

THE VENTURA COUNTY HOME BUYER GUIDE

What to Expect Before, During
and After Your Purchase

William "Bart" Potter & Keziah Aaliyah

DRE #02157874 | DRE #02157683

Living-InVenturaCounty.com

805-256-2813

Balboa
Real Estate

Welcome



Buying a home can feel overwhelming—even if you’ve done it before.

We created this guide to make the process easier to understand. It walks you through what to expect, the decisions you’ll face, and the surprises we want to help you avoid.

We believe good advice should be honest, practical and never pushy. We’ll help you understand the home, the value and the terms so you can make a decision you’ll still feel good about long after you get the keys.

We’re glad you’re here.

Bart & Keziah

Balboa Real Estate

Contents

Use this guide in the order that helps you

Read it straight through or return to the page you need as your purchase moves forward.

WELCOME

Welcome from Bart & Keziah _____ **1**

GETTING ORIENTED

Ventura County overview _____ **3**

The purchase at a glance _____ **4**

Your home-buying team _____ **5**

GETTING READY

Before you tour homes _____ **6**

Get your financial file ready _____ **7**

Choosing your lender _____ **8**

What buyers typically pay _____ **9**

California property taxes _____ **10**

MAKING AN OFFER

Your offer is more than price _____ **11**

Contingencies and deadlines _____ **12**

When the seller responds _____ **13**

UNDER CONTRACT

Your offer was accepted _____ **14**

Escrow and your money _____ **15**

Inspections _____ **16**

The appraisal _____ **17**

Homeowners insurance _____ **18**

Repairs, credits or price reduction _____ **19**

Before removing contingencies _____ **20**

CLOSING

Protect your loan _____ **21**

Understand your final loan numbers _____ **22**

Getting ready to sign _____ **23**

The final walk-through _____ **24**

Seller rent-backs _____ **25**

From signing to keys _____ **26**

AFTER CLOSING

Your first week at home _____ **27**

Your home-maintenance rhythm _____ **28**

We're still here _____ **29**

A REFERENCE GUIDE - NOT HOMEWORK

We will guide you through each decision when it becomes relevant.

Ventura County Is Not One Market

A home's location can affect much more than your commute. Climate, insurance, neighborhood feel, housing styles, HOA costs, property values and future resale can vary considerably from one community to the next.

We help you evaluate both the home and the area around it—
so you understand the trade-offs before you buy.



COASTAL

Ventura • Oxnard • Port Hueneme

CENTRAL VENTURA COUNTY

Camarillo • Somis • Santa Rosa Valley

CONEJO VALLEY & NEARBY

Thousand Oaks • Newbury Park • Oak Park •
Westlake Village • Moorpark

OJAI VALLEY

Ojai • Oak View

SANTA CLARA RIVER VALLEY

Santa Paula • Fillmore • Piru

SIMI VALLEY

Simi Valley

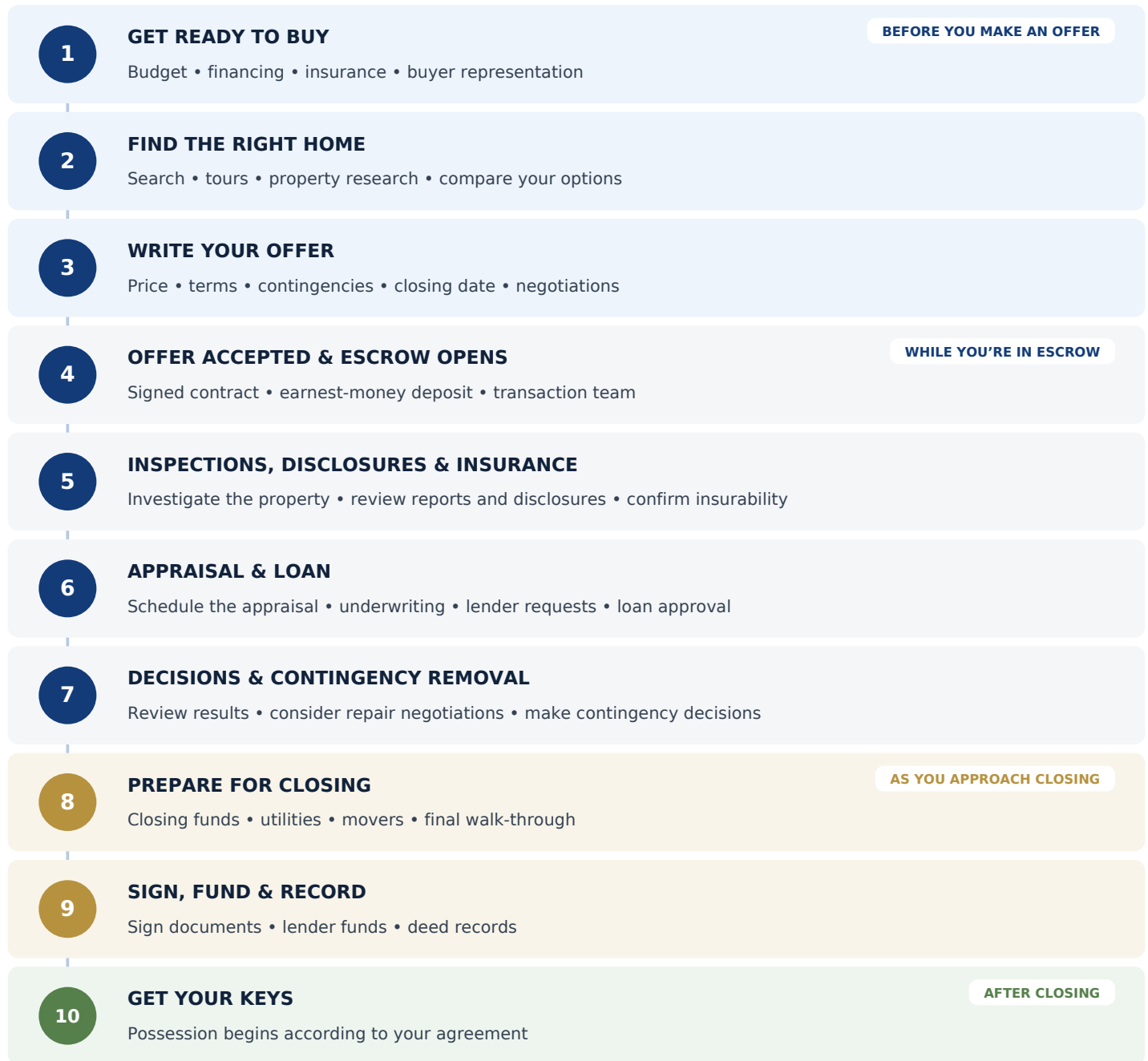
Still deciding which community may fit you best?

