

*AS SEEN IN*



October 2, 2014



I think it's safe to say that if you live in Naples, you know all about having houseguests. And despite all the sayings about three days and the smell of fish, etc., you have to thank them for one thing: They reintroduce us to this great town.

We take them to the beach, to the zoo, to the theater, to the ballpark, to the golf course and sometimes to the dog track.

The best of them treat us to dinner at restaurants we wouldn't dare enter outside of summer when the specials run rampant.

Houseguests remind us just where we are living — and why we are here. It's not the grocery store or the gas station or the office or any of the locales that occupy our minds during a typical day.

Look around.

The incredibly blue, blue sky, the freshness of the air, the boulevards lined with flowers, palm trees and shrubs, all of them perfectly manicured, winding through neighborhoods of tasteful homes and picturesque water scenes.

When I first moved here (from Connecticut in 1990), I was overwhelmed with Naples. I actually found it hard to work in the midst of such splendor and in such perfect weather.

I drifted through those first few months as though I were on vacation — until the bills finally caught up with me and I had to get down to business.

Since then, I've been the most responsible, hard-working professional I know, able to drive down Pelican Bay Boulevard and not even glimpse at the sparkling lake flowing from the lush golf course.

Able to show a gorgeous home while listening so intently to the buyer that I don't even hear the surf in the background.

Even able to be in an office on the top floor of a building on U.S. 41 and not once glance with longing at the vast Gulf of Mexico.

I tell myself that it's enough to just know it's out there. But it's not enough. Not anymore.

Today marks the start of a new exercise program. I'm calling it my appreciation workout and it goes like this:

No fewer than three times a week, I will arise early, just before dawn, and walk for 45 minutes. I might walk quickly, or I might just stroll.

I might walk my neighborhood or Fifth Avenue or Waterside Shops or the beach. And when I do walk the beach, I will breathe in the salt air and let the breeze ruffle my otherwise perfect coif. Most of all, I will consciously feel the sugary sand beneath my feet and between my toes.

I will arrive at my office refreshed and rejuvenated and, while I'll work as diligently as ever, I will stop frequently throughout my day, if only for a few seconds, to remind myself where I live.

It might be to marvel at the fact that my hometown just got buried in 12 inches of snow, while here I am in a summery dress without even a sweater draped across my shoulders.

Or it might be to listen to the serenade of a mockingbird or the staccato attack of a woodpecker or the lovely rustle of palm fronds.

Or just to relish the texture and succulence of a Florida tomato, something not available, much less describable, to the larger world.

At night, when the air turns cool, I will make it my routine to watch the sun set and to spot the first star just as I did as a little girl (that is, when the sky was clear enough).

And I will thank God for allowing me to live in this heaven on earth.

Each of these will take only seconds out of my day, but they will enrich my life for hours at a time and sustain me through whatever the day may bring. I'm confident they will do the same for you.

After all, to paraphrase an old Irish saying: "If you're lucky enough to live in Naples, you're lucky enough." †

— When Realtor Cheryl Turner is not marveling at the beauty of Naples, she can be found helping others find their home here.