

FROM THE OUTSIDE, IN

Six Ways to Make Your Farm Shine in the Real Estate Market

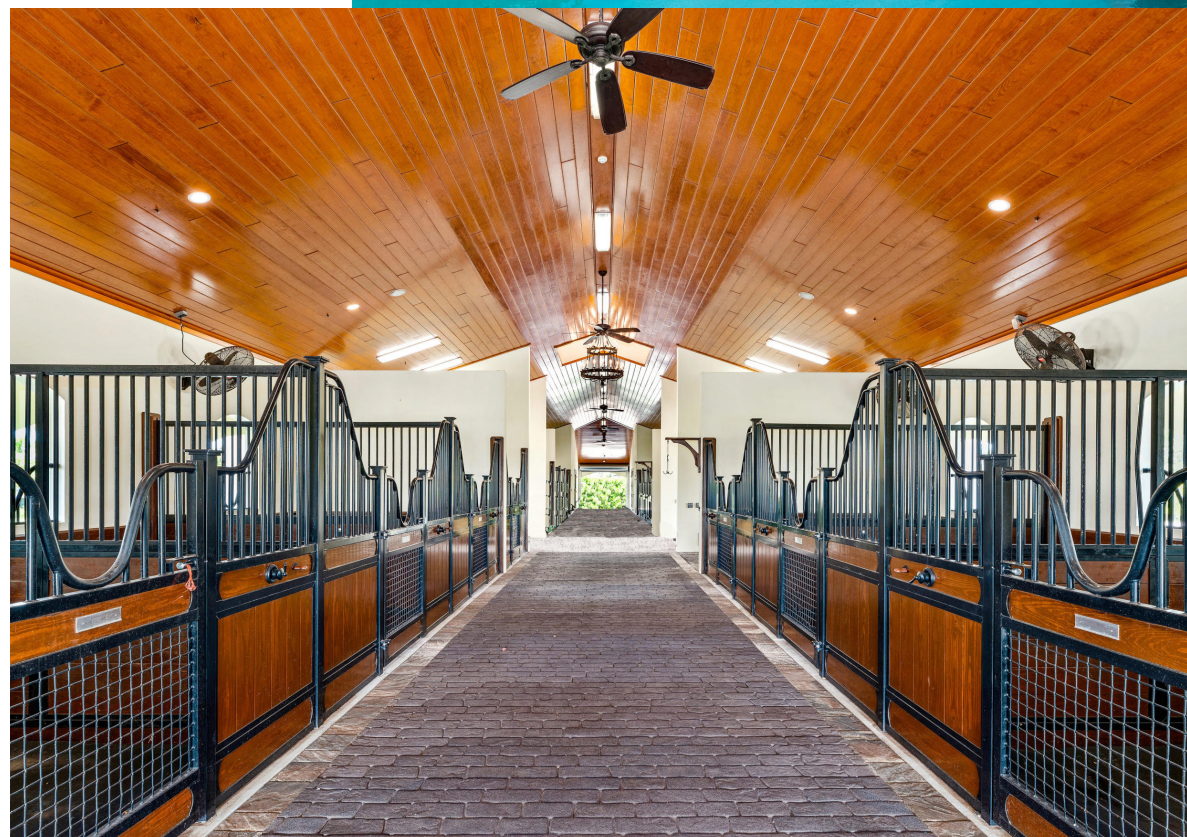
IF YOU ASK leading Wellington real estate agent Martha Wachtel Jolicoeur what property buyers are looking for these days, her answer without hesitation would be, “a house.” The housing market is sizzling due to low interest rates. Everyone seems eager to become a homeowner, making home buying a tricky endeavor with inventory being low across the nation.

It sounds easy enough to sell a home these days, but in Wellington, FL, many buyers are looking for a place their horses can call home as well. Equestrian real estate is also a hot commodity, and there are particular trends and styles that can be incorporated to help a farm property sell even faster.

According to Martha, selling a farm is like selling a horse. If it checks most of the boxes, it's a quick sale. It's easy to sell something attractive and well-maintained that also serves its intended purpose. The price also needs to be right; if it's too expensive, the pool of interested buyers will shrink and the sale may take longer. The property that's priced right, clean, and well-located will sell right away. Keeping these things in mind ahead of time will help the selling process move swiftly and easily.

WORDS: TORI BILAS/JUMP MEDIA

PHOTOS: COURTESY MARTHA JOLICOEUR, KATHY RUSSELL PHOTOGRAPHY



ABOVE AND NEAR LEFT: The pool and neutral interiors complete this home in Palm Beach Polo

FAR LEFT: A stunning barn interior in Palm Beach Point



WHAT DOES it take to get a farm sale-ready? Martha offers six tips for bringing a farm property to the market.

