


 A photograph of three real estate agents sitting on a tan leather sofa outdoors. On the left is Ron Wynn, a man with glasses wearing a dark suit. In the middle is Fiora Aston, a woman with blonde hair wearing a light-colored dress. On the right is Steve Sawaii, a man with a mustache wearing a dark suit. They are all looking towards the camera. The background shows a lush green garden with a white fence.

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Top real estate agents from WSA/Compass—Ron Wynn, Steve Sawaii and Fiora Aston—work hand in hand to provide personalized service with effective technology tools.

Written by Karine Monié
Photographs courtesy of WSA

Over 4,000 properties sold for more than \$3 billion, at an average of 96 percent of their list price in less than 60 days on the market. And with more than 100 years combined experience in the real estate market: sometimes numbers speak louder than words. For partners Ron Wynn, Steve Sawaii and Fiora Aston from WSA, who recently joined Compass, these achievements are the result of expertise, passion, personal touches and hard work. Through the years, the trio has learned exactly how to work together in the best possible way, complementing each other and sharing a willingness to provide the highest level of professionalism and efficacy to their clients.

Wynn, who comes from a real estate family, is the problem-solver. He was licensed at the age of 18 and, for more than 10 years, was included in the Wall Street Journal's list of the top 100 real estate professionals in the country. Sawaii—whose clientele spans generations and includes

celebrities and athletes—is the “people person” and the master of numbers. And Aston, who trained in architecture and urban planning, is the impeccable taste master. The three specialize in Los Angeles's newly dubbed Silicon Beach, and the enclaves of Brentwood, Century City, Santa Monica and the Pacific Palisades.

In a very competitive market, Wynn, Sawaii and Aston understand the need to stand out—and they certainly do. Over the years, they have acquired unique knowledge of the areas where they work, and among their big advantages is access to properties that are not on the market. Each time this is the case, they contact their priority private clients, giving them a unique opportunity to be on the frontline and see their dream before anyone else. This illustrates the type of personalized service that Wynn, Sawaii and Aston provide.

There are, however, many other aspects that the three top agents consider in their daily work. In a world where communication and image are key, technology is a

powerful tool that the team uses at the service of their clients. They scrutinize and analyze price ranges, demographic and financial data to make sure they find the perfect match for every transaction. Listings are beautifully presented online with images and videos to help every potential buyer imagine how he or she could live and enjoy the space. Buyers can also define search criteria on Compass's website, which allows Wynn, Sawaii and Aston to get to know their preferences and then select the right property for them. With social media at the heart of everything, WSA/Compass is also present on Instagram and YouTube, showcasing a modern and dynamic approach. Thanks to the exclusive agent notification software that WSA/Compass provides, Wynn, Sawaii and Aston promote their listings to other targeted agents to accelerate the process. With many tools at their fingertips, lots of ideas, energy and savoir-faire, it comes as no surprise that the trio continues to achieve impressive results day after day.

Ask The New Homes Experts



As a buyer, how much difference in value is a 5 year old home compared to brand new?

There is no doubt some added cache to owning a home that no one has ever occupied which may add, give or take 5%, but more important is the condition and finishes and attention to detail. Is the home 100% in character with the finishes, amenities and in appearance to a new home or is it not?

As a homeowner/seller of a newer luxury home, what do we have to offer making our home a better alternative to a new home?

Every case is different, but in many cases due to recent code changes, a home 5-10 years old offers more square footage on a similar lot. Also due to other code changes, many of the newer homes offer less square footage on the upper level which often reduces bathroom sizes or bedroom count. Many builders have also recently had to reduce the quality of finish materials to allow for their profit due to rising land, material and labor increases.

Why are there fewer new homes in framing than 3 years ago?

Interestingly there are several reasons aside from the obvious, which is that many of the tiny homes and fixers have already been rebuilt. However the biggest reason is that profit margins are gone and due to the recent linkage tax and parks and rec fee, owners holding firm for top dollar for the tear downs as well as limits to what a buyer will pay for a "new build" home makes the equation no longer work in most cases.

Will there be another wave of new homes starting soon?

The wave of new homes will only start if a reasonable spread becomes available between the acquisition land cost plus building cost and the ultimate price a buyer will pay for the new finished home.

Does it make sense for a private party to buy a fixer upper and build a home for themselves?

Building their own home has always been a dream for many people. First there is the need to acquire a fixer upper/tear down. Then an architect, a civil engineer, a structural engineer, a builder, a landscape architect and a landscape installer are all required. A home generally requires over 20 different trades these are all coordinated by a builder if you buy a home already constructed. Construction financing is difficult to obtain and complicated to understand. There are also many time considerations and risks.

Do I pay more for a new home by purchasing from a developer?

Although every case is different, a developer can generally spend at least 30% less to build than a private party because a developer has crews and relationships with many subcontractors. That said, a builder generally wants a 20-25% profit and then total invested dollars after paying costs and commissions. Factoring in people's tolerance for risk and their need for a reliable move in

date, in most cases for homes other than estate properties (\$10,000,000 and above) it makes better sense and costs less in the long run to buy from a developer.

Can you buy from a developer and make your own upgrades?

