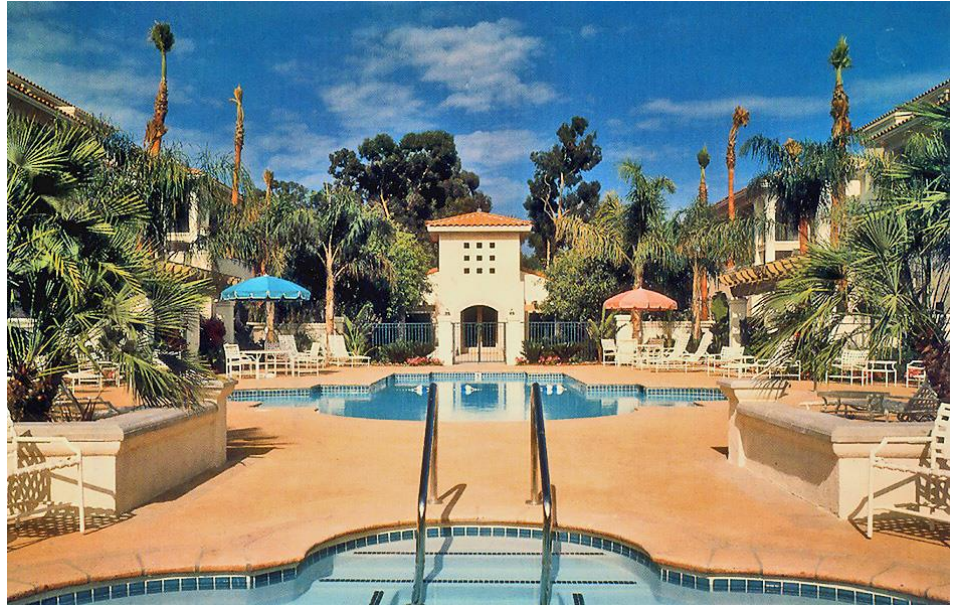


# *El Escorial Villas* at East Beach

## June 2017

### **Bob & Karin's Real Estate Newsletter**



This is the 19th publication of our newsletter, focusing on the Santa Barbara area real estate condo market and specifically as it relates to El Escorial. This issue presents Santa Barbara real estate statistics providing a market summary for the first five months of 2017. El Escorial sales continue at a healthy pace but below last year, primarily because of a lack of inventory. We have included a story regarding another one of our neighboring zoo's celebrity animals. We continue to welcome your feedback and any suggestions of topics that we could focus on in our future publications. We also invite you to view our website at [www.SBBeachHome.com](http://www.SBBeachHome.com). We would be pleased to expand our distribution to include any friends, family or acquaintances who you think would enjoy receiving this newsletter. Just let us know and we will be happy to add their names to our address book.

*Bob Oliver & Karin Holloway*

***The El Escorial Experts***



## Conrad the Sea Lion

In creating our newsletters, we are continually searching for unique subjects that our readers might find especially interesting, as related to El Escorial and to our neighborhood. Most of you are aware that El Escorial Villas was a condo conversion project and that the original structures were initially developed as an apartment complex built in the late 60's and operated as Kingswood Village Apartments. It's remarkable how many Santa Barbara residents had lived in the apartment complex over the years (including numerous real estate agents, current El Escorial owners and even my dentist) and how fondly they all speak of the time they spent here. In researching the history of Kingswood Village, we came across an engaging controversy that occurred in 1978 relative to the proximity to the zoo and the animal sounds emanating from it.

One of the early attractions at the Santa Barbara Zoo was the sea lion display (we created an article on the history of the zoo that was presented in our June 2014 Newsletter). It was probably the most popular display at the zoo. The exhibit was a unique design that enabled the zoo patrons to view the sea lion activity from above the rock haul-outs, but also provided viewing windows below the water line so that they could be



**Santa Barbara Sea Lion Exhibit in 1978**

observed in their playful swimming activities. At the time, the exhibit featured two female sea lions and one very large male, named Conrad. There were hopes that they would mate and produce numerous offspring over the ensuing years. Conrad was very large, over 600 pounds and was aggressive and very vocal in his needs. He barked in the morning when he was hungry, but he also barked throughout the day just to show everyone who was the boss.