1 FOCUS ON CURB APPEAL
When it comes to preparing a farm for the market, Martha says to start with the exterior. Curb appeal is crucial when showing a property because it's what the buyers see first. A simple landscape design featuring clear walkways with manicured trees and plenty of privacy goes a long way. Adding simple upgrades like new flowers and mulch will pay off in the long run.

2 FOCUS ON YOUR FARM'S SELLING POINTS
When it comes to farm amenities, remember that every buyer will step onto a property with different priorities in mind. Some will prioritize the footing, others will want an ideal turnout situation, while still others will prefer a stylish barn, meaning a newer building with built-in storage and high ceilings with tongue and groove wood paneling, which is beautiful but difficult to maintain.

Other significant barn selling points to keep in mind include water access to every stall, superb footing, 12'-by-12' stalls at minimum, and excellent ventilation throughout the barn. Emphasize your farm's selling points and consider whether it's worth the investment to add a few more desirable items before listing.

3 MAKE NECESSARY UPDATES
"As a general rule of thumb, newer is better in Wellington," says Martha. "I used to sell antique farms often when I was working in real estate in Virginia, but homebuyers in Florida typically prefer new." If it can't be new, modern updates always go a long way. Replace dated appliances and update kitchens and



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bathrooms with new counters, hardware, and cabinetry, if needed.

When considering updates, remember that simplicity sells. Light exterior colors, especially white, are preferable over dark colors, and a simple coat of paint can drastically improve curb appeal. Roof updates are worth considering, too. Barrel roofs are not as popular as they once were, and now people are opting for metal or cement tile roofing. Installing a new roof is a daunting project for a prospective homebuyer, so updating to a simple, desirable roof could go a long way in a sale. Addressing any functional issues with the facility is also crucial prior to hitting the market, as a poor inspection could cause a sale to fall through or force the seller to make a significant price reduction.

4 MINIMIZE DISTRACTIONS
On the inside of both the home and barn, focus on allowing potential buyers to picture themselves in the space. With the interior, less is more. It should not be completely empty, but don't overload the space with personal touches and photographs. Even when top riders list their properties, they may only keep their Olympic medals on display to give the space a sense of aspiration while still allowing prospective buyers to envision themselves living there.

Eliminate bold colors and patterns to avoid distraction. Bold furnishings can be overbearing and draw viewers' eyes away from the rest of the space, both in person and in photographs. An antique oriental rug, while beautiful in person, may not photograph well, so you may want to put it in

storage or avoid using it in photos. White carpeting can also be distracting and off-putting for pet owners, as it gets dirty easily. When considering flooring, think of what's easy to mop and maintain, such as light hardwood or a good quality laminate, and even marble for bathrooms.

5 HIRE A STAGING EXPERT
If your property is empty, or if your furniture doesn't help your property look its best, you can hire a designer to stage the space to show it off for buyers. When a home is professionally staged, the furniture is often available for sale so a buyer can choose to purchase the home furnished or select certain pieces to match their taste.

6 KEEP IT CLEAN FOR SHOWINGS
This can be tricky for farms, but try to keep everything in its place while it's on the market and, ideally, use storage containers to conceal the things needed around the barn on a daily basis. Try to show the farm after feeding time once everything's been put away and swept clean. If you have boarders or clients, communicate the importance of keeping things neat and organized and arrange for them to not be present while the farm is being shown.
"My number one piece of advice would be to start outside and work your way in," says Martha. "Spruce up the landscaping, declutter, apply a new coat of paint, and keep everything clean. Once a seller does all that, half the time they don't want to sell anymore. I often find that by the time their property is ready for the market, they're thinking to themselves, why did I ever want to sell it?"



Meet the Expert:
MARTHA WACHTEL JOLICOEUR

Buying or selling a property with Martha Wachtel Jolicoeur assures the highest level of professional real estate consultation in the Wellington, FL, equestrian community. Jolicoeur understands the importance of customer excellence and prides herself on dealing honestly and fairly while creating relationships with her customers that continue far beyond a transaction.

Jolicoeur first established herself among the equestrian community as a world-class show jumping competitor.

Since then, she has combined her passion for horses with her career as one of the area's top-ranked real estate agents catering exclusively to equestrian clientele. Jolicoeur serves her clients by consulting and guiding them to make the right real estate choices. She prides herself on her work within the global equestrian community, and her international competitive background helped lay the foundation for many relationships that have proven to be the building blocks of her impressive equestrian real estate clientele.



ABOVE: The kitchen and landscaping at a serene Saddle Trail property
ABOVE RIGHT: The front exterior of a South Wellington property