Take our Ventura County Lifestyle Quiz.



Your Purchase at a Glance

You don't need to memorize this. Use it as a reference, and we'll guide you through each step as it happens.



YOUR CONTRACT CONTROLS

The order and timing shown here are examples. Your signed purchase agreement and related documents determine your actual dates, obligations and options. This guide is educational and does not replace advice from legal, tax, lending, insurance or other appropriate professionals.

Your Home-Buying Team

Several people help move your purchase forward. You do not need to manage everyone—we'll keep the pieces connected and tell you who to contact.

Start with Bart & Keziah

YOUR REAL ESTATE TEAM • WITH YOU FROM THE BEGINNING

We research the property, explain value and risk, write and negotiate your offer, and guide the decisions that belong to you.

If you are ever unsure who to ask, begin with us.

THE PROFESSIONALS WHO HELP MOVE YOUR PURCHASE FORWARD

<div><div><h4>YOUR LENDER</h4><p>BEFORE YOU SHOP THROUGH CLOSING</p><p>Handles preapproval, loan options, underwriting and funding. Keep your lender updated and respond promptly to document requests.</p></div></div>	<div><div><h4>TRANSACTION COORDINATOR</h4><p>AFTER YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED</p><p>Christa Clegg-Green organizes documents, signatures and deadlines. We do not charge you a transaction-coordinator fee.</p></div></div>
<div><div><h4>ESCROW & TITLE</h4><p>AFTER YOUR OFFER IS ACCEPTED</p><p>Escrow follows the contract instructions and coordinates funds and closing. Title researches ownership and prepares title coverage.</p></div></div>	<div><div><h4>INSPECTORS & SPECIALISTS</h4><p>DURING YOUR INVESTIGATION PERIOD</p><p>Independent professionals evaluate the home within their expertise. We help you consider which inspections may fit the property; you choose.</p></div></div>

THE TEAM CHANGES WITH THE TRANSACTION

Your lender, escrow, title company and specialists may be different from those used in another purchase. We'll introduce everyone and keep the communication organized.

Before You Tour Homes

Two things should be clear before the search begins: how we'll work together and how buyer-agent compensation will be handled.

01 Our Working Agreement

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS BEFORE WE BEGIN

Before we begin providing buyer-agent services, we'll review and sign a Buyer Representation Agreement together. It explains what we do for you, how long the agreement lasts and how our compensation works.

- Initial term: 90 days
- Cancellation notice: 0 days
- Protection period: 90 days for properties we introduced or showed you

If we're not the right fit, you can cancel going forward. The protection period may still apply to properties we introduced or showed you.

02 How Our Fee Is Handled

YOU WILL KNOW BEFORE YOU WRITE AN OFFER

Our compensation is agreed to in writing. When we prepare an offer, we can request that the seller pay some or all of it, but the seller is not required to agree.

If the seller offers less than the amount in our agreement, we'll discuss the difference and your options before you decide whether to proceed.

CLEAR BEFORE WE BEGIN

We'll explain the agreement, compensation and your choices before asking you to commit.

Once these are clear, we can focus on finding the right home.

Be Ready When You Find the Right Home

The financial documents to prepare before touring or writing an offer.

