

## Welcome to The Carole Downing Group February Newsletter!

Love is in the air this February, making it the perfect time to reflect on what truly feels like 'home sweet home.' In this edition, we're diving into 'Love It or List It,' helping you weigh the factors that align with your long-term goals and budget. You'll also discover creative ways to celebrate Valentine's Day. Plus, for a special treat, we've included not one but two mouthwatering recipes—one perfect for Valentine's Day and another just right for your Super Bowl party. Don't miss our San Diego Spotlight, featuring a must-visit neighborhood, along with the latest market update to keep you informed about the local real estate scene.



Deciding whether to renovate your current home or move to a new one? Here are the top 5 factors to consider:

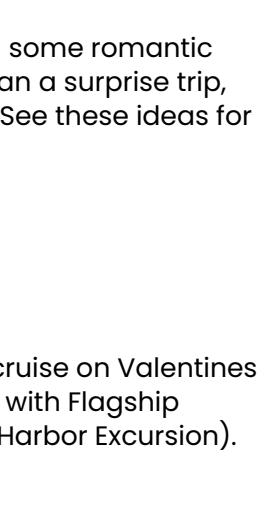
### 1) Current Home Needs



Assess whether your home still meets your lifestyle and functional needs. If you require more space or modern features, renovations might address these issues. However, if the layout no longer suits you, moving could be the better solution.

### 2) Cost Comparison

Renovating can be a budget-friendly way to upgrade your home, but unexpected expenses can arise. Moving involves costs such as realtor fees, closing costs, and potential repairs in a new home. Comparing the long-term financial impact is crucial.



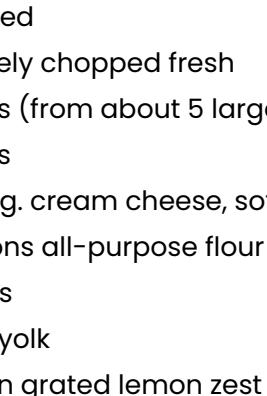
### 3) Market Conditions



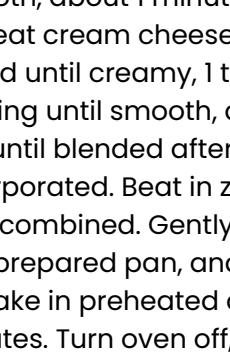
Research the housing market to understand if selling now could yield a high return. In a seller's market, you might get a great offer on your current home, whereas a buyer's market could offer favorable prices for a new property.

### 4) Lifestyle Changes

Your current home should align with your evolving lifestyle needs. Whether you need more room for a growing family, want to downsize, or seek a new location, moving might be the right choice. Renovating can provide immediate improvements but may not address future needs.

