Virtual Tours Become the New Norm in Selling Homes

Clients Being Able to View Properties Remotely Now Commonplace

BY RAY HUARD

Virtual tours have become a key part of what San Diego real estate agencies use to market homes during the COVID-19 pandemic and are fast becoming the new norm.

They range from simple walk-throughs with agents using cell phones to show clients remotely what homes look like to sophisticated 3-D virtual reality programs that let potential buyers walk through homes remotely as if they were there in person.

Melissa Goldstein Tucci of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage likened the effect of a 3-D tour that is becoming more commonplace to looking at a doll house with everything there to see.

Tucci said that she does 3-D presentations on every listing and started doing them well before the pandemic hit.

“I saw it and said, ‘oh my God, this looks really cool,’” Tucci said. “Every time I do it for clients, they’re amazed.”

“You have to do it now,” Tucci said.

“Virtual Everywhere

Zane Burnett, chief digital officer with Willis Allen Real Estate in La Jolla, said the number of agents ordering virtual tours “has increased exponentially since shelter-in-place was first ordered back in March.”

“We push for every listing to have a virtual tour on it,” Burnett said, and these are far from the photo collections agents once used to market property. Short of smelling chocolate chip cookies baking in the oven, the tours can give buyers the sense of being in a house.

“When we shoot a virtual tour, we want the consumer to see anything and everything that they would be able to...
THE LIST

BROKERS

Ranked by 2020 local sales volume as of Jan 1.-June 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Local sales volume Jan 1.-June 30, 2020</th>
<th>Local units sold Jan 1.-June 30, 2020</th>
<th># of local offices</th>
<th>Local territories served</th>
<th>Services offered</th>
<th>Top local exec(s)</th>
<th>Year est. locally</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compass</td>
<td>$2.13B</td>
<td>2,372</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Coastal communities of La Jolla, Carmel Valley, Del Mar, Encinitas &amp; Carlsbad</td>
<td>Professional consultation in residential real estate sales, purchases &amp; investments</td>
<td>Adam Carey</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td>Pacific Sotheby's International Realty</td>
<td>$1.38B</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>All communities of San Diego &amp; San Diego County</td>
<td>Residential property sales, relocation services, luxury property auction</td>
<td>Brian Arrington</td>
<td>2010</td>
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<td>Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties</td>
<td>$1.36B</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Listings, sales, relocation services, mortgage, title escrow, corp. resources, marketing</td>
<td>Mary Lee Blaylock</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage</td>
<td>$1.09B</td>
<td>1,412</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Residential, commercial sales, listings, property management, comp, relocation, mortgage, title</td>
<td>Jamie Duran</td>
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<td>Big Block Realty Inc.</td>
<td>$876.79M</td>
<td>1,537</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Listings &amp; purchases</td>
<td>Sam Khormalian</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>eXp Realty Of California</td>
<td>$620.03M</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>na</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Full service virtual, cloud-based brokerage</td>
<td>Deborah Penny</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>Windermere Home and Estates</td>
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<td>647</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Full service</td>
<td>Rich Johnson</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Redfin</td>
<td>$455.73M</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Web based real estate database &amp; brokerage services</td>
<td>Ann Navarro</td>
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<td>Century 21 Award</td>
<td>$415.36M</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Real estate sales, settlement (escrow) services, mortgage loans, property management &amp; relocation</td>
<td>David Romero</td>
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<td>Willis Allen Real Estate</td>
<td>$361.95M</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>La Jolla, Del Mar, Rancho Santa Fe, Point Loma, Coronado, Metro/ Downtown, Carlsbad, Encinitas</td>
<td>Listings, sales, rentals</td>
<td>Andrew Nelson</td>
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<td>First Team Real Estate</td>
<td>$196.4M</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Full service</td>
<td>Marcel Alshadi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keller Williams San Diego Metro</td>
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<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Listings, sales</td>
<td>Robert Schantz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allison James Estates &amp; Homes</td>
<td>$147.99M</td>
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<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Full service</td>
<td>Tom Bullock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keller Williams La Jolla UTC</td>
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<td>Full service</td>
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<td>Re/Max United</td>
<td>$102.62M</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>San Diego County</td>
<td>Residential sales, commercial sales, escrow, mortgage, property management</td>
<td>Cheyanne Terraciano</td>
<td>1987</td>
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</table>

Source: Trendgraphix Inc. Jan. 1.-June 30, 2020. Residential list of sales compiled from data pulled by Trendgraphix. Neither the Associations nor their MLSs guarantee or are in anyway responsible for its accuracy. Data maintained by the Associations or their MLSs. Not applicable.