Unfortunately, the continual barking was a major nuisance to the residents of Kingswood Village, especially when it occurred during sleeping hours. Ted Berkman<sup>1</sup>, a writer and Kingswood Village resident,

organized a petition signing with over 20 residents, demanding that action be taken by the city to curb the constant barking. Berkman commented "The problem is this sea lion, in the month of June for example, for about eight nights running was sounding off between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. for a period of two hours, blasting into the otherwise tranquil night. When I say 'blasting', I don't mean a puppy squeak. It's a sound between a bray, a bark and a yelp. And this will go on for a couple of hours. I defy any normal person to sleep through it."

The petition was presented to the city. The City Attorney had the noise level checked out and found it far exceeded the maximum level defined by the city noise ordinance. He acknowledged that he had personally heard the barking from a distance of three miles. He called an executive session meeting with the City Council

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<sup>1</sup> Ted Berkman was an author and a screen writer. He is famous for the screenplays *Bedtime for Bonzo* and *Fear Strikes Out* and authored the bestselling book *Cast a Giant Shadow*. He passed away in Santa Barbara in 2006 at the age of 92.



## Conrad (Continued)

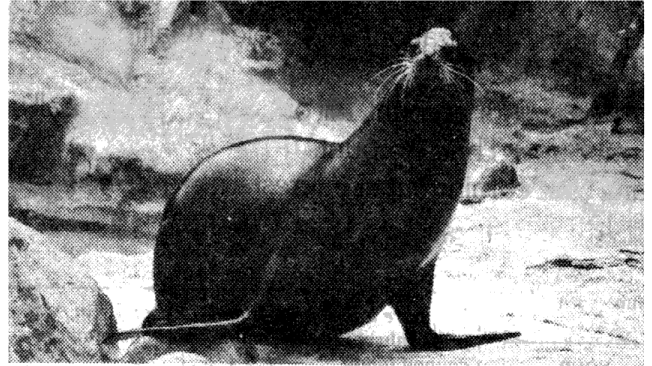
to discuss the issue. The result was that the city offered the zoo an exemption from the noise regulation, but only after Conrad's departure. Plans were put in place to move Conrad to the Los Angeles Zoo.

In the meantime, the word went out to the community that Santa Barbara was potentially going to lose Conrad. An effort was organized named "Friends of the Zoo" and the adjacent ad was published. The community response was overwhelming. The phone number in the ad was to City Hall and that number was tied up for two solid days with hundreds of calls, with each caller merely saying "Oooort" (sound of the sea lion). The dispute received so much notoriety that Los Angeles TV stations sent crews to Santa Barbara to cover the issue. Two days after the ad was published, another City Council meeting was held. When the mayor came out to address the press after the meeting and was asked what the decision was, the mayor merely smiled and said "Oooort!". The council had decided to make an effort to try to train Conrad to be less vocal. As a result, an animal psychologist was hired to provide "affection training" for Conrad, which was intended to also make him more amorous for the mating season.

Unfortunately, this whole issue came to a sad resolution in the summer of 1978 when Conrad developed pneumonia and kidney problems. His zoo handlers indicated that he had lost his resistance to illness due to the rigors of the mating season. His "affection training" may have been too successful. He was sent to Marineland on the Palos Verdes Peninsula for treatment, but succumbed after only a week there. He was 7 years old when he died.

The sea lion exhibit at the Santa Barbara Zoo remained open for many years, with new members added to the colony. You could still hear their occasional barking, but in the early 2000's, the elderly sea lions began to pass away. Rather than try to replace them, it was decided to send the final sea lion to a Galveston aquarium and to convert the exhibit to a Humbolt Penguin display. This was opened in 2006, and it quickly became an even more popular exhibit than the sea lion display. At the same time, it also eliminated a noise nuisance for Kingswood Village/El Escorial residents. The occasional sea lion barking now heard at El Escorial is coming from East Beach and not the zoo.

# Bark Back for Conrad



Conrad the sea lion barks in the morning at the Zoo. He barks if he's hungry and he barks to prove he's the boss bull California sea lion.

He might not be boss bull long. 22 people in a nearby apartment building have filed a petition asking to have the animal removed under the city noise ordinance.

Conrad's days of basking in the sun with his two mates may be over. Unless the city council gives the Zoo an exemption from the noise ordinance, Conrad will be banished from Santa Barbara and we will lose this rare breeding colony of sea lions.

