

SD *Luxury Lifestyle, In Arizona*

Now is the time to invest in Arizona real estate. Once known more for its natural beauty than for its potential for luxury, Arizona has become a veritable Boca Raton of the west.

By Kristen Gorzelany

Look out your window...if you're in Manhattan, the sky is probably some shade of gray, the trees colorless and barren, and the people bundled and hurried.

If you were in Arizona, you'd be looking out over the vibrant and blooming Sonoran Desert, through giant Saguaro cacti, toward verdant mountains in the distance. It'd be a sunny 75 degrees, and you'd be just about ready to head down to the pool.

When Robert Cohen, then a young attorney, left the east coast for Arizona he, like many people, half expected the state's climate to be its greatest asset. He hadn't initially made the cross-country move for himself—his parents' relocation to Scottsdale had lured him west—but Rob has since happily settled his own family in Arizona. Though he's still a practicing attorney, Rob has also established a booming real-estate business (aptly named Valley of the Sun Team), specializing in investment properties, corporate relocations, and vacation homes. It's a business that enables him to help others find happiness while making Arizona their new (or second) home. It's noteworthy when a Harvard-educated Bostonian warms to the idea of calling another place "home;" for him to invite others to do the same is another thing altogether.

But it's not just Rob who's fallen for the affable western state. It seems the secret of Arizona's arid warmth, easy lifestyle, and vast entertainment offerings has spread throughout the country already. Once known more for its natural beauty than for



Rob Cohen with his wife and kids

its potential for luxury, Arizona has become a veritable Boca Raton of the west. As lavish high-rise condominiums spring up in old-town Scottsdale and Phoenix and upscale homes sprawl across vast stretches of desert, massive commercial development has enabled high-end "walking malls" to proliferate. And some of the nation's most luxurious spas are here too.

To add to that, more goes on here than one might expect: the FBR Open (golf), Cactus League Spring training (12 MLB teams), the Arabian Horse Show, and the infamous Barrett-Jackson collector-car auction are all held each year in Arizona; the 2008 Superbowl and the 2009 NBA All-Star Game will both be held in Arizona as well. And on an everyday basis, Arizona's plethora of golf courses, pools, and tennis courts teem with life year-round. Its deserts and mountains provide such an ecologically and geologically striking backdrop that riding, hiking, and running take on a spiritual air. When you'd rather stay indoors, museums, art galleries, and performing arts centers abound. And if you ever do feel the need to leave, the Grand Canyon, Las Vegas, Sedona, San Diego, and the posh Sea of Cortez resorts in Rocky Point



Rob Cohen with his staff

(just over the Mexican border) are all within five-hours' drive. And if you miss the snow that much, you can head up to Snow Country (in Flagstaff, AZ), which is less than 3 hours away.

These things might help to explain Arizona's astronomical population growth of late. Despite the nation's economic woes, Arizona's infrastructure is still growing, and its economy is expected to bounce back faster than the rest of the country's. (The "housing slump" looks more like a slouch in Arizona, and Rob doesn't expect even that to last long.) That being said, there are plenty of units on the market, which has (conveniently for buyers) depressed prices (even some-high end foreclosures and short sales that the Valley of the Sun Team can access for you). Rob has come across some impressive properties selling at below-market prices. While he invests in properties here on his own, Robert Cohen takes pleasure in helping others build their lives, their leisure-lives, and their investments in Arizona. Rob firmly believes that if you have ever thought of owning a dream home getaway, now is the time to buy.

As people who own multiple homes and investment properties can attest, the peace of mind that flows from a competent realtor and property manager is invaluable. (Otherwise, additional properties are accompanied by additional anxiety.) Rob's extensive legal background (he was Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of Boston, General Counsel to the City of Boston's Zoning Board of Appeals and finally the City's Director of Planning and Zoning) has prepared him well to negotiate contracts on his clients' behalf. His years of real-estate experience have enabled him to streamline and monitor mortgage and leasing

processes as well. But beyond that, Rob has an innate sense of what people need to feel at home.

Half of Rob's clients are residents of other states; others are foreign investors. As a certified relocation expert (which means that corporations explicitly and particularly trust him to handle their employees' moves), Rob uses his local knowledge to connect people to their new communities, finding them not only the right home but also the right services and amenities that make them most comfortable. But he specializes in taking care of his long-distance buyers, offering concierge services in addition to pairing buyers with properties that best fit their aesthetics and their lifestyles. When potential buyers decide it's time to see the properties in person, Rob's Client Care Supervisor offers to connect them with high-end hotels at a special rate, hire a car service, get them tickets to events in the area, and give them some great recommendations for a just the right night out.

When people purchase their second homes with Rob and his Valley of the Sun Team, they benefit from Rob's connections to the best interior designers, architects, and landscapers too. His Team can arrange for anything from cleaning services to appliance maintenance for vacation homes, or contract and tenant services for investment properties. Everything can be taken care of from afar. If you find yourself thinking about getting away, or about investing in some property while it's still a buyers' market, you can call **Rob and his Valley of the Sun Team: 480-595-6410; Toll free at 877-553-2539**. Also, explore the local Arizona market on his website at www.valleyofthesunteam.com. You can also email Rob directly at rob@votsr.com. ♦