IF YOU'RE FINANCING

SHOW THE LOAN AND THE CASH

- ☐ Current preapproval letter
- ☐ Funds for the earnest-money deposit
- ☐ Funds for the down payment and estimated closing costs

IF YOU'RE PAYING CASH

DOCUMENT THE FULL PURCHASE

- ☐ Available funds covering the offer price
- ☐ Additional funds for estimated closing costs

IF YOU NEED TO SELL FIRST

SHOW WHERE YOUR SALE STANDS

- ☐ Funds for the deposit and estimated closing costs
- ☐ Listing agreement or active MLS listing
- ☐ Accepted contract and key dates if already under contract
- ☐ Current preapproval if the new purchase will also be financed

PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

Before a document is shared, redact information the seller does not need.

HIDE

Account numbers • home address • unrelated transactions

KEEP VISIBLE

Your name • institution • enough available funds

ONLY SHOW WHAT IS NEEDED

You generally do not need to disclose every account you own—only enough to document the purchase.

WHAT USUALLY WORKS BEST

A formal bank, investment or other financial statement is usually stronger than a screenshot from a banking app.

Choose the Team Behind the Loan

The rate matters. So do the people responsible for getting your loan funded and your purchase closed on time.

RATE + EXECUTION

A competitive loan is valuable only if the lender can deliver it.

WHAT TO COMPARE

THE NUMBERS

Rate • lender fees • credits • cash needed to close • monthly payment

THE LOAN

Program fit • qualification requirements • rate-lock terms

THE PEOPLE

Responsiveness • one clear point of contact • backup support

THE EXECUTION

California escrow experience • appraisal coordination • funding timing

WHY EXECUTION MATTERS

A lender once missed the local Friday funding window. The deed could not record until Monday, delaying the buyers' move and adding expense.

A great rate mattered. So did closing when promised.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Who will actually handle my loan?
- Will I have one primary contact?
- Who is available if an issue comes up?
- Is the team familiar with California funding, recording and contract deadlines?

YOU MAY BE ASKED TO CROSS-QUALIFY

A seller or builder may ask you to qualify with another lender. That does not always mean you must use that lender. Builders may also offer financing incentives, so compare the complete package—not just the advertised rate.

What Buyers Typically Pay

Common expenses in a Ventura County purchase

The down payment is only one part of the money needed to buy a home. Closing costs vary with the loan, property, insurance, timing and the terms negotiated in your contract.

YOUR EARNEST-MONEY DEPOSIT IS NOT AN EXTRA COST

It is generally credited toward the funds you need for the purchase at closing, subject to your contract.

YOUR COSTS MAY INCLUDE:

LOAN & LENDER COSTS

- Origination, underwriting or processing charges
- Points, if you choose or negotiate them
- Appraisal, credit and lender-required services

ESCROW, TITLE & RECORDING

- Your share of escrow charges
- Lender's title-insurance policy, when financed
- Recording, notary, wire or related transaction charges

PREPAIDS & RESERVES

- Homeowners-insurance premium
- Prepaid mortgage interest
- Initial tax and insurance reserves, when required

PAID DURING ESCROW

- Whole-home and specialist inspections
- Appraisal fee, depending on the lender
- Other investigations you authorize

WHO CHOOSES ESCROW & TITLE?

In our Southern California market, the seller commonly selects the escrow and title companies, although these terms are negotiable. Each company organizes and charges certain items a little differently.

ONCE UNDER CONTRACT, WE ASK ESCROW FOR AN ESTIMATED BUYER CLOSING STATEMENT.

Your lender separately provides your Loan Estimate and, later, your Closing Disclosure.

California Property Taxes

What changes when you buy - and the bill that may arrive later

The seller's current tax bill is not a reliable estimate of what you will pay. A purchase generally triggers a new assessment based on the property's value when ownership changes.

1

YOUR NEW REGULAR TAX BILL

California's base property-tax rate is 1% of assessed value. Voter-approved debt and parcel-specific assessments or charges can make the total rate higher. The regular annual bill is generally paid in two installments.

2

WHY THERE MAY BE A SUPPLEMENTAL BILL

The seller's regular tax bill was based on the property's prior assessed value. After you buy, the county reassesses the property. A supplemental bill collects the tax on the difference for the part of the tax year after your purchase.

EXAMPLE: ESTIMATING THE SUPPLEMENTAL TAX BILL

New assessed value after purchase	\$800,000	Example purchase date	October 15
Prior assessed value	- \$500,000	Supplemental period	Nov. 1-June 30
Supplemental-assessment difference	\$300,000	Portion of fiscal year	8 of 12 months
$\\$300,000 \times 1.20\% \times 8/12 = \text{ABOUT } \\$2,400 \text{ SUPPLEMENTAL TAX}$			

WHERE BUYERS ARE OFTEN SURPRISED

The supplemental bill is not a duplicate. It is separate from the regular annual bill and may arrive months after closing. It is commonly mailed directly to you and may not be paid from your lender's tax impound account. Verify who will pay it and note the due dates.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR

Before you buy, we look for the parcel's estimated tax rate and any Mello-Roos or other special assessments that may affect your ongoing cost.

Your Offer Is More Than a Price

The purchase price gets attention, but the complete combination of money, protection, timing and certainty determines what you are actually offering.

PRICE + TERMS + TIMING + CERTAINTY

Sellers often weigh the whole package—not only the highest number.