Legal

It is not the intent of this list to endorse the participants or to imply a company's size or numerical rank indicates its quality.

# of local offices: 10

Local territories served:
- Coastal communities
- San Diego & San Diego County
- All communities

Services offered:
- Professional consultation
- Residential property sales
- Listing services
- Luxury property auction
- Full service
- Web-based real estate services
- Web-based real estate database & brokerage services
- Real estate sales, settlement (escrow) services
- Mortgage loans
- Property management & relocation
- Full service virtual, cloud-based brokerage
- Listings, sales, relocation services, mortgage, title escrow, corp. resources, marketing
- Full service, specializing in military relocation
- Listings, sales, rentals, mortgage, title escrow, corp. resources, marketing
- Listings & purchases
- Full service virtual, cloud-based brokerage
- Full service
- Web-based real estate database & brokerage services
- Full service
- Web-based real estate database & brokerage services
- Full service
- Web-based real estate database & brokerage services
- Full service
- Listing services
- Residential property sales
- Full service
- Residential property sales
- Full service
- Residential property sales
- Full service
Industry - Defining Agents

We congratulate our associates recognized in this year's REAL Trends “The Thousand” Rankings of top agents in the Nation and America's Best Rankings of top agents in California - for sales achievements, and acknowledge their consistent annual success.

Tara Shapiro
INDIVIDUAL BY VOLUME | #37

Scott Aurich
INDIVIDUAL BY VOLUME | #88

Cain Group
SMALL TEAM BY VOLUME | #11

Stanfield Real Estate Group
LARGE TEAM BY VOLUME | #9

Pacific Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY
#1 TEAM IN SAN DIEGO SINCE 2008

THE JASON BARRY TEAM

From left to right: Kendra Gibilisco, Jason Barry, Ryan McGovern

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $8,495,000
Chic 5+BR Single Level + Casita, West Side, 4.5 Acres, Views

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $7,688,000
Beyond Custom 5+BR Spanish, Guest House, 3+ Usable Acres

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $8,495,000
Chic 5+BR Single Level + Casita, West Side, 4.5 Acres, Views

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $2,195,000
Charming 1+BR Bungalow, 2.4 Acres, Pool & Spa, Golf Course Views

RANCHO SANTA FE RANCHO FARMS ESTATES | $4,295,000
Unique 8,800+SF Contemporary, 30’ Ceiling, Elevator, Solar

SOLANA BEACH | $4,250,000
Recently Refreshed 5BR, Rare Large Lot, Ocean Views, Walk to All

RANCHO SANTA FE RANCHO FARMS ESTATES | $4,295,000
Unique 8,800+SF Contemporary, 30’ Ceiling, Elevator, Solar

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $29,995,000
22,500 SF Modern Masterpiece on 33 Acres, State-of-the-Art Smart Home, Stunning Views, Walls of Glass, Sports Court, Stadium Style Tennis Court

DEL MAR | $15,995,000
Private 5BR Modern Estate, Unparalleled Ocean Views, Steps to Village

SANTALUZ | $3,495,000
4BR Sanctuary of Comfortable Luxury, Pool, Solar, Golf Course Views

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OVER $4 BILLION IN SALES

SOLANA BEACH | $4,250,000
Recently Refreshed 6BR, Rare Large Lot, Ocean Views, Walk to All

SANTALUZ | $3,495,000
4BR Sanctuary of Comfortable Luxury, Pool, Solar, Golf Course Views

RANCHO SANTA FE RANCHO FARMS ESTATES | $4,295,000
Unique 8,800+SF Contemporary, 30’ Ceiling, Elevator, Solar

SANTALUZ | $8,495,000
Chic 5+BR Single Level + Casita, West Side, 4.5 Acres, Views

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $29,995,000
22,500 SF Modern Masterpiece on 33 Acres, State-of-the-Art Smart Home, Stunning Views, Walls of Glass, Sports Court, Stadium Style Tennis Court

