

# HousingCoach<sup>SM</sup> Headlines

Village IV Edition

October 2017

## An Entrepreneurial Halloween Story

After being a public servant for 30 years with the Department of Water and Power, Tony Dighera retired and bought a small organic farm, which he named Cinagro farms. Cinagro is organic spelled backwards, perhaps a hint that this is an innovative organic farm.

Soon after starting his farm, Dighera read a story about square watermelons coming out of Japan. Intrigued, he devoted a small plot of land to experimenting with shaping produce. He succeeded in growing perfectly square, and then heart-shaped, watermelons. Then he did something truly amazing.

Dighera was turning his attention from watermelons to pumpkins, and gradually an idea took shape. Since he understood the basics of shaping produce, he wanted to take the concept much further. Four years and \$400,000 later, he finally perfected a way to grow molded (not moldy) pumpkins. The result? These crazy Frankenstein-shaped pumpkins, which he calls pumpkinsteins.



"People never believe it's real the first time they see it; they all want to touch it to make sure," Dighera told the LA Times in 2014. "The point was to make something that would get attention."

During his first full year, he harvested roughly 5,500 pumpkinsteins and sold them at a wholesale price of \$75 each. Retailers charged \$100. Reaction was quick; they were selling, competitors were jealous, and Dighera even had trespassers come in the dark of the night.

In subsequent years, Dighera devoted much of his land to the monstrously profitable pumpkinsteins, harvesting 30K – 40K of them at a time. "It's easier than watermelons," he says, "because no one cares how they taste."

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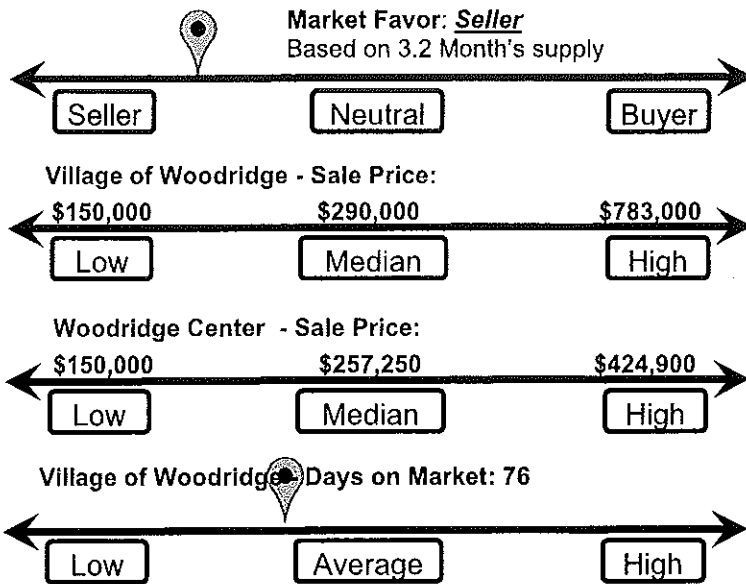
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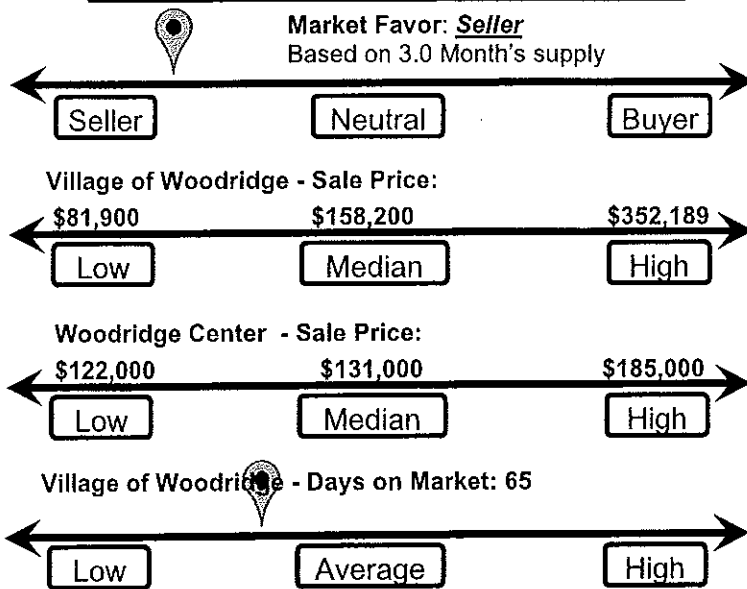


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