WHAT YOUR OFFER CAN ADDRESS

MONEY

Purchase price • earnest-money deposit • financing
• seller credits • appraisal terms

PROTECTION

Loan • appraisal • investigation • insurance and
other applicable contingencies

TIMING

Seller response deadline • contingency periods •
closing date • possession

CERTAINTY & DETAILS

Strength of preapproval • proof of funds • included
or excluded items • seller rent-back • other
negotiated terms

EARNEST MONEY

In our local market, the earnest-money deposit is commonly around 3% of the purchase price, although the amount is negotiable. A meaningful deposit can help demonstrate that you are serious and financially prepared to complete the purchase.

Your offer states the deposit you agree to deliver to escrow if accepted. It is held and applied toward your purchase at closing, subject to the contract.

WHAT WE LOOK FOR BEFORE YOU SIGN

We walk through the price, every term and the trade-offs, including how each choice affects your risk and the offer's strength, before it is submitted.

Contingencies: Your Time to Decide

A contingency is a contract condition that gives you a defined period to complete specified work or obtain an approval—and then make the decisions allowed by the agreement.



WHAT HAPPENS DURING THIS PERIOD

- Inspections and property investigations
- Seller disclosures and reports
- Insurance review
- Appraisal
- Loan approval and lender conditions
- Your decision about whether to proceed

THE TIME PERIOD IS NEGOTIABLE

Depending on the offer, you may see periods such as 5, 10, 12 or 17 days. A seller may ask for shorter periods. Less time means less room to complete the work, solve delays and make a careful decision.

We'll discuss what must happen before recommending a shorter timeline.

WHERE BUYERS ARE OFTEN SURPRISED

A deadline does not automatically remove a contingency.

Applicable buyer contingencies are generally removed or waived in writing. But missing a deadline is not harmless: the seller may use contractual notices and remedies if the buyer does not act. Your signed agreement controls.

THE HONEST TRUTH

Shorter is not automatically better. A shorter contingency strengthens an offer only when you can realistically perform within it.

When the Seller Responds

Submitting an offer does not always lead to a simple yes or no. The seller may respond in several different ways.

ACCEPT

REJECT

COUNTER

REQUEST YOUR BEST

Your offer usually includes a deadline for acceptance. A shorter deadline can create focus, but it cannot force a seller to respond.

1

A COUNTEROFFER

A counteroffer means the seller wants to continue the conversation but is proposing changes. Those changes may involve price, closing date, contingencies, credits, compensation, possession or other terms. You may accept it, reject it or counter again.

A counteroffer does not mean the home is being held for you.

The seller may continue considering other offers until a binding agreement is created.

2

A MULTIPLE COUNTEROFFER

The seller may counter more than one buyer at the same time. Depending on the form and its terms, signing and returning the seller's multiple counter may not create a contract; the seller may still need to make a final acceptance. We will explain where you stand before you sign.

3

A REQUEST FOR “HIGHEST AND BEST”

Instead of negotiating separately, the seller may ask interested buyers to submit their strongest offer by a stated deadline. You are not required to change your offer. We will talk through the value, competition and risk before deciding whether a change makes sense.

THE HONEST TRUTH ABOUT HIGHEST AND BEST

Choose a price you can feel at peace with either way.

Do not overpay - but do not be so conservative that you would kick yourself if another buyer won by a small amount. We have also seen a conservative first offer lead to a highest-and-best situation where the buyer ultimately paid more.

You are in the driver's seat. We advise; you decide. We will never pressure you.

Your Offer Was Accepted

What happens now?

Congratulations. Once the agreement is accepted, several parts of the purchase begin moving at the same time. We keep the dates organized and guide you through each decision.

1

OPEN ESCROW

The signed agreement is sent to escrow, the neutral third party coordinating documents, instructions and funds.

2

DELIVER YOUR EARNEST-MONEY DEPOSIT

You send the agreed deposit to escrow by the deadline in your contract - never to us or directly to the seller.

3

INVESTIGATE THE HOME

You review disclosures and reports and complete the inspections or specialist evaluations appropriate for the property.

4

FINALIZE THE LOAN, APPRAISAL & INSURANCE

Your lender continues underwriting and arranges the appraisal while you confirm acceptable homeowners insurance.

5

MAKE CONTINGENCY DECISIONS

After reviewing the available information, we discuss your options and any written contingency removals or other contract decisions.

6

COMPLETE THE FINAL WALK-THROUGH

Near closing, you verify the property's expected condition and agreed repairs or included items. This is not a new inspection.

7

SIGN YOUR CLOSING DOCUMENTS

You sign the required loan and closing documents, often before the closing date. Signing does not mean ownership has transferred yet.

8

FUND, RECORD & RECEIVE KEYS

The lender and escrow coordinate funds, the deed records with the county, and ownership transfers. Possession and keys follow the contract.

WHERE BUYERS ARE OFTEN SURPRISED

Signing can often come to you.

Many documents can be signed electronically. When notarization is required, a mobile signing appointment can often be arranged at a convenient location. We explain what can be handled remotely and whether anything requires an in-person visit.

Escrow: Where Your Money Goes

Escrow is the neutral third party that follows the purchase agreement, holds funds and coordinates the documents and instructions needed for closing.