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $19,995,000
Private Hilltop 49.56-Acre Estate, Soaring Vaulted Ceilings, Crafted with Redwood, Glass, and Marble, Indoor Pool & Spa, Tennis Court, Guest House

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $7,688,000
Beyond Custom 5+BR Spanish, Guest House, 3+ Usable Acres

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $2,195,000
Charming 1+BR Bungalow, 2.4 Acres, Pool & Spa, Golf Course Views

SOLANA BEACH | $4,250,000
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SANTALUZ | $8,495,000
Chic 5+BR Single Level + Casita, West Side, 4.5 Acres, Views

RANCHO SANTA FE COVENANT | $29,995,000
22,500 SF Modern Masterpiece on 33 Acres, State-of-the-Art Smart Home, Stunning Views, Walls of Glass, Sports Court, Stadium Style Tennis Court

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Virtual tours have always been there but we just never depended on them,” said Carla Farley, owner of Corban Realty Group and president of the Greater San Diego Association of Realtors. “Now, in the pandemic, you, any one who wants to do any kind of business, you have a new skill set,” Farley said.

The Only Way

Dena Holman Maldonado, who heads the Maldonado Team of Compass real estate in La Jolla, said he uses virtual tours to cut down on traffic going through homes he’s showing, especially in homes that are occupied.

“Virtual tours would show us the house, the better, for the owner and everybody to stay safe,” Maldonado said. “With the vacant ones, it just depends on the property because with vacant property, you have more access to them.”

No Furniture, No Problem

“With the pandemic, pricier versions of virtual tours that took people right inside the house, you just didn’t see that much,” Farley said.

“The cost of doing virtual tours has come down for agents as more people use them,” said Jenny Torres, a real estate agent with the California Association of Realtors. “Typical costs, according to many agents, range from about $250 to $500, although at least one agent reported prices of under $200.”

A benefit cited by many agents is that virtual tours aren’t intrusive. “With virtual tours, many said that a person walking through a house would see them on the higher income but not on the middle income. You just didn’t see that much,” Farley said.

“Now, you’re seeing it on just about everything.”

For example, Maldonado said he tended to use video tours on homes selling for $2.5 million or more, adding that, “We’re using those tools for all price points now.” Wendy Purvey, CEO of Pacific Sotheby’s International Realty in Rancho Bernardo, said her company has stepped up agent training in the early days of the pandemic when nothing was moving, including learning how to use virtual tours.

“We were teaching and training and using this downtime like crazy,” Purvey said. “It’s forcing even the least tech people to use technology, otherwise they can’t do business.”

Purvey said buyers and sellers also are using virtual reality in their own businesses and personal lives, so they expect it from real estate agents when they go to buy or sell a house.

“I think we’re going to have some permanent changes,” Purvey said.

Roxana Said of Pacific Sotheby’s International Realty said that she offered virtual tours on her social media sites prior to the pandemic but does so far more now.

“This definitely changed the way consumers look at property,” Said said.

An Evolution

Angela Aviléz, vice president of Century 21 Award for Southern California based in Mission Valley, said virtual tours aren’t new but “nothing was as robust as it is right now.”

“The pandemic has really forced us to embrace different tools, the virtual experience, as part of the real estate,” said Aviléz, who is a realtor with Cardenas and Company.

“The pandemic has really rattled and disrupted what the normal was,” Aviléz said, adding that she provides virtual tours on every home she lists.

If I’m selling a mobile home or I’m selling an investment home, the experience is the same,” Aviléz said.

She said Century 21 agents have sold homes based solely on virtual tours.

“The virtual tours, they basically weed out and prioritize who people really want and it brings to the table the serious buyer,” Aviléz said.

Jamie Duran, president of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Southern California, said Coldwell agents had been trained in virtual tours and were up to speed with the technology prior to COVID-19, although it’s up to individual agents how sophisticated they want to get with the virtual tours and how much use, from simple presentations to the 3-D versions.

“We never skipped a beat when COVID hit because really, our technology was already in place,” Duran said. “Moving forward, everybody should be doing them (virtual tours) in some form. It’s just so much more visual today with everyone going online.”

Sellers just expect it as a routine part of marketing their homes, Duran said.

“I just don’t think you can afford to be camera shy or virtual shy anymore,” Duran said.

Linda Moore, a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Encinitas, is one of those who has stepped up her use of the technology Coldwell offered when the pandemic hit.