Zoos throughout the United States enjoy exemption from local noise ordinances, because everyone knows that elephants trumpet and whooping cranes whoop. That's their nature, and nature is what we are trying to preserve.

Conrad needs help. He's in a territory war with the apartments. His voice doesn't reach the city council. Yours can.

The call of the sea lion sounds like "ooooort!"

## Friends of the Zoo

**CALL 963-0611 AND SAY "OOOORT!"**

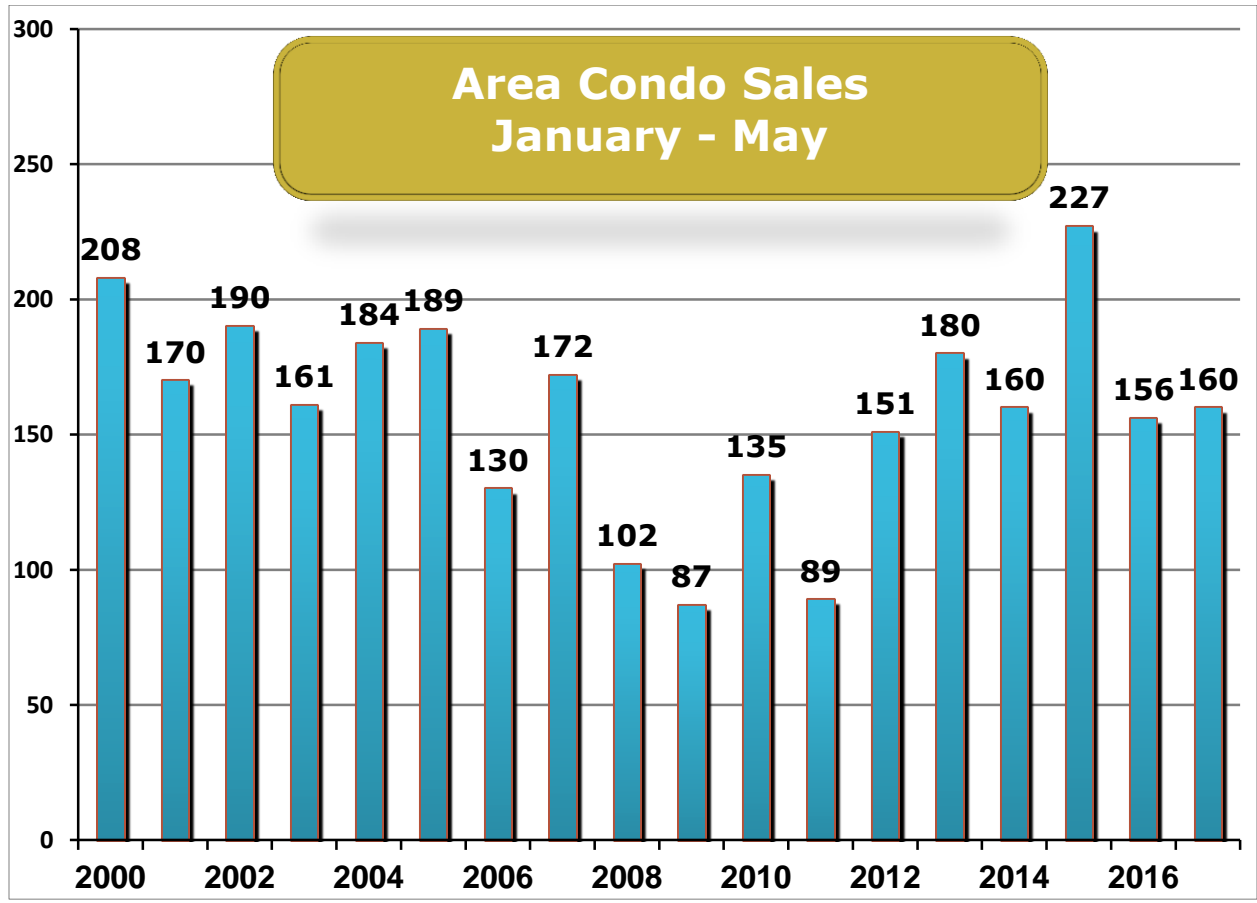
*The El Escorial Experts*





## Healthy Pace Continues for Santa Barbara Area Condo Sales

The Santa Barbara area (Carpinteria through Goleta) condo sales for the first five months of 2017 are off to a reasonably healthy pace, slightly above the sales for the same period last year.. The sales for the same period in 2015 were the highest since 1999, and were driven mainly by the high volume of sales in three high-end, luxury condominium projects which have basically sold out at this time. There are 92 current active listings which at the current rate of sales represents an approximate three month inventory.

