

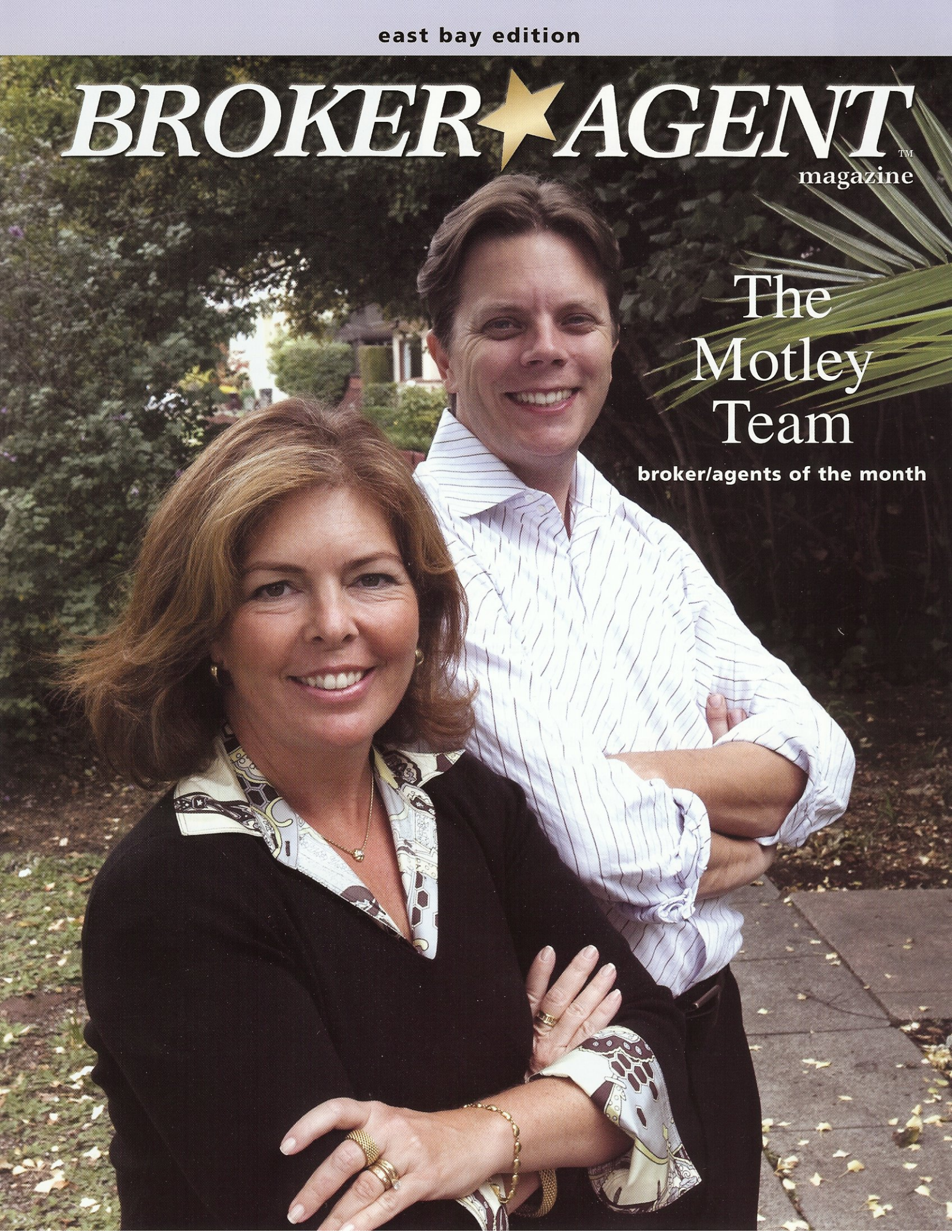
east bay edition

BROKER★AGENTTM

magazine

The Motley Team

broker/agents of the month



The Motley Team Is All About Family

*A
Special
Bond*



**broker/agents
of the month**

Meet The Motley Team of Red Oak Realty: Saraya Motley, her husband, Simon, and her mother, Virginia Perl. Not only are they a close-knit family, they are also dedicated sales associates who always put their clients first and foremost.

