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The Desertleaf

Catalina Foothills Community Living

Roads
Less Traveled

Plus
Music In The Canyon



Lisa Bayless

Ask the Expert

Recently, I closed on a \$2 million home

In late 2010, I represented a buyer who purchased a home in Tucson for over \$2 million. In all of 2010, there were only three homes that sold for \$2 million or more in Tucson and Oro Valley.

Currently, there are over 38 homes for sale, in Tucson and Oro Valley, for over \$2 million. At the rate of three homes per year that is more than a 12 year supply of homes in this price range. **Thus both buyers and sellers in this market must be astute, diligent and get the best professional advice.** Based upon my first-hand experience with the above sale, and my work in the luxury home market, I believe the guidelines below will help achieve the optimum results for both buyer and seller.

Price: Price is the most important component of a successful sale. When considering the market value of a property, both buyers and sellers should obtain and review a Comparable Market Analysis "CMA". **A good CMA will list what every comparable home in the area has sold for in the past 3-6 months.** Realtors can easily provide clients with a CMA for their property of interest. **Understanding a home's fair market value is crucial, since buyers can't obtain a mortgage for more than the property's appraised value.** Further, for sellers in this market, listing at a price much greater than market and then repeatedly dropping the price often signals weakness to buyers.

Realtor: A good Realtor must have the time to devote to the sale. Buyers in this price range do not make impulsive home buying decisions. They expect personalized service. It is important for the buyer's Realtor to have the time to show them every home that fits their criteria and provide them with all the necessary information so they can make an informed decision. A seller's Realtor should also be able to devote the necessary time to market a property, make a commitment to provide the appropriate level of advertising and provide potential buyers with the information they request.

Condition: Buyers expect a home in this price range to have a certain look. You should consult your Realtor to determine what repairs and modifications need to be made prior to listing. The home must be in good condition and clean to achieve the maximum price. Currently in this price range you have 38 other homes to compete with - **yours must stand out.**

If you are considering selling your home, or are curious what your home is currently worth call (520.668.8293) or email lisab@longrealty.com the **Lisa Bayless Team for a free consultation and market evaluation.** Whether you're a seller or a buyer, the **Lisa Bayless Team** will work to make every aspect of your real-estate transaction successful.



Please email Lisa your questions.

520.668.8293
lisab@longrealty.com



The Sonoita Valley spreads out before you as you walk east along Passage 5 of The Arizona Trail.

Photos by Lyda S. Harris

Day Tripping

The Arizona Trail Passage 5: A Ribbon of Time

by Lisa K. Harris

The Arizona Trail rambles over 800 miles between Mexico and Utah. If you were to explore the entire route you'd witness incredible natural diversity—craggy peaks, desert bajadas, canyons, pine forests, grasslands, saguaros—within many different communities. As if a ribbon of time, the trail links cliff dwellings, mining camps, and quaint towns like Patagonia and Oracle.

Luckily, it's in our backyard.

The trail is broken into 43 sections or passages. One of my favorites is Passage 5—Santa Rita Mountains—just north of Sonoita, on the range's eastern flanks and under an hour's drive from Tucson. The 13.5-mile passage links Gardner and Oak Tree canyons, and can be explored at one go (with two vehicles) or in parts. This portion of The Arizona Trail is on Forest Service property, so well-behaved, leashed dogs are welcome.

My daughter, Lyda, and I recently tackled Gardner Canyon to Kentucky Camp, and found that this portion delivers what The Arizona Trail is all about: awesome scenery, solitude, and cultural history. It's an easy seven mile round-trip hike—long enough to qualify as exercise but short enough to keep the family peace and not become an endurance competition. Most of the journey is at 5,000 feet elevation, so temperatures are pleasant year-round.

The adventure starts at the trailhead: Gardner Canyon, named after cattle rancher and pioneer Thomas Gardner, is a sycamore rich riparian area. Gardner originally built Apache Springs Ranch, which

you pass on the way (see Finding Your Way for travel details).

You'll know you've arrived at the trailhead when you spot the ample dirt parking area with room for cars, trailers and trucks. Raring to go, our yappy dogs, Lola and Ellie, barely gave us time to admire the incredible view of the Santa Rita's undulating oak-covered ridges, let alone find ourselves on the large trail map posted next to the parking lot.

As the trail heads northeast, you switch-back up to the top of the first ridge. The rise travels through grasslands dotted with squat evergreen oaks and prickly yucca. We traveled the trail before spring greenery came on, so the grass was a sea of amber waves. This ascent is just the right elevation gain; your heart beats faster but not so much that you're wondering, *how much farther?*



The Arizona Trail Passage 5 winds across a grassy meadow.

Once up top, turn around for the rewarding jaw-dropping view. So used to seeing the Santa Ritas from Tucson, I'm always taken aback with how large of an area they encompass, north to south, and how densely vegetated they are.

Continuing on uphill but at a less steep incline, the trail runs parallel with an at-grade water pipe. The only sound is our feet, kicking up rocks every now and then, and Lyda snapping photos. At one point, the trail crosses the pipe and a posted sign interprets its construction.

A little over a mile from the parking lot, the trail reaches a plateau and merges into a two-track jeep road. The Arizona Trail has been constructed by linking existing paths and dirt roads, and building new trail where needed. This passage is no exception, and it follows several primitive roadways.

Heading east for another mile, the Sonoita Valley unfolds before you, gold grasslands stretching clear to the Whetstone and Huachuca mountains.

The trail finally leaves the two-track and tumbles down the ridge's north-side, passing through thicker stands of oak and yucca along with a smattering of alligator juniper. Screaming from its perch, a raven—a sentinel of jet black against an azure sky—watches us pick our way through. The raven's jabbering doesn't faze Ellie or Lola. Noses down, the occasional cow patty, horse poop, and coyote scat harness their attention.

At the bottom, the trail opens into a grassy sunlight-drenched meadow. The warm glow feels good after the shade. Bored with our unresponsiveness, the raven leaves us to weave our way through brushy grass. The trail intersects another two-track underneath a



Remnants of the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company's Kentucky Camp are evident along Passage 5 of The Arizona Trail.

large oak clump, and less than a mile later we arrive at Kentucky Camp, an old gold mining operation. Once part of the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company, the five adobe buildings were abandoned in 1912. Today, volunteers work to restore them. Kentucky Camp makes for a good stop, with its pit toilet and signage interpreting area mining.

Build a Trail: Constructed by volunteers, The Arizona Trail is 95 percent complete. The undeveloped sections are close by, giving you an opportunity to be part of the trail-building community that will finish it this spring. Check <http://aztrail-build.org> for a schedule. No experience or tools are necessary

and Beyond Bread sponsors a feast after each half-day event.

Finding Your Way: From Tucson take I-10 east. Exit onto Highway 83 (exit 281), head south for 20.5 miles. Turn right (west) at Gardner Canyon Road (FS-92). Head west 5.5 miles until the trail head. See www.arizonatrail.org for more information.

DL

Lisa K. Harris is a freelance writer and environmental consultant with a huge wanderlust. She's often found exploring the backcountry with her two daughters and dogs. Comments for publication should be addressed to letters@desertleaf.com.

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