WHAT ESCROW DOES

Escrow receives and holds money, gathers signed documents, follows written instructions and coordinates with the lender and title company. Funds are not released simply because one party asks; escrow follows the agreement and authorized instructions.

YOUR EARNEST-MONEY DEPOSIT

The amount and deadline come from your signed contract.

You deliver the deposit to escrow. It is held there and, if the purchase closes, is generally applied toward the funds needed for your purchase, subject to the agreement.

BEFORE YOU SEND ANY MONEY

STOP

Do not send money solely because wiring instructions arrived by email.

CALL

Call escrow using the number in our introduction email or another number you independently verify - not a number in a new wiring email.

VERIFY

Confirm the escrow company, account details and amount before every transfer.

WHERE BUYERS ARE OFTEN SURPRISED

A convincing email can still be fraudulent. After acceptance, our introduction email will identify your escrow company and trusted contacts. If any instruction changes or feels unexpected, do not reply to that email - stop and call us or escrow using a verified number.

Inspections: Learn Before You Decide

Your inspection period is the time to learn as much as reasonably possible about the home. The right inspections depend on the property's age, location, systems and condition.

A HOME DOES NOT PASS OR FAIL AN INSPECTION

The inspection gives you information so you can decide what you are comfortable taking on.

1 CORE INSPECTIONS

For many resale homes, we coordinate the whole-home, termite and sewer or plumbing inspections on the same day to use the contingency period efficiently.

2 ADD SPECIALISTS

The whole-home inspector is like a general doctor: a broad review, not an expert in every system. The property or findings may call for a specialist.

3 DECIDE WITH FACTS

We review the reports with you, separate routine maintenance from larger concerns and discuss your options before you decide how to proceed.

OTHER SPECIALISTS MAY INCLUDE

- Roof
- HVAC or electrical
- Moisture or mold
- Pool, spa or chimney
- Foundation or geotechnical
- Structural engineering
- Solar systems
- Septic, well or other rural systems

WHAT WE LOOK FOR

An older coastal home, hillside property, rural home, condominium and newer subdivision can call for different investigations. We help you consider which inspections fit the property, its location and your individual concerns.

YOUR INSPECTORS WORK FOR YOU

We can provide options and help coordinate access, but you choose the inspectors and pay them directly. We do not receive referral fees. Our goal is to help you get the information you need to make your own decision.

The Appraisal

An independent opinion of value

For a financed purchase, the lender generally obtains an appraisal to help evaluate the home as collateral for the loan. The appraiser develops an independent opinion of market value.

HOME INSPECTION

What condition is the home in?

Helps you understand the home's systems and condition. You select the inspectors and decide which investigations fit the property.

APPRAISAL

Is the value supportable?

Helps the lender evaluate the collateral. It may note certain property concerns, but it is not a substitute for your inspections.

HOW THE APPRAISAL MOVES

1

LENDER ORDERS

The lender arranges the appraisal through an independent process.

2

APPRAISER ANALYZES

The appraiser considers the property, relevant market data and comparable sales.

3

LENDER REVIEWS

The lender reviews the completed report and provides the appraisal to you.

WHEN WILL WE KNOW THE VALUE?

The appraiser cannot tell us the value at the property. Completing the research and report may take a week or longer, depending on the assignment.

WHAT IF THE VALUE COMES IN LOW?

The difference between the purchase price and appraised value is the appraisal gap. A gap does not automatically mean the purchase is over.

- Review the report and comparable sales
- Ask whether a reconsideration is supported
- Renegotiate price or other terms
- Bring additional cash if you choose
- Consider other financing options
- Decide whether moving forward still makes sense

KEZIAH'S APPRAISER PERSPECTIVE

Keziah is a Certified Residential Appraiser, but she will not perform the appraisal for your purchase. Before you offer, she prepares a comparative market analysis and gives you a likely value range. This is not a formal appraisal. If the lender's appraisal creates a concern, we help you understand the information and your options.

Homeowners Insurance

Check early - ideally before you make an offer

Most homes can be insured without unusual difficulty, but some require more research. Starting early helps you understand the coverage and cost before important deadlines arrive.

BEFORE YOU WRITE THE OFFER, ASK:

- Can this particular property be insured?
- Approximately what could the annual premium be?
- Could the roof, prior claims, location or wildfire exposure affect coverage?

THREE SIMPLE STEPS

1

YOU MAKE THE CALL

Contact an insurance company or broker for a property-specific quote. We can flag concerns and help you know what to ask.

2

CONFIRM COVERAGE & COST

Make sure the available protection meets your needs and that the estimated premium fits comfortably within your budget.

3

TELL US ABOUT ANY PROBLEM

If coverage is unavailable, unexpectedly expensive or conditional, tell us immediately. We will help you understand your deadlines and options.

WHERE BUYERS ARE OFTEN SURPRISED

The seller's existing policy does not guarantee you the same carrier, coverage, premium or terms.

CALIFORNIA FIRE AREAS & THE FAIR PLAN

Most homes will not require the FAIR Plan. In or near a higher fire-hazard area, traditional coverage may be harder to obtain. The FAIR Plan provides basic fire coverage and may need companion coverage. Ask an insurance professional to explain the complete protection and total cost.

CONDOS: WALLS-IN OR WALLS-OUT?

