

Palisadian-Post

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PAGE 23

THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2017 ♦ PACIFIC PALISADES, CALIFORNIA

\$1.50

Palisadian-Post
ESTATE

Q&A

Dan Urbach

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Managing Editor

Dan Urbach, a Realtor with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, shares about growing up in Malibu and his life now in Pacific Palisades.

Sarah Shmerling: Tell me about your childhood. Where were you born and where did you grow up? What were some of your hobbies and interests as a child and teenager?

Urbach: I was very fortunate to have grown up in Malibu on Point Dume. In the '70s, it was a very different Point Dume than today. The homes were mostly small, ranch style homes on large lots with very few fences. There were lots of trails, and our local Mayfair Market had a hitching post to tie off horses. To me, Malibu was a giant playground with the ocean on one side and the Santa Monica Mountains on the other. I took full advantage—surfing, skateboarding and biking almost every day.

Shmerling: What schools did you attend and where did you go to college? What did you study?

Urbach: I went to Point Dume Elementary, Malibu Park Middle and Santa Monica High schools, before Malibu High School was built. To this day I'm a big supporter of our public schools. For college I went to UC Santa Barbara where I double majored in English and business economics.

Shmerling: What was your first job? What led you to choose a career in real estate?

Urbach: My first job was at 16 years old as a gas station attendant at Ball & Sons Service Station on Point Dume, before "self-serve." I would wash windows, check tire pressure, check oil and pump gasoline.

During college, my parents insisted I have a job when I came home for summers from UCSB. I loved the beach and the ocean, so I tried out for the California State Lifeguards. I worked full time in northern Malibu every summer during college and part time for the next 20 years.

Immediately after college, I started working in the entertainment industry as a production assistant and then production coordinator on television shows (mostly pilots) produced by Grant Tinker's company, GTG Entertainment.

My grandfather, Sheldon Leonard, was the reason I got into entertainment. He was an actor (you might remember Nick the bartender in Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life"), a director and producer (he created and executive produced "I Spy," "The Dick Van Dyke Show" with Carl Reiner, the "The Andy Griffith Show" and many more TV shows in the



Pictured, from left: Sierra, Gloria, Dan and Tyler

Photo courtesy of Dan Urbach

'50s and '60s.

To be honest, I never enjoyed working in the entertainment industry. It was the mid-1980s, and I had friends who were becoming very successful in real estate, as the market was soaring. I took the real estate license exam while still working in entertainment in 1990.

My timing couldn't have been worse, as the real estate market promptly began a nosedive that lasted for the next six years. I stuck to it, persevered, and slowly built a loyal clientele and a successful business.

Shmerling: Do you represent homes in all neighborhoods of the Palisades?

Urbach: For many years, as I was breaking into the residential real estate business, I represented buyers and sellers throughout Los Angeles. I've sold homes in the South Bay, the San Fernando Valley and the Hollywood Hills, to name a few.

As I became more established, I've been fortunate to narrow my focus and specialize in the Palisades neighborhoods I really know and love. I can't think of a better place to sell residential real estate. I don't have to "sell" the Palisades—it sells itself.

I love to introduce my clients who are relocating here to our Village, the Pacific Palisades Farmers Market, the Fourth of July parade, our incredible park and library, beaches, and mountains.

Shmerling: Tell me about how you approach new clients who are aiming to buy or sell a home.

Urbach: My approach is simple: Listen, work hard and exceed expect-

tations. I really believe in my motto, "I Represent PEOPLE Not Properties!" I meet such interesting people and really enjoy working with them. I am so lucky to be doing what I love with wonderful clients in such a great town.

Shmerling: What are some current trends in real estate?

Urbach: When I first started selling real estate in the 1990s, the industry guarded its data like Fort Knox. The only way to get access to available properties was directly through a real estate agent.

Today, all the information is available to anyone with an internet connection through hundreds of websites and mobile apps. That said, the need for a knowledgeable local expert to guide the buyer and seller is needed now more than ever, as the home buying process has become increasingly complicated.

Shmerling: In which neighborhoods and for how long have you lived in the Palisades? What brought you here and why do you stay?

Urbach: I started working in the Palisades in 1996 at AM Realty (now Amalfi Estates) while living in Santa Monica. We scrimped and saved enough to buy a modest ranch home in the Marquez Knolls in 2003 and have been loving it ever since.

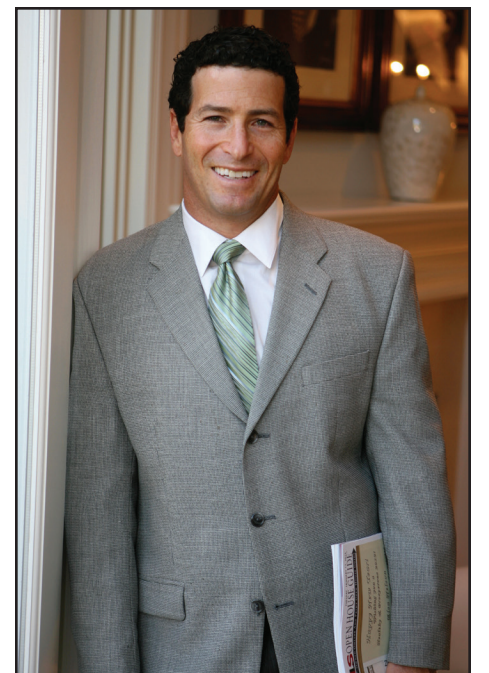
Shmerling: Thoughts on Caruso's Palisades Village project?

Urbach: Our little walking Village is one of the things that make the Palisades so unique and desirable. It really saddened me to see the continued dete-

rioration of our Village in the last handful of years. I'm very excited about the re-development and looking forward to a, once again, vibrant Village. And can't wait to catch a movie with my family at our new theater.

Shmerling: What do you and your family like to do for fun?

Urbach: I met my wife, Gloria, when she was in her last year at Pepperdine Law School in 1996. We have been together for 20 years and have two beautiful children. Sierra is 15 and in her second year at Palisades Charter High School. Tyler is 14 and an eighth-grader at Paul Revere Charter Middle School.



Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer