LA CREATIVE REALTY

A CURATED REAL ESTATE EXPERIENCE

THE CREATIVE'S GUIDE TO REAL ESTATE

Buyer's Guide (Q1 2026)

@LACreativeRealty

THE CREATIVE'S GUIDE TO REAL ESTATE

BUYER'S GUIDE

Q3 2026 EDITION

Your vision. Your space.

When searching for the right space, many creatives find themselves overwhelmed by options and underwhelmed by advisors who don't truly get them. Too often, traditional agents overlook the values, lifestyle, and financial realities that shape a creative life.

Whether you're buying your first home, creating a live-work sanctuary, or securing your next creative HQ, having an advisor who understands your vision and the way you work is essential to turning possibilities into results.

As creatives, our passions define us. Inspiration can strike at any time, so your space should not only be ready to help capture your ideas, it should inspire them.

Gabe Rudner - Founder

WHY BUY AS A CREATIVE IN LA?

Ownership creates financial compounding and lays a strong foundation to support creative endeavors

As creative entrepreneurs, money is often a byproduct of our passions, not the end goal. This often means sacrificing financial stability to achieve creative freedom. By owning assets such as real estate, creatives can achieve financial compounding through appreciation building wealth and income over time so they can stay focused on what really matters.

Ownership provides long-term security and peace of mind

When you own your property, you're not subject to rising rents, sudden moves, or restrictions placed by a landlord. Instead, you create a lasting foundation for both your personal life and creative work. This sense of permanence allows you to plan for the future with confidence and invest energy into what matters most—your craft, your community, and your vision.

Ownership allows customization– of style and of function

Owning your home or business property allows you to customize the space to your exact specifications. Create a separate work from home space such as an office or creative studio, build a warehouse to suit, create landscaping that inspires, or create inspiring places to host collaborators. All matters of design and function are fully in your control.

THE BUYING PROCESS

PHASE 1 | Preparation 📝

1. LACR Strategy Call

- Complete initial call to identify strategy, timeline, and preferences

2. Preparation

- Work with agent and lender (or loan broker) to identify a suitable budget range, timeline, and strategy
- Gather documents needed for Loan Pre-Approval including pay stubs, W-2s, or tax returns
- Identify wants and needs when it comes to suitable properties
- Identify neighborhoods that support lifestyle goals and budget
- Obtain Loan Pre-Approval

3. Discovery

- Tour suitable properties and further refine preferences and strategy
- In-depth review of sample purchase documents and buying process with agent to answer any questions and further refine strategy– essential in order to move quickly and decisively when the right property is found

4. Writing an Offer

- When a suitable property is identified, work with agent to review market data and define an offer strategy
- Prepare and submit a thorough, complete, and professional purchase offer on your terms

5. Counter-Offers & Acceptance

- Review any counter-offers while continuing to research the market and tour other properties
- Work with agent to negotiate the best possible terms and reach an agreement acceptable to both Buyer and Seller

THE BUYING PROCESS

PHASE 2 | Performance 🎬

6. Open Escrow & Initial Deposit

- Deliver the accepted purchase agreement to Escrow and Title companies
- Transfer initial deposit (often 3% of the purchase price) to Escrow

7. Inspections

- Work with agent to schedule comprehensive third party inspections in order to uncover material facts about the property condition including but not limited to:
    - General Inspection
    - Termite Inspection
    - Sewer Inspection
- Work with agent and lender to order a third party appraisal of the property if needed for loan
- Review all disclosures received from Seller, HOA, and other third parties and ask questions or order additional inspections or reports as needed

8. Negotiation & Performance

- Review all reports, disclosures and inspections with your agent and identify any important facts about the property condition, title, HOA, and loan product
- Shop for homeowner's Insurance and select a policy that meets both your needs and your lender's requirements
- Identify any conditions you may have to closing, and if applicable ask for any seller repairs, closing cost credits, or other concessions you will require.
- Negotiate until a suitable course of action has been agreed to by both parties to address these closing conditions
- Prepare closing funds needed for balance of down payment and other closing costs and ensure they are liquid for closing
- Work with your lender to clear any remaining loan conditions and obtain Final Loan Approval

