

# Gabe's September 2013 HOUSECALLS



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## The great decorating piece from old times and new



Gabe Sanders

A few years ago, interior designer Jonathan Adler was in a Florida thrift shop when he noticed a life-size ceramic greyhound. Today it sits dutifully inside his and Simon Doonan's Palm Beach home. Some visitors hang their hats on it. He says the best ceramic dogs are Italian and from the '60s.

You could buy a 29-inch greyhound for \$1,400 at 1stdibs.com or one that's 36 inches tall for \$450 at theivyinc.com.

The history of dog sculpture extends over time. In ancient Rome, dogs were carved from marble. Ceramic or terra cotta dogs were fashionable for landed gentry in the 19th and 20th

centuries.

Using such an object of art in one's home now might seem whimsical or irreverent. Not so, says interior designer Kelly Wearstler, who stationed greyhounds at the entrance of the Viceroy Hotel in Palm Springs.

Antique versions are available at Sotheby's and Christie's. You could also rescue worthy animals online from 1stDibs and eBay, or pick up a reproduction from the Ivy or from Los Angeles designer Barbara Cosgrove, who also offers a smaller, puppy-sized dog.

Visit her website, [shopcandelabra.com](http://shopcandelabra.com).

## No matter what the Fed says ...

### Housing is still a great buy, though prices are inching up

The Dow Jones is up.  
The Dow Jones is down.

It seems as though every announcement from the Federal Reserve prompts some change in the stock market.

The National Association of Realtors predicts that the ups and downs will have little impact on housing, which has recently shown bigger increases in the value of existing homes than in any quarter in recent years. The downside is that means you'll probably pay a little more for a home than you would have. But every deal is different.

#### **Existing homes**

With home prices rising, there is an upside: a certain percentage of people who have waited to put their homes on the market will do so now. That means a



nationwide shortage of existing homes for sale will be eased somewhat.

If you're looking for an existing home and haven't found what you wanted, you'll have a few more choices now.

#### **New homes**

Even as many stocks went wobbling with announcements from the Fed, business experts were reporting home builders were in good shape. Their stocks

weren't greatly affected, and the stock market will have little influence on pending deals. Home buyers already have money for their homes available and don't intend to change their plans.

#### **Mortgage interest rates**

As you may know, the best deals on mortgage interest have gone from something under 4 percent to 4 percent and a little more.

Just as a decrease in Fed backing was no surprise, rising interest rates were no surprise either. The rate is still the lowest it's been in decades.

If a bank or mortgage company has preapproved a mortgage for you, the deal will most likely still go through. Lenders have been careful to preapprove only qualified borrowers, so the rate increase won't matter that much.



## What's your home worth?

If you're thinking of selling, call me for a free market analysis.

### Q & A

*We're wondering how much profit on the sale of our present home will be tax deductible. Will we have to provide a lot of expense records?*

Very few sellers will have to worry about paying taxes from home sale profits, but the American Institute of CPAs says the tax law is quirky.

\* Since 1997, sellers of a principle residence can skip tax on a profit of up to \$500,000 for a couple or \$250,000 for an individual. Above that, profits are taxed as capital gain at 25 percent.

\* A principle residence: It could be a house, a duplex, a condominium, a boat or a mobile home, as long as it has eating, sleeping and toilet facilities. It can even be outside the United States.

\* Tax break calculation: If you bought a house for \$200,000 and spent \$100,000 on room additions, your cost basis would be \$300,000. Including the \$500,000 tax break, you could sell the house for \$800,000 without owing federal taxes.

\* Renovations and additions: Tax experts say to keep track of those that will count as improvements. Improvements can include items such as a

## Family Pharmacy The Truth About Drug Expiration Dates

Ever tossed a half-full bottle of antibiotics or aspirin into the trash because the label said it was past the expiration date?

Turns out, drugs and painkillers are effective far longer than the label on the bottle would lead you to believe, says Harvard Medical School's Family Health Guide.

Most of what we know about drug effectiveness comes from military research in the 90s. According to the Wall Street Journal, between 1993 and 1998 the military commissioned the FDA to test more than 100 drugs. They found 90 percent of both prescription and over-the-counter medications were safe and effective well past their expiration dates—some as much as eight to fifteen years longer. As of 2008, as many as 312

medications had been tested, with findings remaining consistent.

So, what's that expiration date good for? To keep the packaging in compliance with a 1979 federal law, which requires manufacturers to stamp the date at which they will guarantee the product is fully potent. Rest assured, the date has nothing to do with a drug's changing properties, only its potency. If you happen to ingest an expired medication, it's unlikely you will gain superpowers or start the zombie-pocalypse.

And if you have any concerns about a specific medication, just bring the container to your local pharmacist who is a great free resource for exactly this kind of information.



### Neighborhood Alert

Interested in what's for sale and/or what has sold in your neighborhood or community? Sign up here for your own personal [Neighborhood Alert](#).

(Available for Martin, Saint Lucie and Palm Beach Counties only)

new roof, a satellite dish or a new central air-conditioning system. For a more complete list, see IRS Publication 523.

