

## 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 recipe—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.



# Love it or List it





### 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.




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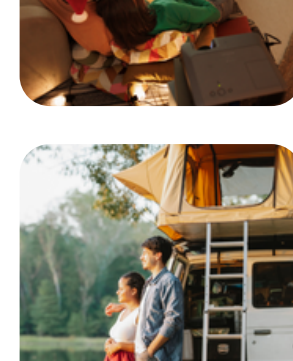


Valentine's Day Ideas to celebrate your love. Enjoy a romantic and fun Valentine's Day in San Diego, CA. This year Valentine's Day is on Friday, February 14, 2025. Happy Valentine's Day



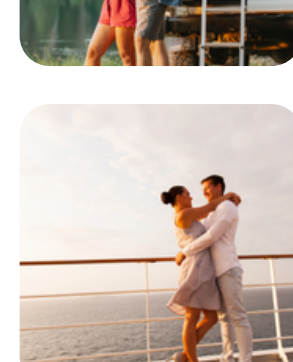
#### Picnic

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.

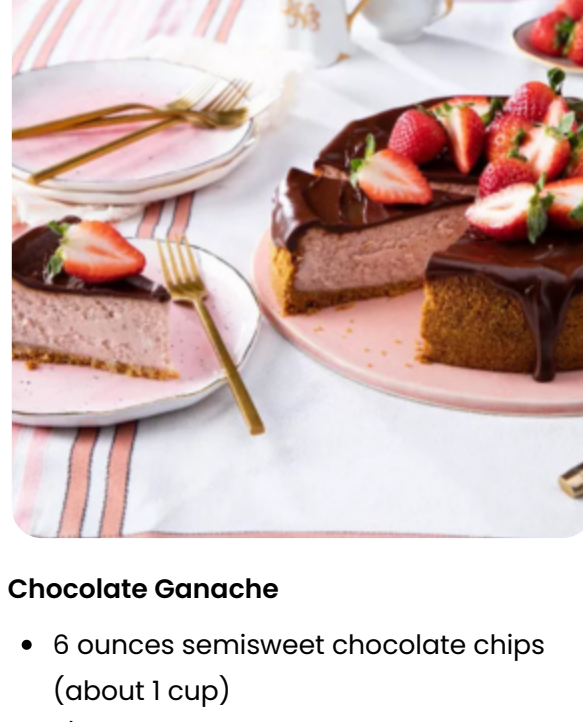


#### Romantic Valentine's Day Dinner

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)

#### Instructions:

##### Cheesecake

- 1.) Preheat 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 on bottom and 1 inch up sides of prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven until set, 7 to 8 minutes.
- 2.) Meanwhile, process chopped strawberries in a food processor until completely smooth, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape down sides as needed.
- 3.) Beat cream cheese with a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment on medium speed until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Gradually add flour and remaining 1 1/4 cups sugar, beating until 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.
- 4.) Bake in preheated oven just until center is set, 1 hour and 10 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. 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.

##### Prepare the Chocolate Ganache

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.

##### Assemble 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.



## GAME DAY SUPER BOWL WINGS

### AIR FRYER SWEET CHILI CHICKEN WINGS

#### Air Fryer Chicken Wings

- 12 Chicken Wings
- 1/2 tablespoon Baking Powder NOT BAKING SODA
- 1 tablespoon Ground Black Pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon Sea Salt
- 1 teaspoon Garlic Powder
- 1/4 teaspoon Onion Powder
- 1/4 teaspoon Paprika

#### Thai Sweet Chili Sauce

- 1 tablespoon Soy Sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoon Hoisin Sauce
- 3 1/2 tablespoon Sweet Chili Sauce
- 1/2 tablespoon Rice Wine Vinegar
- 1/2 tablespoon Sesame Oil
- 1 tablespoon Brown Sugar Optional
- 2 Cloves Garlic Minced
- 1/2 teaspoon Ground Ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon Sea Salt
- 1/2 tablespoon Lime Juice
- 1/4 Cup Water

#### Sriracha Ranch Dip

- 1/2 Cup Homemade Butterflied Ranch Dressing
- 1 tablespoon Sriracha
- 1/4 teaspoon Cayenne Pepper

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#### Instructions:

