

MARNI

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space at all. Now we have a pool. We're barbecuing and love just being in the yard," Kristina Dove said. "My heart has really changed. I no longer have the stress of walking outside and worrying about who is around the corner."

McLaughlin, a top Bay Area realtor and author of "Real Estate Rescue: How America Leaves Billions Behind in Residential Real Estate and How to Maximize Your Home's Value" (Mango Media, April 2020), says the Doves have plenty of company.

"Because of COVID, many adults had an opportunity to live somewhere else and work," McLaughlin said.

Many formerly office-based workers who temporarily moved

out of cities during the pandemic found they liked where they went better than where they were, so they made the decision to pivot.

Many companies are accommodating the change long term. Once the pandemic lifts, for instance, Twitter is letting workers choose whether they want to work in the office, from home or a combination. Kristina says she'll likely opt for the hybrid plan.

"Because we can take our laptops anywhere," McLaughlin said, "that lets us work and live in places we never dreamed of. If people can still earn what they did in the city, and enjoy some breathing room, they are not going back."

Before they do, she said, "Cities will have to be clean and safe and beautiful for people to want to return or they will remain blighted."

If the pandemic has a silver lining, McLaughlin added, it's that it made people try something different, and many, like the Doves, found another way of life that worked better.

Nationwide, the housing market is hot, as the pandemic has driven home buyers to make permanent changes. Here's what McLaughlin said buyers in this market want:

- **Indoor-outdoor living.** "If they are going to move out of the city, they want to touch the ground," McLaughlin said. "They want yards, not elevated living, not decks or balconies. They want a place where they can entertain outside and enjoy outdoor recreation and feel safe. Swimming pools are huge."

- **Room for exercise.** Having a yoga studio or Peloton room is a big selling feature. When gyms closed, then reopened with only

limited capacity, people began creating places in their homes to help them feel healthy.

- **Walking trails.** Homeowners want to walk outside with their dogs and be on a walking trail. They don't want to have to drive to a dog park.

- **Safer neighborhoods.** "People can deal with a year of not going to restaurants or bars, but not with also having homes or cars broken into or homeless people living on their street," she said.

- **Workspace.** Even if it doesn't have a dedicated home office, every home must have a place to work, preferably one with a view.

- **Outbuildings.** Since the pandemic, guest houses are more desirable. Accessible dwelling units have been on the rise. Whether for boomerang kids or in-laws, they allow families to be close without living together.

- **Simple technology.** Home


buyers want easy technology. They don't want a remote to turn on their fireplaces. They don't want crazy lighting systems. They want great internet, solid cell service and performance right away.

- **No fixers.** Buyers don't want houses that need a lot of work. "Buyers want turnkey. They don't have the bandwidth to remodel," she said. "They want to buy a house where they can move in and feel good right away."

Marni Jameson is the author of six home and lifestyle books, including "Downsizing the Family Home – What to Save, What to Let Go" and "Downsizing the Blended Home – When Two Households Become One," and, coming in June, "What to Do With Everything You Own to Leave the Legacy You Want." Reach her at www.marnijameson.com.

HD-450667

Open Houses



33 9th Ave, So Charleston
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Motivated Seller! Move in Ready! Immaculate 2 Story frame with vinyl siding. 4 BR, 1-1/2 BA, 3 walk-in closets, gleaming hardwood floors throughout. Appliance filled kitchen, washer/dryer, porch, detached garage, mostly fenced yard & partial basement. Convenient to all amenities and interstate. Not a drive by!

DIRECTIONS: Maccorkle Ave to F St. Make left at the stop sign. House is on the right.



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137 Wildwood Drive, Elkview
\$225,000
 2:00-4:00 PM

Beautiful 2-story home with 5 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, & an attached 2-car garage located in Elkview at Wildwood Acres. Too many updates to list but like new inside & out. Carpet, paint, solid-surface countertops, roof, siding, laminate flooring, exterior stone, & more make up this beautiful home.

DIRECTIONS: I-79 North to the Big Chimney exit. Turn R to the 4-way stop. Turn L onto Route 119 to L onto Wildwood Dr. Go to top of hill, last house on the left.



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