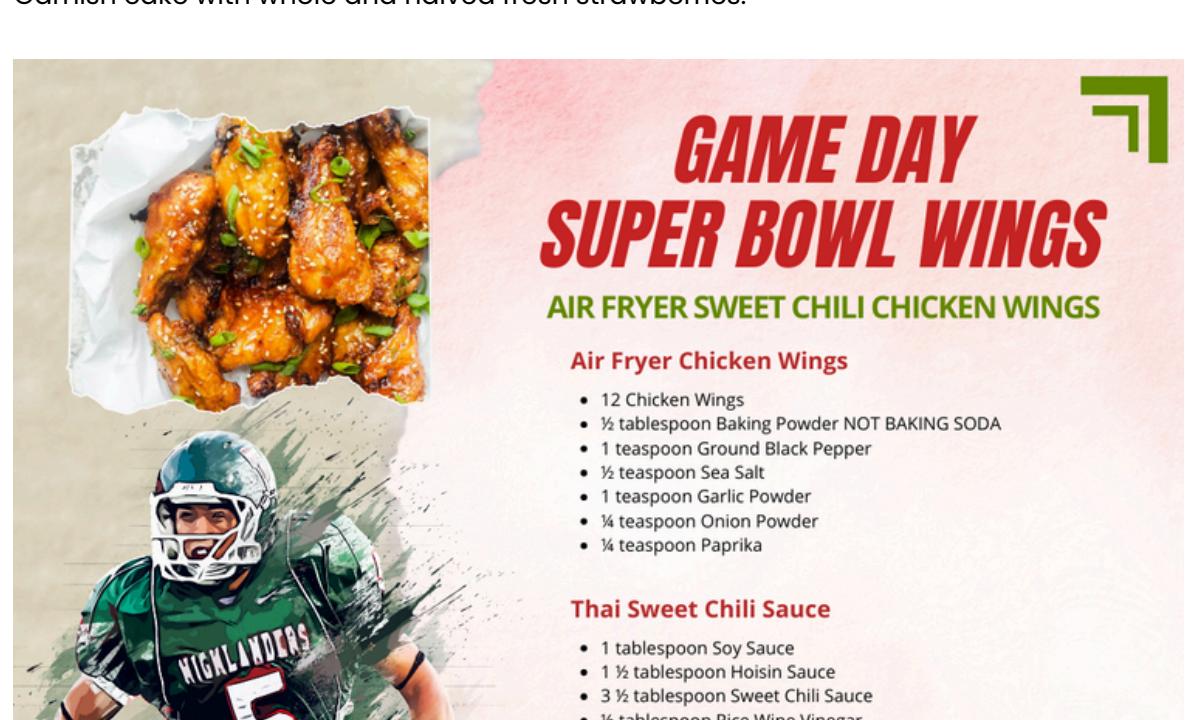


### 5) Time and Effort

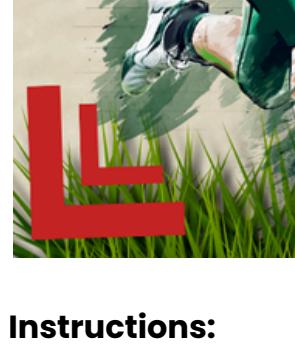


Renovations can take time and disrupt daily life, whereas moving provides a fresh start with less hassle. Consider whether you're ready for the commitment of renovations or prefer a quick transition to a new space.

[www.thecaroledowninggroup.com](http://www.thecaroledowninggroup.com)

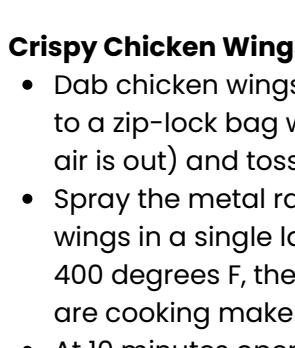


Valentines Day Ideas to celebrate your love. Enjoy a romantic and fun Valentine's Day in San Diego, CA. This year Valentines Day is on Friday, February 14, 2025. Happy Valentine's Day



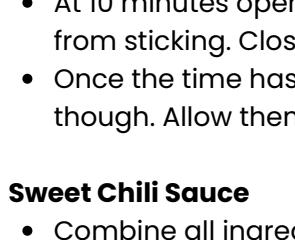
#### Picnic

Pack all your favorite foods in a picnic lunch, grab a bottle of wine or your favorite drink, and head out for a picnic at a local park, hiking trail or beach. If you don't want to cook, buy take out from your love's favorite restaurant.



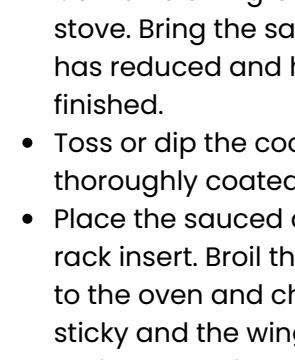
#### Romantic Movie

Choose a romantic movie at a Cinepolis Luxury theatre on Valentine's Day, or pick out a romantic movie to watch online from home. Make reservations early to get the best reserved seats.



#### Romantic Weekend Trips

Valentine's Day is a great time to plan some romantic weekend trips. Each partner should plan a surprise trip, that is scheduled in different months. See these ideas for some [romantic weekend trips](#).



#### Valentine's Day Cruise

Treat the one you love to a romantic cruise on Valentines Day (or before). Cruise San Diego Bay with Flagship Cruises & Events (formerly San Diego Harbor Excursion). Call for reservations at (619) 234-4111.



#### Romantic Valentine's Day Dinner

Make reservations at one of San Diego's best restaurants for a romantic valentine dinner. Go early to dinner on Friday or Saturday as an option, or reserve your February 14 dinner.



## Chocolate-Covered Strawberry Cheesecake



**Chocolate Ganache**

- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate chips (about 1 cup)
- 1/4 cup salted butter
- 4 teaspoons light corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Garnish: Whole and halved fresh strawberries (about 2 cups total)

**Cheesecake**

- Cooking spray
- 2 1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs (such as Keebler; from 1 [13.5-oz.] pkg.)
- 6 tablespoons (3 oz.) salted butter, melted
- 1 1/4 cups plus 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar, divided
- 1 cup coarsely chopped fresh strawberries (from about 5 large strawberries)
- 4 (8-oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest (from 1 large lemon)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 to 2 drops soft pink food coloring gel

**Instructions:**

**Cheesecake**

- Prewarm oven to 325°F. Lightly coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray. Wrap outside of pan with heavy-duty aluminum foil. Stir together graham cracker crumbs, melted butter, and 2 tablespoons of the sugar in a medium bowl. Press mixture into bottom and 1 inch up sides of prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven until set, 7 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; cool completely, about 30 minutes.

