



The Buyer's Edge:

5 Juicy Secrets to Winning Your Dream Home (Without Overpaying)

By JoEllen “Sohaila” Handelsman

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About Your Guide

This book was written by **JoEllen “Sohaila” Handelsman**, a trusted Realtor® with over 23 years of experience helping buyers and sellers succeed in real estate.

Whether you’re buying your first home or moving up to your dream one, Sohaila’s mission is to give you the **edge**—the tools, insights, and strategies to make smart moves with confidence.

 **760-519-9615**

 [SoldbySohaila.com](https://www.SoldbySohaila.com)

 SoldbySohaila@gmail.com

DRE #01243480

S&H Realty Associates



Disclaimer

As a licensed real estate agent, I’m excited to share strategies and insights to help guide your real estate journey. Please note, the information in this book is for general educational purposes only and may not apply to every market or situation. This is not legal, tax, or financial advice. For advice specific to your circumstances, always consult with a licensed professional in your area.

Prologue: Welcome to the Inside Track

Buying a home isn't just about scrolling Zillow, touring open houses, and crossing your fingers. It's a game—one with strategies, shortcuts, and insider secrets that most buyers never get told.

Here's the truth: the market isn't "fair." Some buyers consistently win dream homes (and even snag them at better prices) while others lose out again and again. What's the difference? It's not luck—it's leverage.

This book is about giving you **the Buyer's Edge**—the little-known strategies that shift the odds in your favor. These are the same tools savvy buyers use to unlock homes before they hit the apps, to craft offers sellers can't resist, and to make sure they never overpay in the process.

Over the next five chapters, you'll learn how to:

- Spot homes before the masses.
- Decode the *true* cost of ownership.
- Win bidding wars without throwing money away.
- See beyond the "staging magic" to uncover hidden risks (and opportunities).
- Choose an agent who fights for you like a dealmaker, not a tour guide.

This isn't theory. These are the moves that separate frustrated buyers from successful ones.

So grab a coffee, buckle up, and get ready—you're about to learn what most buyers never hear until it's too late. By the end, you'll be armed with **5 juicy secrets** to not just buy a house, but win your dream home on your terms. Welcome to your edge.

Chapter 1 - The “First-to-Know” Advantage

In today’s market, the best homes sell fast — sometimes before you ever see them online. Many buyers believe Zillow, Redfin, or Realtor.com is where the search begins. The truth? By the time a home hits the big websites, the sharpest buyers already know about it.

Why “Coming Soon” Is Gold

Top agents often share “coming soon” listings or “pocket listings” (homes that aren’t officially on the MLS yet). These are the hidden gems most buyers never see. If you have access, you get to tour a property days before the competition even knows it exists.

The Power of Relationships

An agent with deep local connections can call you the moment a home is about to be listed. Sometimes, sellers are willing to accept an offer before the home ever goes public.

 Imagine skipping the frenzy of an open house and landing your dream home because you were first through the door.

 **Pro Buyer Insight:** Don’t just rely on Zillow. Work with an agent who has early access to homes — because the first buyer often becomes the winning buyer.

Chapter 2: The Power of the “Invisible Offer”

Most buyers wait for the first open house. Smart buyers don't. By then, multiple offers may already be on the table. Enter the “invisible offer.”

What It Is

An invisible offer is an early offer submitted before the home has its big debut. It tells the seller: skip the chaos, let's make this easy.

Why Sellers Love It

- They avoid the stress of multiple showings.
- They get certainty right away.
- If terms are strong, they may accept before the crowd shows up.

How to Do It Right

1. Make your offer clean and easy to accept (fewer contingencies, flexible closing).
2. Add a personal touch with a letter or video to the seller.
3. Be prepared to move fast—the window is short.



Many buyers don't even know this is possible, which makes it your secret weapon.

✨ Pro Buyer Insight: You don't always have to fight in a bidding war. Sometimes the smartest play is to slip in early and secure the home before anyone else gets the chance.

Chapter 3: Read Between the Listing Lines

Every listing description tells a story—but not always the one you think. Sellers and agents choose their words carefully, and if you know how to decode them, you can spot hidden gems and avoid costly surprises.

Common Code Words

- **“Cozy”** → Small.
- **“Charming”** → Old, possibly with quirks.
- **“Needs TLC”** → Repairs required, maybe a lot.
- **“Motivated seller”** → They want it sold—fast. Leverage for you.

Spotting Opportunity

Sometimes vague language hides potential. A “fixer” in the right neighborhood could become your best investment. A “motivated seller” might mean you can negotiate below asking.

 Instead of being scared off by coded language, use it as a compass. The listings other buyers skip might be the ones where you get the best deal.

 **Pro Buyer Insight:** Learn to read between the lines. What sounds like a red flag to others could be your chance to score a hidden gem at the right price.

Chapter 4: Win With Terms, Not Just Price

Most buyers assume the highest offer wins. Not true. Sellers often choose the offer that feels safest and most convenient—even if it isn't the most money.

Why Terms Matter

Think like a seller. What do they want? A smooth, stress-free closing. If you can give them that, you may beat out buyers offering more cash.

Terms That Can Win You the Deal

- **Flexible Closing Date** – Let the seller pick the move-out timeline.
- **Larger Earnest Deposit** – Shows you're serious.
- **Shorter Contingencies** – Speeds things up.
- **Rent-Back Option** – Let the seller stay a little longer if they need time.