Perhaps this is why The Motley Team continues to excel in a tough real estate market, where many associates are experiencing hardships countrywide. "It is definitely a challenging market, but we are doing better than all right," said Saraya. "We continue to serve our clients the best way we can, with honesty, integrity and commitment."

One Team, Many Specialties

The Motley Team serves Alameda and Contra Costa counties, maintaining offices in Oakland and Lafayette servicing clients on both sides of the Caldecott Tunnel. Saraya Motley, who was formerly in the mental health field, has been with Red Oak Realty for eight years. She specializes in prepping homes for sale and has built a solid reputation for selling them. "I believe that prepping a home is an investment and that there should be a decent return on the money that is spent. After meeting with contractors, stagers, landscapers, painters, selecting materials, flooring specialists, etc., I review all of the bids and put together a proposal that I believe will bring my clients at least a two-to-one return on their investment."

When representing buyers, Saraya believes that it is important to be able to assess where the buyer is on the continuum of conservative to aggressive. "This helps us to best advise our buyers in writing and structuring an offer. I would consider myself an aggressive agent when it comes to representing my client's best interests. This is not to say that I push my clients, quite the opposite, but I won't hesitate to push the limits with agents in an attempt to represent my client's best interests. I believe in working cooperatively with all parties in a transaction and believe in win-win scenarios. Our reputation in the real estate community for being honest professionals with integrity attracts other agents who want to work with us."

Saraya's husband, Simon, was also in the mental health field and has a degree in clinical psychology. "Our previous careers have



The Motley Team: Simon Motley, Virginia Perl, and Saraya Motley

prepared us tremendously for success in real estate," Saraya said. "One of the most important skills we transferred over from our previous careers that benefit my clients is our ability to provide anxiety management. Excellent negotiation and communications skills are also carried over from our previous careers."

Simon serves as the team's listing coordinator and buyer's agent. For the seller, Simon manages all aspects of work that needs to be done by outside professionals and ensures a high level of quality. He knows that the preparation process may sometimes feel a little overwhelming and he is not afraid to get his hands dirty to help get a house ready.

For the buyer, Simon helps increase their knowledge of the current market and acquire the vantage point they need to find the house that is right for them. Working in Contra Costa and Alameda counties gives him a greater capability to find the perfect home for his clients.

As a buyer's agent, Perl's role on the team is to be of maximum service to the buyers. She believes that real estate is not about sales, it's about people. She has a degree in fine arts, which gives her an enormous advantage in being able to see a home's true potential. She keeps a vigilant watch on the market and sends a candid report to the client several times a week after her tri-weekly Broker's Preview of Homes. Besides providing private viewings of properties, Perl has exceptional knowledge of what goes on behind the scenes regarding inspections, disclosures, and

the entire escrow process, making sure the transaction is as smooth as possible.

As a licensed real estate associate, Perl is dedicated to assisting all clients with their real estate needs. As one of her clients attested, "I appreciate, very much, all of your effort and enormous help in my search for my dream house. Thank you for being so patient, tactful, and not pushy. In other words, thanks for being a superb professional."

Moving from the East Coast to California in 2001 was one of the smartest moves Perl ever made. Not only does she have the good fortune to work in a business she loves, she gets to do it with family. "I am fortunate to have been trained by the best real estate has to offer," she said. "I learned by watching Saraya, and then duplicating her work ethic. It's a family affair. We share the same philosophies, and we attack our work with integrity, understanding, responsibility, and wisdom. We each play an important role in providing the best service for our clients."

Real estate is not the only reason Perl loves California. "I tell my clients that the only night I am not available is Friday night—Grandma Night." That's because she is busy with her grandchildren, Max, 9, and Cole, 4, kicking back, eating pizza and ice cream, watching old Scooby Doo movies, staying up late and having pancakes for breakfast.

Marketing Mavens

Perhaps what also makes the Motley Team stand out from its

competition is its unique marketing approach. In fact, clients refer to this successful team as Marketing Mavens.