##### Crispy Chicken Wings

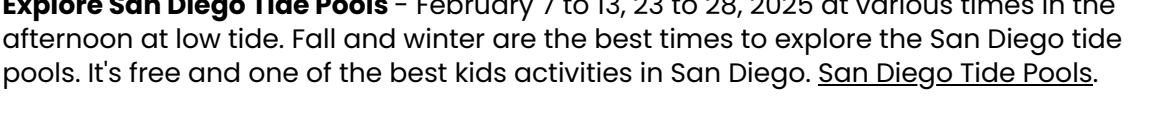
- Dab chicken wings with a paper towel to ensure they are dry. Add the chicken wings to a zip-lock bag with baking powder and spices. Close the bag (making sure all the air is out) and toss everything together until the wings are coated.
- Spray the metal rack (or basket) insert with cooking spray and arrange the chicken wings in a single layer. Close the Ninja Food lid and hit AIR CRISP, then set the TEMP to 400 degrees F, then set the TIME to 20 minutes and hit START. While the chicken wings are cooking make the sweet chili sauce.\*See Recipe Notes for oven instructions!
- At 10 minutes open the lid and toss/flip the chicken wings with tongs to avoid them from sticking. Close the lid and allow them to cook for the remaining 10 minutes.
- Once the time has expired check the internal temperature to ensure they are cooked though. Allow them to rest for 5 minutes before tossing in the sweet chili sauce.

##### Sweet Chili Sauce

- Combine all ingredients into a small saucepan and heat over medium heat on the stove. Bring the sauce to a boil then reduce heat to a simmer stirring until the sauce has reduced and has slightly thickened. Keep sauce warm until chicken wings are finished.
- Toss or dip the cooked chicken wings in the sauce. I like to make sure they are thoroughly coated.
- Place the sauced chicken wings in a single layer on a greased cookie sheet with wire rack insert. Broil the chicken wings on the top rack on HIGH for 2-4 minutes. Stick close to the oven and check the wings often, they can burn quickly! Once the sauce is sticky and the wings have some color remove them from the oven. Serve warm with optional garnishes and Sriracha Ranch.

##### Sriracha Ranch Dip

- Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and stir to combine. Serve with warm Sweet Chili Chicken Wings.



**Explore San Diego Tide Pools** - February 7 to 13, 23 to 28, 2025 at various times in the afternoon at low tide. Fall and winter are the best times to explore the San Diego tide pools. It's free and one of the best kids activities in San Diego. [San Diego Tide Pools](#).

**Photography Exhibit** - Check out the Museum of Photography Arts (MOPA) in San Diego's Balboa Park. Free exhibits to see what photographers around the world have created. [mopa.org](http://mopa.org)

**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 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, let by docents from the Coronado Historical Association. Reservations recommended. 619.437.8788

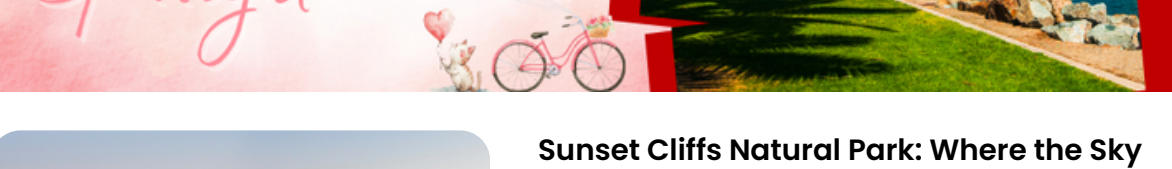
**San Diego Museum Month** – February 1 – 28, 2025 at 40 local museums, monuments, historical sites and gardens offering half-price admission. Pick up a pass starting February 1 at a local library. One of the best cultural San Diego events. February museum discounts for the entire month! [San Diego Museum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



### Sunset Cliffs Natural Park: Where the Sky Paints Its Masterpiece

Sunset Cliffs Natural Park in San Diego is a coastal treasure, a haven where nature develops a nightly symphony of colors as the sun sets. This small sanctuary perched on rugged cliffs provides an authentic, unfiltered view of the Pacific sunset.