\* The home sale tax break can be claimed every two years if you lived in the house for at least two years out of the previous five.

\* Rental unit: If you have a rental unit in your home, such as a garage apartment, the rules require you to divide the property into the percentage that is your residence and another that is the rental unit and treat them separately.

Only the residence portion qualifies for the \$250,000 or \$500,000 tax break.

\* Home office: If you took a depreciation deduction for a home office, you will have to adjust the cost basis of the house downward to reflect them.

Yes, the calculation can be quirky, but in most cases, it's a simple matter of taking advantage of the basic tax break.



**Autumn Begins, Sept. 22**

## 10,000 explorers are testing Google Glass

As it celebrates its 15th year in business, the search engine giant Google now wants to make a name for itself in the ultimate in computer portability.

Glass, its new entry looks like a fancy pair of eyeglasses with an oblong device on the upper right side.

Some 10,000 Glass Explorers, winners of an online contest who agreed to pay the \$1,500 list price for the privilege, received the cyborg-like apparatuses. They are providing engineers with feedback on the wearable computer, sending their comments through an online community dedicated to them.

In New York, Explorers were introduced to Glass by trained guides. High-end catering was part of the event. In the Bay area, Explorers were ferried from San Francisco to the former naval base to drink Champagne, eat, and put on their personal-looking Glass to the future, according to USA Today.

It comes in five colors: shale, sky, cotton, tangerine and charcoal. Its works are gathered on the right temple, powering an operating system that allows as-yet limited access to the Web. It also powers a 5-megapixel camera capable of shooting bursts of 720p video. It captures the images hands free, by voice, one of its main attractions.

Users can make telephone calls when it's tethered to a phone. A cyclist liked being able to make a call and check texts without using her hands.

Commands are made by voice and by tapping a finger on the front and side of Glass. You start by saying "OK Glass," then tell it to take a photo or whatever you want it to do. Paired with an Android phone, it will give turn-by-turn voice directions.

Explorers had a few improvement suggestions, but so far, all said they would buy the Glass again.

## Fall prepares its razzle dazzle

October is usually the month for fall color, but Mother Nature has a mind of her own, so predicting the days when fall foliage will peak in various areas is risky at best.

To see wonderfully relaxing and inspiring fall foliage tour, plan ahead.

Elevation and climate have everything to do with fall colors.

In New England, the famous colors of fall start to develop in mid-September with full displays in northern Maine and Vermont by the last week in September. To time your trip visit, yankeefoliage.com.

In the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee, leaves begin to turn first at higher elevations in early to mid-October. Take the Blue Ridge Parkway early in October for fabulous high elevation color displays. At lower elevations you can catch nice displays from mid-October to early November when the famous sugar maples, red maples, sweet gum, oaks and hickories blaze forth.

Ohio, with its rolling hills, peppered

with creeks and caves, is replete with wonderful driving tours. In Southern Ohio, near Bainbridge, the Fall Festival of Leaves begins October 17 with at least seven recommended skyline drives.

You'll find similar itineraries in New England for drives in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

If you want to be immersed in color try a train ride with hotel accommodations and fancy hotel dinners. Visit [vacationsbyrail.com](http://vacationsbyrail.com) or call (877) 929-7245.

If you are looking for a pleasant afternoon drive, check out any forest in your area. Autumn paints the world with wonderful colors right next door to your home.

**Beautiful young people are accidents of nature.**



**But Beautiful Old People are works of art.** Eleanor Roosevelt

National Assisted Living Week, Sept 8

## Featured Listings

Castle in the Sky! A very unique waterfront estate located on the Designated Floridian Scenic Route called Indian River Drive. The Castle in the Sky was designed and built by the prominent builder and current owner. From the balcony adjoining the large master suite, one will see the expansive wide water of the famous Indian River that leads to the blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean. The estate sized parcel has the benefit of having the State Preserve located to the rear to ensure a life time of peace and low density. The many fig trees, and the graceful palms located on the grounds will offer a lifetime of tropical tranquility! This is a great investment now and into the future.

Offered for \$799,000

[Click here for more pictures and information](#)



## Monthly Detail July 2013 Single Family Home Sales for Florida

[Click Here for the full July 2013 Florida Single Family Market Data](#)

Monthly Market Detail - July 2013  
Single Family Homes  
Florida



Summary Statistics	July 2013	July 2012	Percent Change Year-over-Year
Closed Sales	21,238	17,560	20.9%
Paid in Cash	9,020	7,523	19.9%
New Pending Sales	24,675	19,595	25.9%
New Listings	30,610	25,911	18.1%
Median Sale Price	\$177,500	\$149,550	18.7%
Average Sale Price	\$255,244	\$217,202	17.5%
Median Days on Market	48	61	-21.3%
Average Percent of Original List Price Received	94.4%	91.5%	3.2%
Pending Inventory	47,210	(No Data)	N/A
Inventory (Active Listings)	91,893	111,037	-17.2%
Months Supply of Inventory	5.0	6.9	-27.7%

View [ALL](#) Single the Market Data for [Florida](#), [Martin County](#) and [Saint Lucie County](#) [Here](#)



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