Those are useful shorthand, but the HOA documents and master policy determine who insures what. Ask what the association covers, what you must cover inside the unit, the master-policy deductible and whether you need loss-assessment coverage.

A REAL-LIFE INSURANCE SURPRISE

After a condo fire, one owner discovered that their policy limits did not cover all the asbestos-remediation costs.

Meeting the lender's requirement does not necessarily mean you have enough coverage for a serious loss. Ask about replacement cost, loss of use, loss assessment, the HOA deductible, remediation and code upgrades.

Repairs & Negotiating

What you can ask - and what the seller can say

An inspection finding does not automatically mean there is a problem with the purchase. It gives you information and an opportunity to decide what matters most before moving forward.

CAN THE SELLER CANCEL BECAUSE YOU ASKED FOR REPAIRS?

NO. The seller may decline your request, but the request itself does not cancel the contract or give the seller the right to cancel it.

IF YOU MAKE A REQUEST, THE SELLER MAY:

AGREE

AGREE TO SOME

OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE

SAY NO

FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS

A whole-home inspection may identify dozens of items. That does not mean asking the seller to correct every one is the strongest strategy.

- Prioritize significant defects, safety concerns and potentially costly items.
- Separate new discoveries from cosmetic or maintenance items you could already see.
- Consider whether a repair, credit or another solution best fits the situation.

REPAIR, CREDIT OR PRICE REDUCTION?

SELLER REPAIR

The seller completes the work before closing. This may be required by the lender or insurer, but you may have less control over the contractor, materials or replacement.

BUYER CREDIT

Useful when major work, such as a roof, cannot reasonably be completed before closing. Your lender must approve the amount and use. A standard water-heater credit can offset the cost if you choose a larger model and pay the upgrade difference.

LOWER PRICE

Reduces the price but does not provide cash at closing to pay for the work. We help you compare the actual savings with the cost you may face after closing.

YOU STAY IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

We give you our perspective and help you prioritize. You decide what you want to request and whether the response works for you.

Before You Remove a Contingency

This is a decision - not just a date on the calendar

Contingencies can protect you while you investigate the property, appraisal, financing and insurance. We review each one based on where your purchase actually stands.

THE DEADLINE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY REMOVE THE CONTINGENCY

Under the standard California purchase agreement, removal is generally made in writing. We do not recommend removing a contingency simply because its scheduled date has arrived.

BEFORE YOU SIGN, WE CHECK:

INVESTIGATIONS

Inspections are complete and repair discussions are resolved enough for you to decide.

APPRAISAL

The value is known and any appraisal concern has been addressed.

LOAN

Your lender has approved removal based on your current file. Avoid material changes to credit, employment, income, debts or assets through closing.

INSURANCE

Suitable coverage appears available at a cost you are comfortable paying.

WHAT IF THE DEADLINE PASSES?

That does not necessarily mean the seller can immediately cancel. Depending on the contract and circumstances, the seller may first send a Notice to Buyer to Perform. The notice means action is required within the stated time - not that you have already lost the home.

AFTER A CONTINGENCY IS REMOVED

You may be giving up an important reason that previously allowed you to cancel and seek the return of your deposit. If you later decide not to complete the purchase without another right to cancel, your earnest-money deposit may be at risk.

WE WILL EXPLAIN WHAT YOU ARE SIGNING BEFORE YOU DECIDE.

Protect Your Loan Until Closing

Pause before changing your financial picture

Buyers are often surprised to learn that the lender may recheck credit, employment, assets and debts even after the loan contingency is removed. A normal-looking financial decision can create new questions, delays or even affect final approval.

CALL YOUR LENDER FIRST

Before you borrow money, move money, make a large purchase, accept gift funds or change jobs or income, ask your lender how it should be handled.

UNTIL YOU HAVE THE KEYS, BE CAREFUL ABOUT:

1 NEW DEBT

Financing a purchase or taking a credit-card loan or cash advance - even at 0% APR.

2 NEW CREDIT

Opening a credit card, increasing balances or having new credit inquiries.

3 MONEY MOVEMENTS

Even transfers between your own accounts can create a paper trail the lender must verify. Ask first.

4 JOB OR INCOME CHANGES

Changing employment, hours, compensation or the way you are paid.

5 LATE PAYMENTS

Missing or delaying a payment on a credit card, loan or other obligation.

6 FAMILY HELP OR DEPOSITS

Gift money may require a gift letter and proof of its source. Talk to the lender before anyone transfers funds.

RESPOND QUICKLY

Your lender may request updated statements, pay stubs or explanations - even if you supplied similar information earlier. Prompt responses help keep closing on track.

WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK BEFORE YOU ACT.

Understand Your Final Numbers

Closing day should not bring financial surprises

Your interest rate is important, but it is only one part of the loan. Review the complete numbers early and ask your lender to explain anything that is unclear.

YOUR CLOSING DISCLOSURE

For most mortgages, you receive this document at least three business days before closing. Compare it with your most recent Loan Estimate and ask your lender about anything that changed or does not make sense.

THE FOUR NUMBERS TO KNOW

INTEREST RATE

The rate used to calculate interest on the mortgage.