THE BUYING PROCESS

PHASE 3 | Closing 🏡

9. Remove Contingencies

- After negotiating acceptable remedies to your inspection related closing conditions including any seller repairs, seller credits for closing costs, or any other seller concessions, remove Investigation of Property Contingency
- After ensuring the property has appraised for the purchase value, remove Appraisal Contingency
- After receiving Final Loan Approval, remove Loan Contingency
- Once all contingencies are removed negotiations will be concluded and the transaction will move on to closing

10. Sign Escrow & Loan Docs

- Set appointment with Escrow to sign loan documents and remaining escrow documents
- Transfer closing funds / balance of down payment to escrow

11. Final Verification

- Meet agent at the property to complete the Final Verification of the Property to confirm that all negotiated seller repairs have been completed as agreed and the property is in the same condition as when the offer was accepted

12. Closing

- Once the lender funds the loan and all documents are signed and funds are in, the escrow company will release the file to be recorded by the County Recorder. Once the County Recorder confirms recording, the deal is closed and the property is yours!

FAQ'S

What should I look for in an agent?

Look for someone who understands your goals, communicates clearly, and knows the local market. Trust and responsiveness matter just as much as experience.

How does my real estate agent get paid?

Before submitting an offer, you will sign an agreement to pay your agent a commission for their services, and in your offer you will include a condition that the seller cover the cost of your agent's commission– this pushes the cost of your agent onto the seller who will pay your agent through escrow at closing. This is customary and will not negatively affect your offer's attractiveness.

How long is a pre-approval good for?

Most pre-approvals last about 60–90 days. After that, your lender may ask for updated documents to confirm your financial picture.

What credit score do I need to qualify for a loan?

Most lenders look for a score of 620 or higher for conventional loans. FHA loans may allow scores starting around 580 (and sometimes even lower with larger down payments). The higher your score, the better your chances of qualifying for favorable rates and terms.

When is the right time to get pre-approved?

As soon as you're serious about buying. Getting pre-approved early helps you know your budget and puts you in a stronger position to act quickly when the right property comes along.

Can I get preapproved for a home loan if I am self employed?

Yes. You'll need to provide extra documentation such as tax returns, profit and loss statements, or 1099s. A good lender experienced with self-employed buyers will guide you through it.

Can I apply with multiple lenders? Will this affect my credit score?

Yes, you can. Shopping rates with multiple lenders within a short time window (usually 14-45 days) counts as a single credit inquiry, so it won't hurt your score significantly.

How much do I need to put down on a home purchase?

It depends on your loan type. Some programs allow as little as 3–5% down, while others, like FHA or VA, have even lower requirements. A 20% down payment avoids mortgage insurance, but it's not required.

FAQ'S

(Continued)

What are closing costs and how much should I expect to pay?

Closing costs are the fees and expenses required to finalize your home purchase. They typically include escrow and title services, lender fees, appraisal, inspections, and prepaid items like property taxes or homeowner's insurance. In most transactions in Los Angeles, the Buyer's closing costs will total between 2-3% of the purchase price.

What is "escrow"?

Escrow is a neutral third party that holds funds and documents until all conditions of the sale are met. They make sure both buyer and seller meet their obligations before money and property change hands.

What is an HOA and how will it affect my condo purchase?

An HOA (Homeowners Association) manages the shared spaces and rules of a condo or planned community. They collect monthly dues that cover things like building maintenance, landscaping, insurance for common areas, and amenities such as a pool or gym. An HOA will affect your purchase because the monthly dues are part of your housing costs, and the community's rules may limit what changes you can make to your unit or how you use the property.

What are contingencies and how do they protect me during the transaction?

Contingencies are built-in safeguards in your purchase contract. They give you time to complete inspections, secure financing, and confirm the home's value through appraisal. If an issue arises—like unexpected repair needs, a low appraisal, or loan denial—you can renegotiate or, if necessary, cancel the contract without losing your deposit.

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THE NEXT STEPS

Ready to acquire your dream space?

Book your strategy call

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