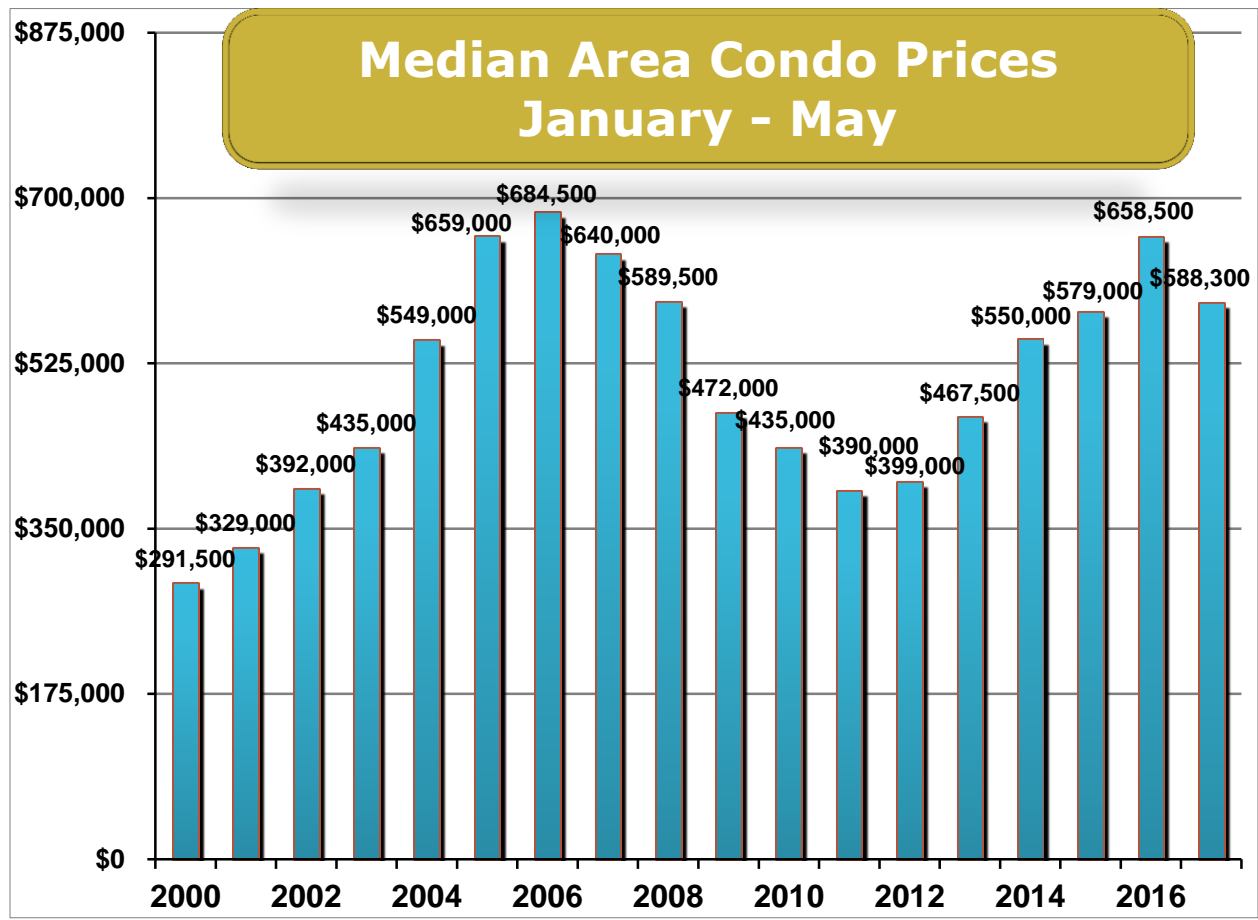


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## Santa Barbara Condo Prices Down from Last Year

The median price of condos in the Santa Barbara area (Carpinteria through Goleta) for the first five months of 2017 is considerably lower than in the previous year. The median sales price to date in 2017 is \$588,300 as compared to the \$658,500 median for 2016. This reduction is to a large degree driven by a higher volume of sales of lower priced condos in Carpinteria and Goleta and a lower volume of sales associated with the three high-end luxury condominium projects that have basically sold out at this point. This year's median price still represents a 51% growth from the bottom of the market in 2011, but is still well below the peak prices of 2006.



