

Published December 8th, 2010

A Real Estate Agent with a Different Background

By Sophie Braccini



Tran Turner in his Orinda office Photo Sophie Braccini

area, as well as homes with historical significance," says Turner, "and there are clients with high architectural demands who want a specific architect. It can be difficult for them to find an agent who has done the research and knows where the homes are, and who owns them."

Turner is creating a database of art deco, Spanish and colonial revival homes, modernist homes, as well as significant contemporary architects and their work in the area. "I have a lot of the information I need in my books and the collection of architecture magazines I have gathered over the years," says Turner. His web site already lists the 20th century architects he will focus on.

As a new agent, Turner has been practicing door-knocking to find customers. Once his database is complete, he will do it with the purpose of identifying which of these special homes could reach the market in the near future, both in the East Bay and in the Carmel area where he was born. "I believe that there is nobody with my specialty in the area," says Turner, "I know that it will take me a few years to get established, but I find this work very exiting. Finding clients for these exceptional homes is like doing an exhibition or writing a book."

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Did you know that modernist, 94-year old architect Olof Dahlstrand designed a few Usonian homes in Orinda and Lafayette? Or that his greatest inspiration, Frank Lloyd Wright, designed one Orinda home? At least one real estate agent in Lamorinda knows all about it - his name is Tran Turner, and he is a new agent for Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Orinda.

Formerly an Art Museum Curator of 19th & 20th Century Architecture & Design, Turner recently came to live in Orinda in order to be closer to aging parents. As he moved, he decided to channel his love of significant homes to the commercial sector, and serve buyers on the lookout for very specific homes. He knows that the Bay Area contains many of these gems and that they need a specific marketing approach.

Elegantly dressed, with polite and reserved manners, Turner does not come across as a typical good-humored real estate agent. His passion for architecture and beautiful homes quickly shines through, and carries his interlocutor through the history of American architecture.

"There are many homes designed by established architects in the