Moore said she used virtual tours sparingly before the pandemic but now, “I’m using them on every one of them now unless the seller doesn’t want me to,” Moore said. “I think they’re very helpful for every property.”

The Walk

Miguel Diaz with Douglas Elliman Real Estate in Mission Valley said nearly all of his clients want to tour homes using cell phone applications.

Diaz said that as soon as the pandemic hit, everyone in his office would schedule an appointment to tour homes in person. He said she has since come to rely on them.

“I’m using them on every one of them now unless the seller doesn’t want me to,” Moore said. “I think they’re very helpful for every property.”

Stone to Screen

The California Association of Realtors has recommended that all agents use virtual tours during the pandemic to limit the possible exposure of buyers and sellers to COVID-19.

“The savvy agents and companies always knew that virtual tours are the new norm,” said Mary Lee Blaylock, president and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Home Services California Properties.

“With the pandemic, it became even more clear they are here to stay,” Blaylock said, adding that Berkshire Hathaway agents had been using virtual tours prior to the pandemic.

“This has grown exponentially in practice and also allows more efficiency and a way to view homes,” Blaylock said. She said more listings include virtual tour and video tours.

“Some don’t,” Blaylock said. Virtual tour agents can walk through a home with a client on a video call.

Likely to Stay

“When the pandemic hit, we had an increase in virtual tours and virtual open houses,” said Carla Farley, Century 21 agent.

“Everyone’s starting to use virtual tours now and has to adapt to the technology,” Carla Farley said.

“Now, you’re seeing it on just about everything.”

The days of lookie loos just looking at homes to check them out I think is going to be a thing of the past,” said Eric Matz of Windermere Homes & Estates.

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4 BEDROOMS | 6 BATHROOMS | 4,209 SQ.FT. | $3,650,000

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Broker Associate | Founding Partner
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858.337.4417 | dane@compass.com
La Jolla, 2BR/2BA | $1,895,000
Nelson Brothers Team, 858.215.3739 | DRE#s 01376023 & 01801493

Coronado, 2BR/2BA | $1,795,000
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La Jolla, 4BR/4BA | $2,999,000
Nelson Brothers Team, 858.215.3739 | DRE#s 01376023 & 01801493

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Solana Beach, 3BR/2BA | $2,495,000
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Last Sold Price $10,500,000

17233 Via Recanto
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Last Sold Price $3,849,000

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Last sold $3,138,000

1633 6th St
Coronado CA 92118
Last Sold Price $2,830,000

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Sold Price $10,500,000

17233 Via Recanto
Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067
Sold Price $3,849,000

3128 Kellogg St
San Diego CA 92106
Sold $3,138,000

1633 6th St
Coronado CA 92118
Sold Price $2,830,000

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“Remarkable” is a great description of Todd’s services... his real estate knowledge & expertise is the Best I’ve experienced. (Having bought/sold ten homes in my history.) He is kind & patient with an innate sense of my needs & calming my angst! He coordinated all transactions, making this sale seamless for me. I will continue to recommend the valuable Todd Armstrong to all of my friends & family!

Todd represented us with the purchase of our new home. He paid attention to every detail during the entire real-estate process. He is an excellent problem solver, negotiator and the most knowledgable real-estate professional I’ve met. If you are buying or selling your home, I highly recommend Todd.

FEATURED PROPERTIES

634 ROSECRANS STREET
SAN DIEGO, CA 92106
$2,999,888
4 Beds
4 Baths
1 1/2 Bath
3,650 Sq. Ft.
$822 / Sq. Ft.

666 UPAS STREET, UNIT 803,
SAN DIEGO, CA 92103
$1,175,000
3 Beds
2 Baths
1,697 Sq. Ft.
$692 / Sq. Ft.

845 FORT STOCKTON DR, UNIT 111
SAN DIEGO, CA 92103
$1,349,000 / 3 beds / 3 baths / 2,488 sq. ft.
Remarkable” is a great description of Todd’s services... his real estate knowledge & expertise is the Best I’ve experienced. (Having bought/sold ten homes in my history.) He is kind & patient with an innate sense of my needs & calming my angst! He coordinated all transactions, making this sale seamless for me. I will continue to recommend the valuable Todd Armstrong to all of my friends & family!

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2 Baths
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