It has become very popular for a buyer to jump into the purchase of a developed new home shortly into framing. Even though the floor plan is set, it may not be too late to combine two rooms or create an office alcove or to partition off an area. A buyer can certainly change finishes and have input to countertops, floors, fixtures, hardware, and smart home technology which is generally all a buyer needs to feel that the home suits their personal needs.

Does every new home provide the same warranty?

Don't be certain that every new home is covered by a 10-year builder's warranty. If the developer applied for a remodel permit saving a wall of the previous structure, the developer not only skirted many fees that are "new build" specific but also the obligation to provide a 10-year warranty. The developer will typically provide a far less comprehensive warranty over a period of time at the discretion of mutual agreement between the developer and the buyer. Be sure to read and understand the warranty to know what is covered and what is not. Perhaps have the warranty reviewed by an attorney if you feel the language is unclear or in any way ambiguous.

If I'm making upgrades to a new home, is it reasonable to pay for the upgrades in advance?

Yes, it is totally reasonable for a developer to ask for payment in advance of the requested modifications as the builder is changing the home to your specific needs and will likely need to remove much of the improvements if you fail to complete the purchase. It is also important to understand that making changes to a design package will slow down the builder's project and proposed date if completion.

What should we look out for when we do new home inspections?

Always be sure to go full throttle on inspections. Your standard physical inspection report may likely recommend further investigation in the areas of drainage, geology and environmental if anything comes up in question. Often the installations of fireplaces are incomplete to meet all current safety codes and therefore a fireplace specialist should inspect each fireplace. If you are building a new home there is no certainty that the sewer connection is brand new. That being the case, a sewer inspection is suggested as well. Ventilation can be inadequate and that can be the case with weather proofing and waterproofing as well. Be specifically focused on sub areas and basements during the inspection process to determine moisture intrusions of any type.

Can you buy from a developer on a contingency to sell your current home?

Many developers will agree to a purchase contingent on

selling your current home. Every developer has their own criteria for if they would agree and under what conditions they would agree.

Is there a way to find out about locations and floor plans for homes under construction?

Homes that are completed are usually offered on MLS, Zillow and Redfin, however, homes in the early stages of construction are not publicly advertised. As a new homes constructing specialty group, we track every new home building permit to ensure that we are 100% able to share coming soon offerings to clients. We have over 60 new homes at any given time in a vast variety of locations and price ranges from Robertson to the Ocean and from Westchester to Encino, covering areas such as Santa Monica, Venice, Mar Vista, Cheviot Hills, Brentwood, Culver City, Beverlywood and Pacific Palisades.

What are some specific areas where we might find a new home for under or just above \$2 million?

There are a number of "up and coming" westside locations to explore, many of which are adjacent to the metro, and to headquarters for Google, Amazon, Apple, Snapchat and Facebook. Parts of Mar Vista, Playa Del Rey, Westchester, Beverlywood adjacent, Culver City and Del Rey are among the hot areas up to and just above \$2,00,000. Call us to hear about several properties coming available soon which can still accommodate design package modification and upgrades.

Why are there so few one-story new homes being built?

Due to recent building code changes in Los Angeles, there are specific guidelines limiting square footage and also limiting how many feet and what percentage of the total square footage can be allocated to the second story. Because homes sell for "X dollars" per feet, the only way for most developers to make a small profit is to build the maximum allowable number of square feet. A buyer is, in most cases, going to want some usable backyard so it would not be attractive or desirable to build a maximum size one story home leaving little to no yard. Also due to side and rear setbacks, most lots could not accommodate a maximum size home all on one level.

What is the appeal to these new homes in every price range?

Buyers are enthralled by the open space, volume ceilings and orientation to outdoor spaces and a yard. Even when the yard is small, the trend is for indoor to outdoor living and entertaining with the California lifestyle totally engaged. Other selling amenities are the master suite and bath with sitting room and walk-in closets, a home office and smart home technology, automation and security. A beautiful kitchen opening to a rear facing family room is very typical in most newly constructed homes regardless of whether the architecture is Cape Code, farmhouse or modern contemporary. Hardwood floors, big windows and bifold or pocket glass doors are common in the higher price ranges.



1000 Norman Place



\$16,500,000 | Brentwood Grove Estates

810 Greentree Road



\$6,195,000 | Pacific Palisades

544 Euclid Street



\$5,995,000 | Santa Monica

609 21st Place



\$4,735,000 | Santa Monica

3261 Coolidge Ave



\$3,787,900 | Westdale Trousdale

1335 Cedar Street



\$2,745,000 | Santa Monica



WYNN · SAWAII · ASTON

Together we share over **100 years** of real estate experience & over **3 billion** dollars in sales.

Our success is rooted in our desire to make a difference to the people who's lives we touch. We combine our passion for community, family, ethics and our local neighborhood with our desire to offer "clients come first service."

Together this has created an awareness garnering life long relationships. For us, it's always about YOU.

Have you thought about your next move? We can help you prepare for the next chapter. Contact us for more information.

Ron Wynn
310.963.9944
ron@ronwynn.com
DRE# 00420587

Steve Sawaii
310.261.3777
steve@stevesawai.com
DRE# 00607215

Fiora Aston
310.480.3585
fioraaston@gmail.com
DRE# 00991714