A Real Example

Two buyers make offers. Buyer A offers \$10,000 more but needs 60 days to close. Buyer B offers slightly less but gives the seller the exact closing date they want. Who wins? Buyer B.

✨ **Pro Buyer Insight:** Winning isn't always about paying more. Play smart with terms, and you could land the home while spending less.

Chapter 5: The Post-Closing Secret That Saves Thousands

Most buyers think the money conversation ends at closing. The savvy ones know that's not true. Even after the keys are in your hand, you can still save thousands.

How to Save After Closing

- **Tax Reassessment** – If your purchase price is lower than the assessed value, you can appeal and lower your property taxes.
- **Home Warranty Credits** – Negotiate with the seller for a one-year home warranty that covers appliances and systems.
- **Repair Allowances** – If the inspection found issues, you may get credits to cover fixes after closing.

Why This Matters

The average buyer leaves thousands on the table simply because they don't know to ask. Your home is likely the biggest investment of your life—don't miss the chance to stretch every dollar.

✨ **Pro Buyer Insight:** Smart buyers know the deal isn't done when the ink dries. Post-closing strategies can put cash back in your pocket for years to come.

Note: Just a quick reminder—Realtors work on commission, which means we start at zero until your home is bought or sold. Everything I do—whether it's answering your questions, giving advice, or walking you through the process—is done with your success in mind. I only win when *you* win.



Bonus Section: Your Quick Buyer's Toolkit

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Quick Buyer's Checklist

30 Days Before You Start Touring Homes:

- Get pre-approved with a strong lender—know exactly how much you can afford.
- List your must-haves vs. nice-to-haves. Be clear on priorities.
- Research neighborhoods like you're scouting your future life—schools, commute, amenities.

14 Days Before Making Offers:

- Drive neighborhoods at night and on weekends to check traffic, noise, and vibe.
- Ask your agent about upcoming “off-market” or pocket listings.
- Double-check your budget using the *all-in monthly cost*: mortgage, taxes, insurance, HOA, and maintenance.

7 Days Before Submitting Offers:

- Have proof of funds or pre-approval ready.
- Prepare a “buyer resume” highlighting your strengths (fast close, strong financing, flexible move-in).
- Decide in advance how much wiggle room you have for negotiation—know your max without panicking.

2 Buyer Savings Calculator

Use these 5 strategies to estimate how much you can **save or gain** on your purchase:

1. **Pre-Approval Advantage** – Being ready can help you win without paying extra in bidding wars. Estimate savings: \$2,000–\$10,000 depending on competition.
2. **True Cost Awareness** – Compare homes using monthly all-in costs, not just the sticker price. Potential savings: \$500–\$2,500/month.
3. **Offer Smart, Not Just Big** – Clean, well-timed offers can beat higher bids. Estimated value: \$5,000–\$20,000.
4. **Inspection Leverage** – Negotiating repairs or credits based on inspection results. Potential savings: \$2,000–\$15,000.
5. **Agent Edge** – Working with a negotiator-savvy agent ensures you don't overpay. Savings: \$5,000–\$25,000+ depending on market.

Quick Tip: Add up the potential savings to see how your Buyer's Edge can put **tens of thousands of dollars back in your pocket**—without overpaying or overextending.

Epilogue: Your Dream Home Awaits

Congratulations! You now know the **insider secrets most buyers never hear**—the strategies that give you the edge in a competitive market. But knowledge alone isn't enough. Success comes when you **take action**, move fast, and make smart decisions.

Buying a home isn't just about money. It's about **positioning, timing, and strategy**. The buyers who win their dream homes aren't lucky—they're prepared. They know how to spot opportunities, craft irresistible offers, and navigate the market with confidence. And now—you do too.

Remember: the perfect home is out there. With the **Buyer's Edge**, you can find it faster, negotiate smarter, and avoid overpaying in the process. You're no longer just another buyer—you're a **strategic, informed, empowered buyer** ready to win.

✨ **Pro Buyer Insight:** Every step you take today—from building your team to understanding market psychology—puts you closer to the keys in your hand tomorrow. Don't wait. The time to act is now.

When you're ready to turn these secrets into results, I'd love to guide you every step of the way.

 **JoEllen “Sohaila” Handelsman**

DRE #01243480

S&H Realty Associates

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 SoldbySohaila@gmail.com



 *You now hold the Buyer's Edge—5 juicy Secrets to Winning Your Dream Home. Use them, and you'll not only find your dream home faster, you'll win it smarter and often for less.*

About the Author



JoEllen “Sohaila” Handelsman is a trusted Realtor® with more than 23 years of experience helping buyers find and secure their dream homes and investment opportunities. Known for her insider strategies and strong advocacy, she, with her dedicated colleagues ensures their clients have the edge in competitive markets—winning homes and investment properties without overpaying.

Sohaila believes buying and selling should be exciting, not overwhelming, and she provides the guidance, negotiation power, and market insights that give her buyers and sellers confidence every step of the way.

Outside of real estate, Sohaila is Professional international Belly dance artist, (yes, you read that right!), an Entrepreneur, Empowerment Coach for Women and Community Leader.

Her lifelong dedication to empowerment and creativity shines through in her real estate work, helping buyers not just purchase a house but step into a home where life’s next chapter can thrive.

