LEISURE WORLD · SEAL BEACH

The Seller's *Guide*

How selling in Leisure World works, what it costs, and how to get top dollar. Simply explained, step by step.

~70 days
listing to settlement

6 steps
we handle the paperwork

30+ years
in real estate, each

Mark Hughes
Real Estate Broker · LW resident

818-480-2864
markhughesrealestate@gmail.com
leisurelivingresales.com

Judy Hughes
Staging & Remodeling

START HERE

The short version

Selling in Leisure World has a few extra steps compared with a normal home sale. Here is what matters most. Every point is covered in more detail later in this guide.

1

Two sets of rules apply

Your **Mutual** (one of 16) sets rules for your building, inspections and buyer approval. The **Golden Rain Foundation (GRF)** runs the shared amenities and community-wide policies. Both must sign off on your sale.

2

Most homes are co-ops, sold for cash

In Mutuals 1–12 and 14–16 you own stock, not real estate. Buyers must pay cash, and your stock certificate transfers to them. Mutual 17 is a condominium with a deeded title, and buyers may use a mortgage.

3

Your home is inspected before it's listed

The Mutual's Pre-Listing Inspection (PLI) checks for unapproved changes and condition issues. Anything it flags must be fixed before closing.

4

Every buyer must be approved

The Mutual Board approves each buyer: one occupant 55+, financial qualifications, and an application (sometimes an interview).

5

No open houses

Leisure World does not allow open houses. Showings are by appointment, with an authorized Realtor. Great photos, virtual tours and targeted marketing do the heavy lifting.

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THE PROCESS

Your selling roadmap

A typical sale takes about 70 days from our first meeting to handing over the keys. Leisure Life Real Estate handles the Leisure World paperwork at every step.

DAY 1 — 1

Listing appointment

Meet with Mark and Judy to review pricing, prepare all the required Leisure World paperwork, schedule your Pre-Listing Inspection, and build a custom marketing plan for your home.

DAY 2 — 2

Notice of Intent to Withdraw (NOI) WE HANDLE IT

The NOI tells your Mutual and the GRF you intend to sell. It starts the resale process and the pre-listing paperwork. See the list of items to pull together.

DAY 10 — 3

Pre-Listing Inspection (PLI) WE HANDLE IT

The PLI request goes to your Mutual, which inspects the condition of your unit. It must be completed before listing, and may result in repairs required by Mutual standards before the sale.

DAY 22 — 4

Go live on the MLS

Your marketing plan launches: professional photos, targeted online exposure, agent outreach, print ads and social media, all designed to create competition and maximize your price.

DAY 30 — 5

Negotiate offers and open escrow

We review and negotiate offers with you for the best price and terms, then schedule escrow, inspections and GRF requirements for a smooth, timely closing.

DAY 70 — 6

Settlement

Mutual approvals, the buyer's New Buyer Orientation (NBO), final walkthrough, signing and handing over the keys. On settlement day the Mutual and GRF sign off, all fees are paid, and the buyer receives the stock certificate (co-op) or recorded title (condo).

Good to know about the NOI. Once delivered, your Mutual has **30 days** to exercise its option to buy your stock itself; in practice it usually waives this, provided you sell to an approved buyer and pay the transfer costs. The NOI **expires 180 days** after Mutual approval. Some Mutuals don't allow owning two units, so if you're moving within Leisure World, both Mutual Boards must be contacted first.

Is your home in a trust? Before the NOI can be turned in, the GRF attorney must complete a **legal review of the trust**. It costs **$256.25** and takes about **10 days**, which adds 10 days to the whole timeline. Have your trust documents ready at our first meeting so we can start it right away.

THE RULES

How ownership & approvals work

Leisure World has two layers of governance. Each of the 16 **Mutuals** runs its own housing cooperative or condominium with its own rules. The **Golden Rain Foundation** manages the shared trust property, amenities, infrastructure and community-wide policies.

	Stock Cooperative Mutuals 1–12 and 14–16	Condominium Mutual 17
What you own	A share in a housing corporation, which gives the right to occupy your unit	Your unit outright, with a deeded title
What transfers	Your stock certificate. The buyer also signs an Occupancy Agreement.	The deeded title, recorded with Orange County through escrow
Buyer financing	**Cash only.** Mortgages are not permitted.	Mortgage or reverse mortgage allowed
Property taxes	Included in the monthly fees	Paid directly by the owner
Escrow	Confirms Mutual and GRF requirements are met before the stock transfer is final. Mutual Board and GRF approve the transfer.	Works like a standard sale: title search, loan processing if financed, property tax transfer

Buyer approval

The Mutual Board must approve every buyer before closing. Requirements vary by Mutual. Buyers must:

- **Meet age rules.** One occupant 55+; co-occupants at least 45, unless a spouse, registered domestic partner or authorized caregiver.
- **Qualify financially.** Proof of assets or income to cover monthly fees.
- **Apply for residency.** Some Mutuals ask for a background check, references or an interview.