APR

A broader annualized measure that includes the rate and certain loan costs.

CASH TO CLOSE

The estimated amount you will need to deliver for closing.

MONTHLY HOUSING COST

The estimated recurring cost of owning and financing the home.

LOOK BEYOND PRINCIPAL & INTEREST

Your estimated monthly housing cost may also include:

- Property taxes
- Homeowners insurance
- HOA dues, if applicable
- Mortgage insurance, if applicable

COMPARE THE REAL MONTHLY COST

Two similarly priced homes can have very different insurance, taxes and HOA dues.

REVIEW THE NUMBERS BEFORE YOU SIGN THE FINAL LOAN DOCUMENTS.

Getting Ready to Sign

A simple checklist for your closing appointment

Escrow, your lender or the notary will confirm exactly what you need. Review their instructions early so a missing document or last-minute transfer does not delay closing.

BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT, CONFIRM:

1 IDENTIFICATION

Bring the current government-issued photo identification requested by escrow or the notary.

2 YOUR NAME MATCHES

Tell escrow early if your identification does not match the name shown on the documents.

3 CASH TO CLOSE

Confirm the final amount, when it is due and the approved method for delivering it.

4 SPECIAL DOCUMENTS

Ask whether trust, power-of-attorney, entity or other documents are required for your purchase.

5 SIGNING LOCATION

Confirm whether you will sign at escrow, with a mobile notary or remotely when available.

6 FINAL QUESTIONS

Ask about anything that differs from your Closing Disclosure or that you do not understand.

PROTECT YOUR MONEY

Never rely only on emailed wire instructions - especially if they changed. Independently call the escrow company using trusted contact information and verify every detail before sending funds.

SIGNING DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN KEYS

After signing, the lender may still need to fund the loan and the deed must record. Possession and keys follow the timing written into your contract.

WHEN IN DOUBT, ASK BEFORE YOUR SIGNING APPOINTMENT.

The Final Walk-Through

Confirm the home is ready before closing

Shortly before closing or possession, we return to the property with you to verify its expected condition and confirm that agreed-upon items have been handled.

THE HONEST TRUTH

The final walk-through is not a second inspection or a new opportunity to renegotiate the purchase. It is a final verification before you complete the transaction.

WHEN SHOULD WE DO IT?

SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE

Often around five days before closing. This gives us time to identify unfinished repairs or agreed work.

AS LATE AS PRACTICAL

The day before can reveal areas previously hidden by furniture and show whether most belongings are gone.

WHEN REPAIRS ARE SIGNIFICANT, TWO VISITS MAY MAKE SENSE.

WHAT WE CHECK

☐ CONDITION & NEW DAMAGE

Substantially the same condition, with no obvious new damage.

☐ AGREED WORK

Repairs, installed items or other agreed work, as applicable.

☐ INCLUDED ITEMS

Fixtures, appliances and other included property remain.

☐ MOVE-OUT CONDITION

The seller has moved out when required and met the contract terms.

A SELLER RENT-BACK WORKS DIFFERENTLY

If the seller remains after closing, the first visit cannot confirm the final move-out condition. We generally plan another verification after the seller vacates. The next page explains why.

IF SOMETHING IS WRONG, TELL US BEFORE CLOSING.

When the Seller Stays After Closing

A rent-back changes the handoff

In a seller rent-back, ownership transfers to you at closing but the seller remains in the home for an agreed period. The legal relationship and required agreement depend on the length and terms of the occupancy.

THE HONEST TRUTH

You own the home while someone else occupies it. You may effectively be acting like a landlord, but escrow and your agents do not manage the property or resolve a post-closing dispute.

TWO DIFFERENT VERIFICATIONS

1 BEFORE CLOSING

We check the property's condition and agreed work, knowing the seller's belongings may still hide some areas.

2 AFTER MOVE-OUT

We verify the move-out condition, document concerns and address the release of held funds under the written agreement.

BEFORE AGREEING, DEFINE THE TERMS

● VACATE DATE & TIME

Exactly when possession must be delivered.

● OCCUPANCY & LATE FEES

What is paid and what happens if the seller stays late.

● FUNDS HELD

Money held to address damage, late possession or other agreed charges.

● CARE & UTILITIES

Who maintains the home and pays ongoing expenses.

● ACCESS

When and how you may enter before the seller leaves.

● LENDER & INSURANCE

Confirm the arrangement is acceptable before committing.

HOW WE TRY TO PROTECT YOU BEFORE CLOSING

We negotiate written terms, meaningful funds held, late-stay charges and a final verification before release. If the protections are weak or the departure plan is uncertain, we may advise against it.

From Signing to Keys

These events do not always happen at the same time

Signing your documents is an important milestone, but the transaction is not finished yet. Escrow, the lender and the county still have work to complete.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

1

YOU SIGN

You complete the required loan and escrow documents, often before the scheduled closing date.

2

YOUR FINAL FUNDS ARRIVE

Escrow confirms that the required buyer funds have been received and are ready for closing.

3

THE LENDER FUNDS

For a financed purchase, the lender sends the loan funds after its final conditions are satisfied.

4

THE DEED RECORDS

Escrow receives confirmation that the deed has recorded with the county and that closing is complete.