"We have spent time researching how buyers find out about our listings. We developed a holistic marketing plan that aims to reach all sources of buyer leads," Saraya said. "The largest source of buyers continues to be from other agents. Therefore, I believe it is essential to market to the agents just as much as I would market to the public. This is crucial now more than ever with increasing inventory."

Saraya starts by hiring a professional sketch artist and a photographer to shoot interior and exterior shots, as well as virtual tours. This way, the moment her listings hit the MLS, they are fully loaded with photos and virtual tours. "Most buyers have experience sifting through multiple listings that don't have photos. It is my experience that when a listing in the MLS doesn't have photos, both buyers and agents will skip over the listing and focus on those that have photos, particularly multiple photos," she said. "I don't ever want a listing of mine to be skipped over. I don't wait for the board to take a photo; I pay for professional images in advance of marketing."

Saraya also researches the top selling agents in a given area and sends them a custom-made e-flyer. Many agents love this because she sends them out before her listings hit the MLS. "This makes them look good when they can forward the flyer to their prospective buyers and tell them, 'Here is a great property for you, it hasn't even hit the market yet, but it is coming soon and will be open on Sunday.' The agents are free to remove my





marketing logo and insert their own. I have agents request to be added to my list all the time. I send this same e-mail to the seller and all my current and past clients.”

Saraya often receives calls from people who have received a flyer that has been passed on three or four times, and she sells at least three of her listings per year as a direct result of the e-flyer. In addition to agents, buyers find out about the team’s listings through the media/newsprint, signs and neighborhood mailings, past clients, seller’s sphere, and the Internet.

“I make sure that my listings get coverage in all these areas—particularly the Internet, where the new generation of home buyer does most of their market research.” The Motley Team advertises on craigslist, Realtor.com, and SF Gate, and allows access to all Web sites with full address and photo coverage. They pay for advanced enhancements on these Web sites so they can add more bells and whistles and pull valuable market data to update clients weekly. “Prospective buyers, other sellers, and agents all comment on how well our listings are prepared for market.”

“Saraya Motley and her team are superstars at Red Oak Realty,” said owner/broker Laurie Capitelli. “Saraya’s hard work and dedication have consistently generated Red Oak’s Top Producer award for the past three years; as well as her stellar professional team receiving our Top Producing Team award for 2006.”

“For the past eight years I have consistently sold 98 percent of the listings I put on the market,” Saraya said. “They sold for an average of 104 percent of their list price, with an average of 22 days market time. Even in this year’s declining market, I managed to sell my listings for an average of 99 percent of their list price.”

Solid performance plus the personal Saraya Motley Touch—no wonder 90 percent of The Motley Team clients are repeat or referral customers. Clients Winn and Cullen Burda explain,

“Saraya and her team understand the stress and intensity of buying a home and are excellent at walking one through the process and creating a personal and nurturing relationship. When it comes time to sell our present home and buy again, Saraya and her team will be the first phone call we make.”

Good for the Whole Family

Outside the office, Saraya and Simon enjoy spending time with their children Max and Cole. Saraya is an avid tennis player, who plays five days a week and plays competitively on five different leagues throughout the year. Simon is a mountain biker who enjoys exploring trails all over the state of California as well as competing in several local races.

Still, Simon enjoys working side-by-side with his wife of 11 years. “Turning this into a family business has been great, not only for our clients, but for our family as well. For Saraya and me it has been great to spend more time together, even if it’s while we are working.

“When we first started working together, sometimes it was hard to turn off work once we were home and try to be present for our children and each other. This has grown much easier as we have recognized how easy it can be to slip back into work mode. We now remind each other to turn off our cell phones during dinner, have at least one night a week that we go out as a married couple separate from work, and settle any disagreements we have on the tennis court.”

As for the future, The Motley Team will continue to serve their clients to the highest degree and enjoy every moment of making their clients’ dreams come true.

“Our intention is to educate them and provide them with professional advice and guidance so that they can make informed decisions and have a greater understanding of the real estate process,” Saraya said. “Our goal is to provide a level of service that exceeds their expectations.” ★

The Motley Team

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