The GRF's part

- The buyer pays a **one-time amenities fee** at closing (the Trust Property Use Fee), for access to clubhouses, golf, the fitness center and more. Disclose it to buyers up front.
- The GRF also charges processing and compliance fees for the transfer.
- All GRF documents and disclosures must be completed with your Realtor and escrow. Missing items can delay closing or add fees.

GET READY

Preparing your home

A well-prepared home makes a strong first impression, attracts more buyers and avoids delays. Most 55+ buyers want a home that’s move-in ready.

1. The Pre-Listing Inspection

Your Mutual checks that the unit meets community standards. Inspectors look for:

- Unapproved modifications or additions, such as enclosed patios, skylights, non-compliant flooring or structural changes
- Condition of roofing and shared plumbing, electrical and heating systems
- Permits for past renovations

You’ll get a report of required repairs. Anything unauthorized must be corrected before closing, so tackle it early with a contractor who knows Mutual guidelines.

2. Repairs worth making

- **Kitchens and baths** give the best return: new cabinet hardware, energy-efficient appliances, neutral paint or updated tile.
- **Easy wins:** neutral flooring (laminate, vinyl or carpet), updated lighting and window treatments, fresh neutral paint.

> **Check with your Mutual first.** Unauthorized changes may have to be reversed before you sell. Bigger upgrades need permits and approval from the Mutual Board or GRF.

3. Stage it to sell

- **Declutter and depersonalize.** Remove extra furniture, personal photos and clutter. Neutral décor lets buyers picture themselves there.
- **Show off accessibility.** Step-free layouts, grab bars, wide doorways and clear paths. Arrange furniture so walkers and mobility aids move easily.
- **Boost curb appeal.** Tidy the patio, walkways and garden. Add potted plants, fresh mulch and seasonal flowers, and make sure outdoor lights work for evening showings.
- **Deep clean.** A professional clean before photos and showings, especially kitchens, bathrooms and windows.
- **Mention what’s nearby.** If you’re close to the golf course, fitness center or a bus stop, we’ll feature it.

Judy can help

Judy Hughes specializes in staging and remodeling. We’ll tell you which repairs and staging are worth the money for your specific home, and which aren’t.

TEAR-OUT CHECKLIST

Seller’s checklist

Put your buyer’s hat on and walk through your home with a keen eye. Small touch-ups go a long way toward making your home look more desirable, and more valuable.

Outside

- [ ] Touch up paint on trim and walls
- [ ] Clean or paint the front door and entry lights
- [ ] Add door mats at all entrances
- [ ] Sweep walkways and patio
- [ ] Check walkways for cracks
- [ ] Update your mailbox and make address numbers easy to see
- [ ] Keep pet areas clean
- [ ] Trim shrubs that hide the home
- [ ] Add color with blooming flowers
- [ ] Clear debris; remove or replace dead plants

Inside

- [ ] Repaint accent walls in neutral colors
- [ ] Simplify décor and remove personal items
- [ ] Clear off countertops
- [ ] Dust the less obvious places, like mantels and fan blades
- [ ] Polish appliances and faucets
- [ ] Clean windows
- [ ] Make bathrooms sparkle
- [ ] Tidy closets, cabinets and drawers
- [ ] Replace burnt-out light bulbs
- [ ] Open drapes and blinds for natural light

Finishing touches

- [ ] Fill paper towel, toilet paper and tissue holders
- [ ] Add room fresheners or scented candles
- [ ] Place fresh flowers in the kitchen and main bedroom
- [ ] Clean out medicine cabinets and put away prescriptions
- [ ] Gather appliance warranties
- [ ] Consider a storage unit for excess furniture

> Questions about what’s worth fixing? Call Mark or Judy at **818-480-2864**.

My notes

GET TOP DOLLAR

Pricing & marketing

Price it right

We price from recent Leisure World sales, market trends and buyer demand. The factors that matter most:

- Your Mutual (some are in higher demand than others)
- Unit size, location and condition
- Upgrades and accessibility features
- How many similar homes are for sale

Overpricing means more time on the market and fewer inquiries. **Underpricing** brings quick offers but leaves money on the table.

Who buys in Leisure World

- **Active adults 55+** who want low-maintenance, secure living with lots to do
- **Retirees from colder states** drawn by the year-round Southern California sun, beaches and shopping in Seal Beach, Long Beach and Orange County
- **Snowbirds** buying a seasonal second home, who love turnkey units

How we market your home

- Professional photos of the kitchen, living areas, baths, bedrooms and patio
- 3D tours, video walkthroughs and live Zoom or FaceTime tours for out-of-state buyers
- MLS, Zillow, Redfin and Realtor.com
- Facebook and Instagram ads aimed at 55+ buyers, retirees and out-of-state prospects
- Email to our database of qualified buyers already looking in Leisure World
- Ads in the *LW Weekly* community newspaper, print ads and agent outreach

What we highlight

- Low maintenance: landscaping, exterior upkeep and many utilities covered by monthly fees
- 9-hole golf course, pools, aquatic and fitness centers, pickleball
- 150+ clubs and social groups
- On-site medical center, pharmacy, post office and credit union
- Gated, with 24-hour security and patrol; transportation inside the community and to nearby shopping
- Single-level layouts and step-free entries

> **Leisure World rules.** Traditional open houses aren't allowed. Showings are by appointment only, and buyers must be accompanied by an authorized Realtor. Only one small "For Sale" sign is allowed per unit, displayed in a window: no larger than 15″ × 18″, with black or blue lettering on a white background.