**2) Prepare the Chocolate Ganache**

- Meanwhile, process chopped strawberries in a food processor until completely smooth, about 1 minute. Add whole eggs, 1 at a time, beating on low speed just until blended after each addition (do not overbeat). Add egg yolk, and beat just until incorporated. Beat in zest, strawberry puree, and 2 teaspoons vanilla on low speed just until combined. Gently stir in food coloring gel until desired shade is reached. Pour batter into prepared pan, and place on a large rimmed baking sheet.

**3) Assemble the Cheesecake**

- Bake in preheated oven, and just until center is set, 1 hour to 1 1/2 hours. Turn oven off, and let cheesecake stand in oven with door closed, 15 minutes. Remove cheesecake from oven, and gently run a knife around outer edge of cheesecake to loosen from sides of pan. (Do not remove sides of pan.) Cool completely in pan on a wire rack, about 2 hours. Cover and chill 8 to 24 hours.

**4) Garnish the Cheesecake**

- Remove sides of pan, and transfer cheesecake to a serving platter. Pour chocolate ganache over top of cake, spreading to edges using a small offset spatula and allowing some to drip down sides. Chill cheesecake until ganache is firm, about 20 minutes. Garnish cake with whole and halved fresh strawberries.

**5) Serve the Cheesecake**

- Place chocolate chips, butter, and corn syrup in a small microwavable bowl. Microwave on MEDIUM (50%) power until melted and smooth, 1 to 2 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds. Stir in 1/2 teaspoon vanilla.

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**Explore wildflowers in Anza Borrego** – Most of us think of wildflowers in March or April, but some years you will see a winter bloom or early bloom in the desert, like we saw in late January 2023 in south part of the Anza Borrego desert. [Anza Borrego desert](#)

**Super Bowl 2025** – Watch the SuperBowl game Sunday February 9, 2025. Even if you don't like football, the commercials are worth it. Still can't convince you to watch? It's a great time to shop in the empty stores.

**Belmont Park** – Have some old fashioned fun at San Diego Belmont park. Ride the Big Dipper roller coaster, play in the arcade, and try the wave machines. [Belmont Park San Diego](#)

**Guided Tidepooling Adventures in La Jolla** – Select Saturdays and Sundays from Jan – Mar 2025. Naturalists from Scripps Birch Aquarium will help you discover the wonderful inhabitants of the tidepools in La Jolla, Cal. [Tidepooling Adventures](#)

**Cardiff Kook Run and Costume Contest** – Sunday February 9, 2025. The Cardiff Kook Run on Super Bowl Sunday. Have some unique fun in San Diego. Where else can you run in the Cardiff Kook Run. 5K (3.1 miles) and 10K (6.2 miles) races along the Pacific Ocean in beautiful Cardiff-by-the-Sea. [www.theekookrun.com](#)

**Romantic Beach Walks** – Thursday, Friday and Saturday February 13 to 15, 2025 from 2:30 to sunset. Take a romantic stroll on the beach, especially at low tide. The beach trail at Torrey Pines is one of my favorites this time of year. [Best San Diego Beaches for Walking](#)

**Hotel del Coronado Historic Walking Tour** – Self guided or guided tours of the famous historic Hotel del Coronado, led by docents from the Coronado Historical Association. Reservations recommended. 619.437.8788