VENTURA COUNTY TIMING MATTERS

In our Ventura County transactions, title generally needs the deed ready to submit by about 11:30 a.m. for same-day recording. We had buyers whose lender funded too late on a Friday; recording waited until Monday, and they paid movers twice and missed additional work. Avoid firm move-in plans until recording is confirmed.

WHEN DO YOU GET THE KEYS?

Keys and possession follow the timing in your contract. If possession is at closing, we coordinate the handoff after recording is confirmed. A rent-back or delayed possession changes that timing.

WAIT FOR CONFIRMATION BEFORE ENTERING OR MOVING INTO THE HOME.

Your First Week at Home

A few practical steps after you receive the keys

Closing is exciting—but it is also the day responsibility for the home becomes yours. Start with the basics before unpacking takes over.

START HERE



SECURE THE HOME

Rekey exterior locks, reset garage and gate codes, and confirm that every key and remote works.



FIND THE SHUTOFFS

Locate the main water shutoff, gas shutoff and electrical panel before an emergency makes you search for them.



TEST THE SAFETY BASICS

Test smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms, replace batteries if needed, and confirm that fire extinguishers are ready.



CONFIRM SERVICES AND ACCESS

Verify utilities, trash service, mail, HOA contacts, parking permits, gate access and any community instructions.



USE YOUR INSPECTION REPORT AS A ROADMAP

Begin with safety items and active leaks, then plan maintenance and improvements by urgency—not by the order they appear in the report.



CREATE A HOME FILE

Keep your closing documents, inspection reports, warranties, insurance information, repair receipts and contractor contacts together.

THE HONEST TRUTH

Closing does not mean every part of the home is new—or that nothing will need attention. Every home requires maintenance. The goal is not to do everything immediately; it is to understand what you own and make a thoughtful plan.

Your Home Maintenance Rhythm

Small checks may prevent expensive surprises

You do not need to remember everything at once. Put a few recurring reminders on your calendar and adjust them for your home, equipment and manufacturer recommendations.

MONTHLY

- Check the HVAC filter and replace it when needed.
- Look under sinks and around toilets, appliances and the water heater for moisture or active leaks.

EVERY 3-6 MONTHS

- Test smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms and replace batteries when needed.
- Clean the range-hood filter and check caulking around tubs, showers and sinks.

BEFORE VENTURA COUNTY'S RAINY SEASON

- Clear gutters, roof drains, yard drains and downspouts.
- Look for damaged roof materials, exterior gaps and drainage that directs water toward the home.

ONCE A YEAR

- Clean the complete dryer vent—not only the lint screen—and service the HVAC system.
- Inspect plumbing hoses, exterior sealant and visible signs of termites, moisture or wood damage.
- Review your insurance coverage and update it for improvements or meaningful changes to the home.

WATER HEATERS ARE NOT ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

Ask a qualified plumber what maintenance fits your water heater's type, age and service history.

We're Still Here

Closing day is not the end of our relationship

Questions often come up after you receive the keys. You may get unfamiliar mail, discover something you do not understand or simply wonder whom to call. You do not have to figure it out alone.

START WITH US

If you are unsure who to call or where to begin, call us. If we do not know the answer, we will help you find the right person.

WE'RE HAPPY TO HELP WITH

01

UNFAMILIAR MAIL

Supplemental tax bills, official notices or solicitations that are difficult to recognize.

02

HOME WARRANTY QUESTIONS

Where to begin when an included system or appliance stops working.

03

CONTRACTOR RESOURCES

Finding an appropriate professional when your home needs maintenance or repair.

04

RENOVATION DECISIONS

Thinking through improvements and how buyers may view them when you eventually sell.

05

HOA OR NEIGHBORHOOD QUESTIONS

Understanding whom to contact when a community-related question arises.

06

YOUR HOME'S VALUE

A future market update when you want to understand how your home may be performing.

OUR PROMISE

We will always tell you what we honestly think—even when the answer is not the easiest one. We hope you will continue to think of us as a trusted real estate resource long after closing.

WILLIAM "BART" POTTER | DRE #02157874

805-816-0989

bartlivinginventuracounty@gmail.com

KATHRYN KEZIAH AALIYAH | DRE #02157683

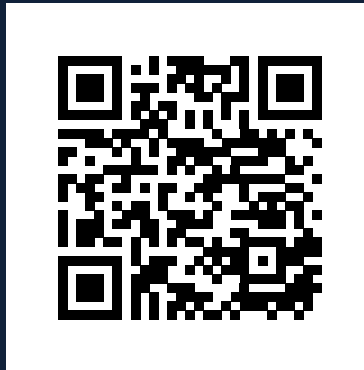
805-256-2813

keziahlivinginventuracounty@gmail.com

Thank You

for trusting us with your Ventura County home journey

If you feel we've earned it, a review or an introduction to someone you care about would mean so much to us.



BART & KEZIAH

living-inventuracounty.com

William "Bart" Potter | 805-816-0989

Kathryn Keziah Aaliyah | 805-256-2813

Licensed California Real Estate Agents

Keziah Aaliyah #02157683 | Bart Potter #02157874

Balboa Real Estate