Add 1 cup of Merlot Wine...definitely make this a wine you would consider drinking! Cook 2.5-3 hours or until your meat thermometer registers 160 degrees.

Just a note:

If this is for only 2 people, you may want to cut back on the vegetables and cook fresh ones when you re-serve the roast. If it's for family/company add or delete vegetables per everyone's tastes! Serves 6-8 usually! ❖

REAL Trends for 2020 and Beyond!

1. Comfortable Dining Rooms

As we continue to celebrate “Entertaining in Our Homes”, we find that homeowners have decided they don't want to give up their dining rooms—that's in the past. Now they want dining rooms to be less formal and more functional, says architect Elisa Morgante of Morgante-Wilson in Chicago. The best way to do this is by investing in a multipurpose table that can take wear and tear, comfy chairs with high backs and armrests, and washable fabrics. Fun light fixtures are replacing delicate ones, and some traditional dining room furnishings are disappearing—such as china cabinets used for fancy entertaining.

Thanks to All my Clients for their Referrals!

There are SO many people to say “Thank You” to this time!

I am also grateful when a past client refers a Friend... I feel like we already have a relationship!

Thank you to Anne and Jef Frick for referring their friends, Herb and Peggy Reinhold. Their beautiful home in Cochran's Crossing, The Woodlands was SOLD in 5 days...multiple offers! Downsizing to a smaller place with no yard was their goal!

Thank you to Jane Rayburn for thinking I would be “the best agent to maximize the sales price for her home once she was gone”. Before she passed away, she requested to her trustee that I be the one to sell her home. She wanted to make sure her children and grandchildren would benefit as much as possible from the gift she would leave them: 54 Bellweather Court in The Woodlands.

Thank you to Susan Blackmore for referring her (millennial!) son, Russell Wylie, to me. He was ready to buy his 1st home and I was lucky enough to be the one who coached him through the process! It's a gorgeous single story home in Woodforest with a “golf course size” lot...his dream!

Thank you to a remarkable couple (another millennial!)- Wesley and Christina Caldwell. They bought their 1st home through me, sold it, moved to a temporary lease and then closed on their “forever home” in The Woodlands! They knew exactly what they wanted and went after it when they found it.

After 25 years of being in Full Time Real Estate Sales, I still get excited when I am asked to help someone with the biggest investment they will probably ever make!

2. Home Elevators

As the baby boomer population ages, first-floor master bedroom suites are becoming more popular. But not every house or townhome provides space to include them. In cases where a home has multiple levels, an elevator provides help for those who have trouble climbing stairs, says Kipnis. He recommends building the feature in new homes, or at least leaving adequate space—3 1/2 feet by 4 1/2 feet on each level for future installation. The cost will vary depending on materials, finishes, and an electrician's hourly labor charge, but the total expense could run about \$15,000 per floor.

3. Remodeling Sells! Consider Remodeling Before Listing

Many homeowners don't want to take on the work and extra cost of fixing up their home before they list. Yet many buyers don't want to invest in a home where they know there are walls to paint, countertops to replace, and floors to resand. A Homeseller's BIG reward usually is a higher price and speedier sale. Call me for “real information on How I Can Help Generate a Faster Sale for More Money” using my contractors! My Sellers have done this many times!

4. Living Walls

For homeowners downsizing to a property with a smaller yard—or for those with limited flexibility or NO INTEREST in maintaining/paying to maintain a large yard, this trend is a true winner: living walls offer a way to connect to greenery by growing plants, vegetables, and herbs along the walls of a home, garage, or out-building. Landscape designer Michael Glassman of Michael Glassman & Associates in Sacramento, Calif., says, “Gardening is going up rather than out for aesthetics and consumption.” He recommends vines like star jasmine and creeping fig, edibles such as tomatoes and cucumbers, and herbs like rosemary and basil. Love the idea of livable outdoor art? Try this!



5. Downsizing Homes, Rooms, and Ornate Features

The McMansion craze has been dead for years, resulting in more homeowners looking to downsize and millennials never planning to go big. “They favor experiences over owning large high-maintenance, high-cost homes filled with lots of stuff,” says Ames. “It's the Marie Kondo version of shedding stuff.” Many home shoppers are also looking for simpler architectural detailing that pares maintenance and cost, as well as fewer rooms that will go unused, Ames says. Sheri Koones' new book, *Downsize: Living Large in a Small House* (The Taunton Press, 2019), offers an abundance of information for homeowners looking to pare down. ❖

- A free market evaluation of my property.
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18 Interesting Facts About Houston



Living near a Major City benefits all of us: airports, Medical Center, and more! See below for some "Fun Facts"!

1. It's got the jobs! Houston is the country's number one city for job creation. By a lot.
2. Its unemployment rate is far below the national level:
3. A paycheck goes farther in Houston than any other major metropolitan area.
4. Housing is affordable.
5. Houston didn't experience a housing bubble the way the rest of the country did.
6. It's home to more Fortune 500 headquarters than anywhere in America except for New York.
7. It's one of the centers of America's booming oil and gas industry.
8. Massive international trade gives another big jobs boost to the rapidly growing city.
9. Houston is called Space City for a reason; it's home of the NASA Astronaut Corps.
10. The New York Times calls it 'one of the country's most exciting places to eat.'
11. A spectacular range of ethnic cuisines, fantastic seafood, and great barbecue.
12. Ignore the Astros. The Texans, Rockets, and Dynamo are all winners.
13. It hosts the world's largest concentration of health care organizations, with scientists working hard to beat cancer.
14. The city is filled with world-class and unique museums and cultural landmarks, like the Rothko Chapel.
15. The combination of The University of Houston and Rice University means there are a bunch of smart people around.
16. Houston recently passed New York to become the most ethnically and racially diverse city in the US.
17. And finally, it's a great place for Southern hip hop!
18. There are 1,196 schools in Houston, TX. There are 490 elementary schools, 256 middle schools, 178 high schools and 272 private & charter schools.

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Sheila Dowell
Keller Williams Realty
2201 Lake Woodlands Drive
The Woodlands TX 77380

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Sheila Dowell
Keller Williams Realty
2201 Lake Woodlands Drive
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