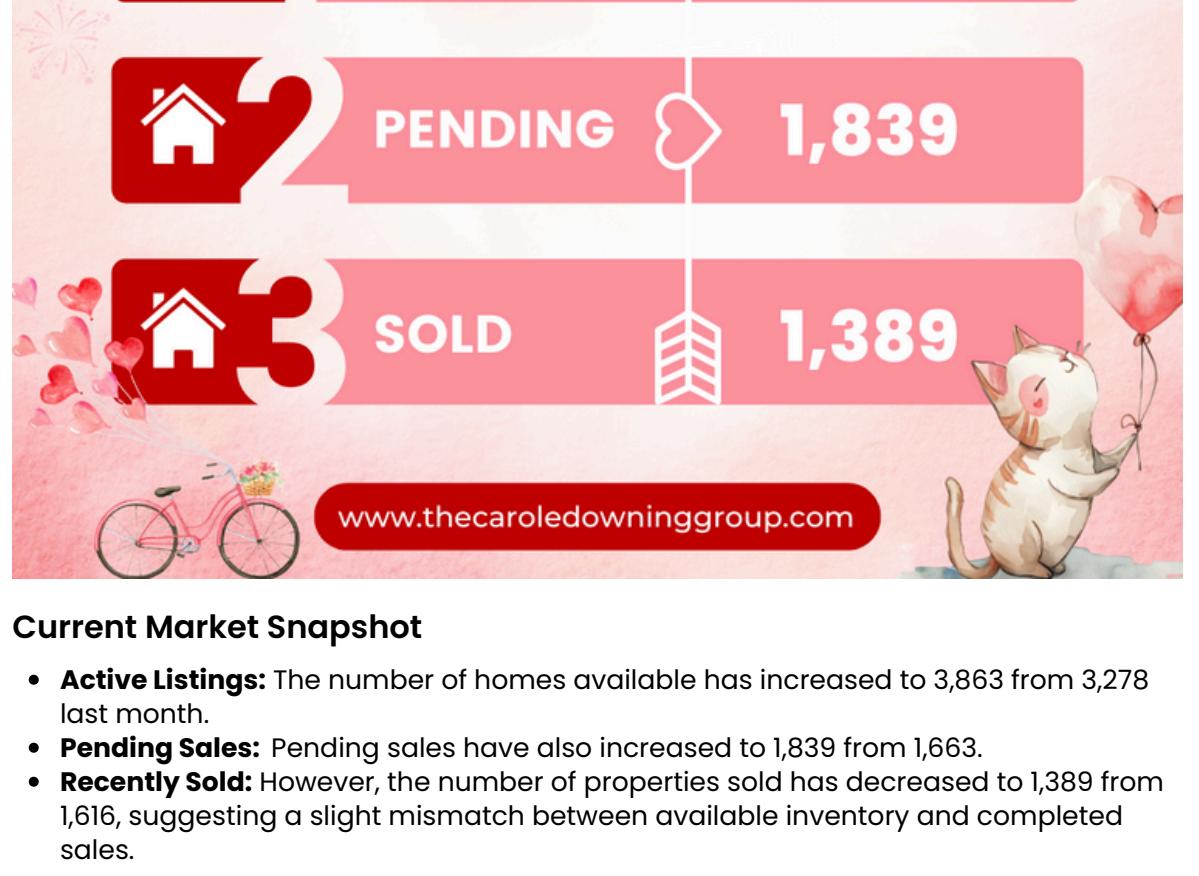
**San Diego Museum Month** – February 1 – 28, 2025 at 40 local museums, monuments, historical sites and gardens offering half-price admission. Pick up a pass starting February 1 at a local library. One of the best cultural San Diego events. February museum discounts for the entire month! [San Diego Museum Month](#)

**Palm Springs Vacation** – Winter is a great time to visit Palm Springs California, a desert community that makes a great weekend getaway. Why not book a romantic Valentine's trip? Check out [Palm Springs Vacations](#).

**Romantic Beaches in San Diego** – Since February is such a romantic month, why not visit one of the lovely beaches. [Windansea Beach](#) beach at low tide is great for watching sunsets and capturing some San Diego sunset pictures, especially at low tide. [Children's Pool](#) and [La Jolla Cove](#) are quite romantic. In north county, try Swamis and the views from the Self Realization Fellowship temple meditation grounds (close at 5 pm).

**Romantic Sunsets at the San Diego Beaches** – Take advantage of our spectacular [San Diego sunset](#) at the beach, which occur around 5:30 pm in February. Make reservations for an early Valentines Day dinner at a fine San Diego restaurant with a view, such as Marine Room in La Jolla, Poseidon, or Jakes Del Mar. [San Diego Best Restaurants](#)

**Sweetheart Sail** – Celebrate Valentines day with those you love on a three-hour adventure sail on the Californian. Includes admission to the San Diego maritime museum and fleet of historic ships. Check in after 9 AM, sail at noon. Make reservations now for one of the best San Diego events February. [San Diego Sail at Maritime Museum](#)



#### Exploring Sunset Cliffs:

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, spanning 68 acres, features rugged cliffs, hidden caverns, and exquisite beaches. It's a favorite with both locals and visitors, and it's ideal for nature lovers, photographers, and anyone looking for peace and quiet by the sea.

#### Sunset Magic:

Sunset Cliffs has magnificent sunsets. As darkness sets, find a spot near the cliffs and watch as the sky transforms into a colorful painting. Each evening presents a unique spectacle that captivates visitors with nature's splendor.

