



SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

By Cathleen McCann

From a beautiful coastline to majestic mountains, Southern California has it all. The unparalleled beauty of the Santa Barbara area is particularly unique and highly desirable. Comprised of Montecito, Summerland, Carpinteria, Goleta and the city of Santa Barbara, it's almost exclusively close-knit communities that make up the Santa Barbara area.

"The number one reason to move here: it's fabulous!" says **Suzanne Perkins**, agent with **Sotheby's International Realty** in Montecito. "There is nothing like Southern California, especially Santa Barbara." Perkins should know; she moved to California in 1962 and has never left.

Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Ynez Mountains is the relatively narrow band of land that makes up the Santa Barbara area. Its unique topography and cosmopolitan feel are a few of the reasons the area remains a low-density community that is highly sought after by luxury buyers from around the world.

"The Santa Barbara area has remained small and elegant," says Perkins. "There is no rampant development allowed here." Strict

zoning regulations limiting over-development combined with low inventory keeps the appreciation rate for homes high. Home prices haven't yet risen since the recession, making the area a good investment opportunity with better value.

Home buying activity in January is a good indicator for what the remainder of the year will look like, according to Perkins. Foreign buyers are flocking to the area. As Perkins notes... "They are attracted by a good place to park their money and a great place to live." With all that the area has to offer, she feels there is no reason to go to Europe.

This is an easy place to fit in and feel at home. The vibrant and active community is involved in many philanthropic organizations and recreational activities. Mild year-round temperatures and calm waters enable maximum enjoyment of the area's many active pursuits, including stand up paddle boarding, hiking and biking.