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## El Escorial Sales Slowed by Lack of Inventory

The following table provides a summary of the El Escorial condo sales for the past 12 months and of the current active listings. Sales continue to proceed at a healthy pace with a total of 18 sales over the past year. A total of eight sales have closed to date in 2017, consisting of three 1-bedroomtal Riviera floor plans, two 1-bedroom Miramar's, a 2-bedroom Biltmore, a 2-bedroom San Ysidro and a 3-bedroom Montecito floor plan. The prices reflect a strong market and a significant recovery from the lows of 2010. The three Riviera sales were \$570,000, \$587,600 and \$589,000; the Miramar sales were \$609,000 and \$675,000; the Biltmore sale was \$852,500, the San Ysidro sale was \$1,110,000, the highest price since August 2008 and the Montecito sale was \$1,350,000 which is the highest price ever paid for this floor plan. There continues to be a lack of inventory with only three active listings in El Escorial Villas; two 1-bedroom Riviera's and a penthouse listed at \$2,100,000. There are no current pending sales.

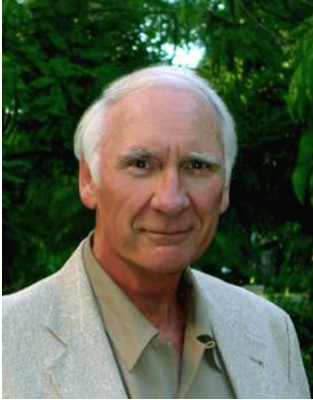
### *Comparable El Escorial Sales Activity*

Address	Floor Plan	Bedrooms	Sq. Ft.	Price	\$'s/Sq. Ft.	Activity Date
<i>Active Listings</i>						
126 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$605,000	\$890	5/10/2017
425 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$570,000	\$846	4/17/2017
262 Por La Mar Circle	Santa Barbara	2	1780	\$2,100,000	\$1,180	11/11/2016
<i>Pending Listings</i>						
<i>1 Sold Listings</i>						
161 Por La Mar Circle	Biltmore	2	1100	\$852,500	\$775	6/2/2017
305 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$589,000	\$866	5/2/2017
328 Por La Mar Circle	Miramar	1	680	\$609,000	\$896	4/27/2017
423 Por La Mar Circle	San Ysidro	2	1360	\$1,110,000	\$816	4/21/2017
436 Por La Mar Circle	Montecito	3	1575	\$1,375,000	\$873	4/3/2017
460 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$587,600	\$864	4/1/2017
410 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$570,000	\$838	3/28/2017
449 Por La Mar Circle	Miramar	1	680	\$675,000	\$993	3/22/2017
322 Por La Mar Circle	San Miguel	2	950	\$815,000	\$858	12/22/2016
309 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$580,000	\$853	12/1/2016
109 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$580,000	\$853	10/12/2016
301 Por La Mar Circle	San Ysidro	2	1360	\$1,000,000	\$735	9/2/2016
143 Por La Mar Circle	San Miguel	2	950	\$799,000	\$841	8/30/2016
411 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$570,000	\$838	8/29/2016
120 Por La Mar Circle	Rincon	0	475	\$449,000	\$945	7/26/2016
123 Por La Mar Circle	San Ysidro	2	1360	\$975,000	\$717	7/12/2016
242 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$545,000	\$801	6/15/2016
133 Por La Mar Circle	Riviera	1	680	\$536,000	\$788	6/7/2016

*The El Escorial Experts*



**Please Contact Us**



***Bob Oliver***  
***(805) 965-0863***  
***(805) 895-6967 Cell***  
***(805) 965-0834 Fax***  
***[reoliversb@msn.com](mailto:reoliversb@msn.com)***  
***CalBRE #01462467***



***Karin Holloway***  
***(805) 895-3718***  
***[karinholloway@ymail.com](mailto:karinholloway@ymail.com)***  
***CalBRE #00836401***



**RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE**

**1290 Coast Village Rd.**  
**Montecito, CA 93108**  
**(805) 969-4755**

**Our Web Site**  
**[www.SBBeachHome.com](http://www.SBBeachHome.com)**



***The El Escorial Experts***