#### Hidden Coves and Sea Caves:

Explore hidden coves and caves along the shore. These calm areas provide a peaceful refuge where you can hear the waves and feel the ocean wind. Don't forget your camera; they're ideal for capturing memories.

#### Coastal Trails:

The park has picturesque pathways along the cliffs that provide breathtaking ocean views. Whether you're a seasoned hiker or a leisurely stroller, these trails allow you to enjoy nature's beauty. Look for coastal plants such as sagebrush and poppies along the way.

#### Cliffside Charm and Coastal Serenity

Nestled on Point Loma's western edge, Sunset Cliffs is a canvas of awe-inspiring cliffs that frame the sun's descent into the horizon. Choose a spot along the trail or in the rocks and allow the coastal breeze to envelop you in a genuine embrace of nature. Nature's Playground: Tide Pools and Wildlife

At low tide, the park reveals its hidden treasures—tide pools teeming with life. Witness crabs and anemones in their natural habitat, adding to the immersive experience of this coastal sanctuary.

#### Community and Connection

Sunset Cliffs is a gathering place, a community hub where locals and visitors alike come together to celebrate life's simple pleasures. The park fosters connections against the backdrop of the setting sun, from yoga sessions to intimate picnics.

#### Preservation Efforts:

The community is committed to conserving the park's natural wonders. Ensuring that Sunset Cliffs remains a wildlife sanctuary and a pleasant respite for all by promoting conservation and ethical tourism.

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park is a sanctuary where nature's masterpiece is revealed every evening. Whether you're a local looking for peace or a traveler looking for genuine beauty, Sunset Cliffs will leave an indelible mark on your heart. Visit, breathe in the salty air, and witness the genuine magic of a sunset that embodies San Diego's coastal charm.



#### Current Market Snapshot

**Active Listings:** The number of homes available has increased to 3,863 from 3,278 last month.

**Pending Sales:** Pending sales have also increased to 1,839 from 1,663.

**Sold Listings:** However, the number of properties sold has decreased to 1,389 from 1,616, suggesting a slight mismatch between available inventory and completed sales.



**Market Insights:** As we move further into the new year, the real estate market is showing signs of increased activity, with more listings and pending sales. However, the decrease in sold properties could point to various factors, including economic factors or seasonal adjustments still affecting buyer decisions.

#### For Sellers:

**Optimizer Listing Strategies:** With the increase in active listings, it's crucial to ensure your property stands out. Consider revising your marketing strategies or staging your home to attract more potential buyers.

**Stay Competitive with Pricing:** Keep an eye on market trends to price your property competitively, which can help you avoid lingering on the market too long.

#### For Buyers:

**Be Prepared to Act:** With more homes on the market and an increase in pending sales, it's important to be ready to make decisions quickly. Ensuring your financing is in order can help you move swiftly when you find the right home.

**Evaluate the Market:** While there are more listings, the decrease in sold properties means you might still have room to negotiate. Take the time to understand the trends and how they affect your purchasing power.

**Looking Ahead:** The increasing activity is a positive sign as we head towards spring. Both buyers and sellers should prepare for the market's seasonal acceleration by aligning strategies with emerging trends.



**74 Saint Malo Bch. Oceanside, CA 92054 | \$2,400,000**

Discover a rare opportunity to own one of the last remaining buildable lots in the prestigious St. Malo community, situated on the picturesque Lagoon Vista Lagoon, offering breathtaking and unobstructed views that are simply unparalleled. This expansive 7,410 sq ft parcel includes modern architectural plans for a 4,714 sq ft, two-story home with 4 bedrooms, 4.5 baths, a three-car garage, a sauna, and a cold plunge. As you pass through the exclusive guard-gated entrance of St. Malo, you are transported into a serene enclave of homes resembling a French village. Imagination is the limit here, as this unique property stands as a testament to charm and sophistication, offering a unique atmosphere that sets it apart. St. Malo offers residents a private beach area complete with volleyball courts, a cabana with BBQ facilities, and direct access to the beach. A lifeguard on duty from Memorial Day through Labor Day ensures peace of mind during peak beach season. The community is a hidden gem, offering a sense of privacy and tranquility, with multiple courts for tennis, paddleball, and pickleball, as well as a bocce ball court. The distance to a variety of restaurants and shopping options is just a short walk away. Experience the distinctive charm and history of this one-of-a-kind community, which has maintained its allure and exclusivity over the decades. This lot provides the perfect canvas to build your dream home, where you can create a sanctuary that blends the fairy tale charm of St. Malo with the stunning beauty of the Southern California coast. Embrace the unparalleled lifestyle and exquisite setting that only St. Malo can offer. Your dream home awaits.

• Lot Size: 0.17 Acre



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