**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.
- Recently Sold:** 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:**

**Optimize 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.

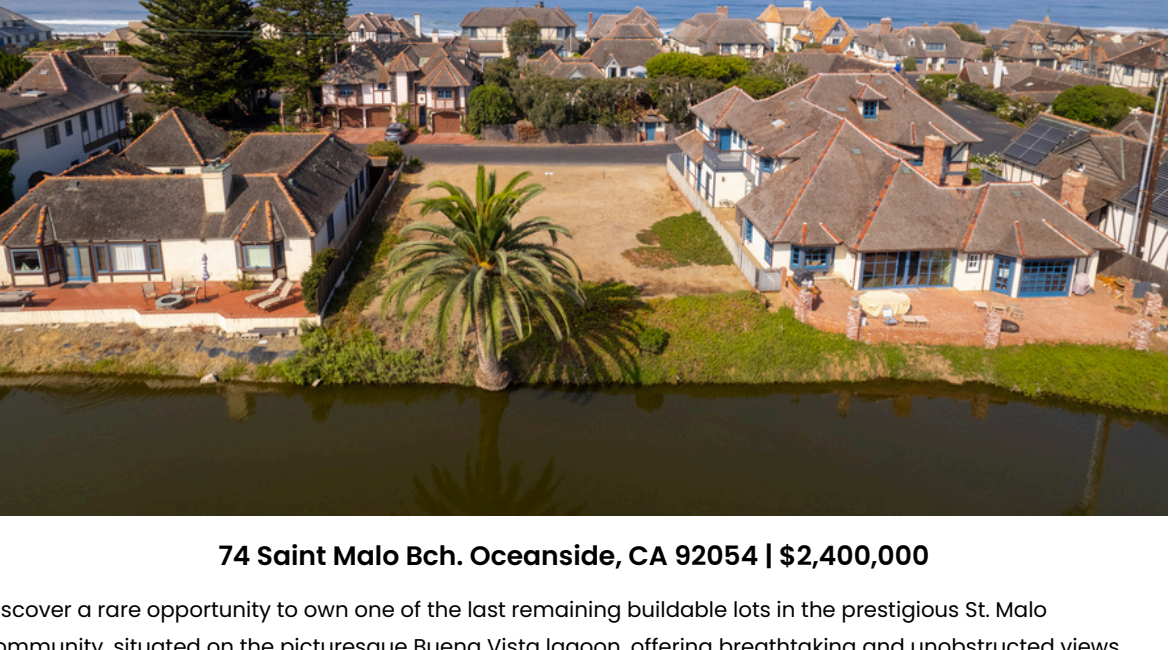
**Stay Competitive with Pricing:** Keep an eye on market trends to price your property competitively, which can help you avoid lingering on the market too long.

**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.

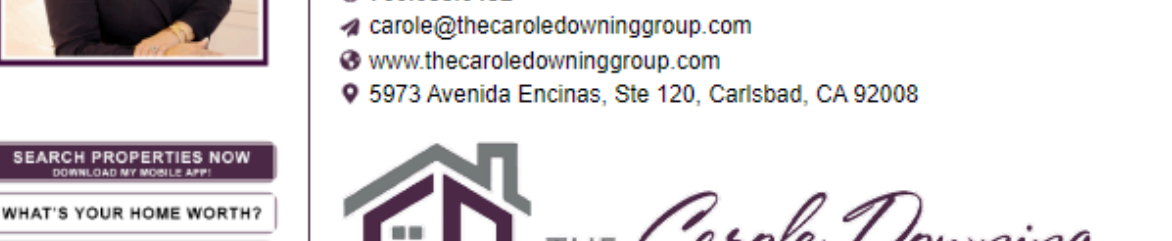
**Looking Ahead:** The increasing activity is a positive sign as we head towards spring, traditionally one of the busiest seasons in real estate. Both buyers and sellers should prepare for the market's seasonal acceleration by aligning strategies with emerging trends.



### 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 Buena 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. Imagined nearly a century ago, this 24-hour guard-gated community stands as a testament to charm and sophistication, offering a unique ambiance 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 seasons. The community boasts an impressive array of amenities, including multiple courts for tennis, paddleball, and pickleball, as well as bocce ball. The prime location along Southern California's most sought-after coastline ensures that you are within walking distance to a variety of restaurants and shopping options. 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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