THE NUMBERS

Costs, fees & taxes

Costs depend on your Mutual and on whether you're selling a co-op or a condo. Here is what to expect.

Cost	What it is	Typical amount
Real estate commission	Split between the listing and buyer's agents; covers marketing, showings, negotiation and coordination. Selling yourself (FSBO) avoids it, but you handle approvals, inspections and paperwork alone.	**Typically 5–6%**
Escrow fees	Escrow holds and disburses funds, confirms Mutual and GRF approvals, and finalizes paperwork.	**$950 each side**
Escrow add-ons	Document/HOA processing $150 and electronic storage $65 (each side), FTB filing $45 per seller, $30 per wire, overnight fees.	**Varies**
GRF transfer fee	Processing and compliance fee for the change of ownership.	**$600**
Mutual transfer fees	Each Mutual charges a fee to verify the buyer and update records. Mutuals 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11 and 14 also have a buyer premium fee set by board resolution.	**Varies by Mutual**
Inspection deposit	A repair deposit held at closing, based on your Mutual's inspection. Refunded by the Mutual about 6–8 weeks after escrow closes.	**$6,500–$20,000**
Escape tax deposit	Held for any supplemental property tax (if any). Refunded once released by the Orange County Assessor.	**$5,000–$7,000**
Trust legal review	Only if your home is in a trust. Done by the GRF attorney before the NOI is turned in; adds about 10 days.	**$256.25**
Title transfer (Mutual 17)	Cost of recording the transfer of ownership with Orange County.	**Varies**
Repairs	Correcting anything flagged in the Pre-Listing Inspection, such as enclosed patios, flooring or added plumbing or electrical.	**Varies**

For buyers, the one-time GRF membership fee is now $8,000 per person ($16,000 for two); a co-occupant who isn't on title pays $8,000 + $120 setup. Other amounts are from the January 2026 per-Mutual fee sheet, and fees can change. See Seller's Closing Costs and Buyer's Closing Costs online.

Capital gains tax

- If the home was your **primary residence for 2 of the last 5 years**, you can exclude up to **$250,000** of gain (single) or **$500,000** (married filing jointly). Gains above that may be taxed.
- Investment and rental properties don't qualify; a **1031 exchange** may defer tax if you reinvest in another investment property.
- Your situation depends on income, residency and deductions, so **talk to a CPA** before you sell.

READY WHEN YOU ARE

What to gather

Have these ready for our listing appointment and we can start right away.

- [ ] **Original Stock & Membership Certificates** (see samples). They're needed for escrow and the transfer. Copies of the front and back are enough to get started.
- [ ] **Keys to your unit and storage.** One goes in the lockbox for agent access; the other goes to the Physical Properties Division for the Pre-Listing Inspection.
- [ ] **Photo ID** for every owner on title: driver's license, passport or other government ID.
- [ ] **Trust or estate documents**, if the home is in a trust or an owner has passed away: trust documents, death certificate(s) and trustee appointment papers. A trust needs a 10-day GRF legal review before the NOI, so bring these first.
- [ ] **A recent Mutual billing statement** to confirm current dues and Mutual details.
- [ ] **Contact details for all owners or trustees**: phone, email and mailing address.

Seller resources

Tap any link for the latest version.

Notice of Intent (NOI) ↗	Pre-Listing Inspection (PLI) ↗
Owner certificate samples ↗	LW Buyers & Sellers handout ↗
Seller's closing costs ↗	Buyer's closing costs ↗
Current LW listings ↗	Leisure World map ↗
Buyer eligibility calculator ↗	Items needed for sale ↗

YOUR TEAM

Why Mark & Judy

Selling in Leisure World isn't like selling anywhere else. As resident Leisure World specialists, we know the rules, the people and the buyers, and we handle every detail so you don't have to.

Local experts

- Top agent in Leisure World, with 30+ years in real estate each
- Fluent in every Mutual's buyer approval rules, co-op vs. condo sales, inspections and GRF fees
- We work directly with Mutual Boards, the GRF, escrow officers and attorneys to prevent costly delays

Proven results

- Pricing based on recent sales and Mutual-specific factors to win competitive offers
- Marketing that reaches qualified buyers locally and out of state
- Experience with Leisure World's most complex sales: estates, probate and Mutual compliance issues
- Judy's staging and remodeling expertise to present your home at its best

LEISURE LIFE
REAL ESTATE
BY SEVEN GABLES

818-480-2864

markhughesrealestate@gmail.com · leisurelivingresales.com

13918 Seal Beach Blvd, Seal Beach, CA 90740 · Directions

Facebook · Instagram · LinkedIn

Mark Hughes DRE #01930200 · MLS OCHUGHMAR

Seven Gables DRE #00745605