Why Buyers Choose ENCORE

Buying is not touring houses. It is a budget that includes the insurance and the taxes, a plan, and someone who reads a house the way an owner does.

ALL OF IT IS HERE.



WHO YOU ARE WORKING WITH

Local knowledge, **an owner's eye, one team.**

I am Desmond Pollock, broker and owner of Encore Investment Realty, licensed in Florida since 2014. Encore is three businesses under one roof — a brokerage, a property management company and an investment business — and each runs with its own people: a transaction coordinator, leasing and maintenance support, and inspectors, lenders and trades we have worked with for years.



For a buyer, that range matters in two ways. We look at a house the way someone who has to maintain it looks at it — the roof, the systems, what the insurance and the taxes will be after you own it. And if you are buying anything you might rent, we manage rentals for a living, so the numbers you get are operating numbers, not spreadsheet numbers.

You deal with me on the decisions that change what you pay and what you are taking on: strategy, the offer and the negotiation. The team handles the scheduling, the paperwork and the follow-through, so nothing waits on one person's calendar.

> **I will tell you to walk away from a house. Expect it at least once.**

WHAT YOU GET BEFORE YOU WRITE AN OFFER

A read on the house the way an owner-operator reads it: condition, likely insurance, the tax bill after it resets, the HOA or condo rules — and, if you will rent it, what it will realistically produce.

2014
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BROKER LICENSE

Owners
WE RUN RENTALS OURSELVES

THREE BUSINESSES, ONE TEAM

Brokerage
Buyers, listings, offers and closings, with a transaction coordinator on every file.

Property management
All of Central Florida. Leasing, maintenance and owner reporting.

Investment
Houses and land, bought with our own capital.

BEFORE YOU LOOK AT A SINGLE HOUSE

Start with what you are solving.

Answer these first. Looking first is how people fall in love with a house they cannot buy, or one that does not fix the problem they were moving to fix.

1

What are you actually solving?

Space, location, cost, a school, a commute — or an investment return. Each one points to a different house.

2

What monthly number are you comfortable with?

The whole payment: principal, interest, taxes, insurance and any HOA or CDD. Not just the mortgage.

3

When do you need to be in?

And what happens if it slips a month. That answer shapes the offer and the closing date.

4

How much cash do you have, apart from the down payment?

The deposit and inspections come first. The rest is settled at closing — see below.



Three musts, three deal-breakers

Write down three things the house must have and three that end the conversation. Everything else is negotiable — and knowing which is which is how you decide in an afternoon instead of a week.

KNOW BEFORE YOU CLOSE

Closing costs, insurance, prepaid taxes and interest are all part of the closing. You will see the full number before you commit, so nothing at the table is a surprise.

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

Who pays whom, in plain words.

Buyer representation works differently than most people remember. Here is how it actually runs now, before you walk into a single house with us.

A written agreement comes first

Before we tour a home with you in person, we sign a written buyer agreement. It is now required, not a preference of ours. It says what we will do for you and what we are paid.

Our fee is a specific number, agreed up front

The agreement states the amount or the rate. It has to be specific and objectively ascertainable — not open-ended. Compensation is negotiable, and it is not set by law.

The seller may contribute, but it is not automatic

We often ask the seller or the listing brokerage to contribute toward our fee as part of your offer. Offers of compensation can no longer appear on the MLS, so it is negotiated deal by deal. If the contribution comes up short, the difference is yours — and you will know that number before we write the offer, not at closing.

How we represent you

As a transaction broker, the Florida default. We owe you honesty, skill and care, limited confidentiality, a full accounting of your money, and disclosure of every known fact that materially affects the value of the home — and we deal fairly with the seller too.

What you can do before signing anything

Walk into an open house on your own, look online, and talk to us about the market, your budget and your options. The agreement comes in when we take you inside a home.

If anyone tells you a buyer's agent is automatically free, they are working from an old script.

We would rather put the number in writing on day one than have it surprise you on the settlement statement.

Source: National Association of REALTORS®, Consumer Guide to Written Buyer Agreements; Florida Statutes §475.278 (transaction broker duties).

FROM FIRST CONVERSATION TO KEYS

The home **buying process.**

Seven steps. You will always know which one we are in, and what has to happen before the next one starts.

1. **Get pre-approved**
   Talk to a lender before you look. You will know your real number, and sellers take your offer seriously.
2. **Plan**
   We turn your answers from page three into search criteria and a monthly budget that includes insurance, taxes and any HOA.
3. **Search and tour**
   New matches as they hit the market. Seeing homes you reject is part of the work — it sharpens what you want.
4. **Offer**
   Price, deposit, inspection period, financing and closing date. Every one of those is negotiable.
5. **Under contract**
   Deposit delivered, inspections done, insurance quoted and bound, appraisal ordered.
6. **Clear to close**
   The lender finishes underwriting. Change nothing financial in this window.
7. **Closing**
   Final walkthrough, funds sent to the title company, documents signed, keys.



BUYING NEW CONSTRUCTION?

Call us before you walk into the model.

Some builders only work with your agent if the agent is registered on your very first visit. The builder's sales team works for the builder.

BEFORE THE SEARCH STARTS

Get your money ready first.

The strongest buyer in any price band is the one whose financing is already done. That is decided before you see a single house.



Pre-approval, not pre-qualification

A pre-qualification is an estimate from what you tell the lender. A pre-approval means the lender has checked your documents and credit. Sellers know the difference.

What the lender will ask for

Pay stubs, W-2s or tax returns, bank statements, ID — and an explanation for any large deposit that is not your paycheck. Gather it now, not mid-contract.

The loan type changes the offer

Conventional, FHA, VA, USDA or cash each write differently. Government-backed appraisals also look at condition and safety, which matters on an older or rougher house.

Talk to more than one lender

Compare the rate, the lender fees and how fast they close. A slow lender can cost you a house even when the rate is right.

CASH YOU WILL NEED BEYOND THE DOWN PAYMENT

- **Escrow deposit**
- **Inspections**
- **Appraisal**
- **Closing costs**
- **First year of insurance**
- **Tax and insurance reserves**
- **Moving and utilities**

Cash buyers still need proof of funds with the offer, and the same inspections, insurance and title work as everyone else. Paying cash removes the lender, not the homework.

WRITING THE OFFER

Winning is not always the highest price.

A seller is choosing the offer most likely to close, on terms they can live with. Price is one lever. Here are the others, and how we use them.

Price

Set from what comparable homes actually sold for, and what is competing with this one right now — not the list price.

Escrow deposit

Held by the escrow agent and credited to you at closing. A larger deposit reads as commitment.

Inspection period

Long enough to inspect, get quotes and bind insurance. Shorter reads stronger; too short hurts you.

Financing and appraisal

Your loan contingency and what happens if the appraisal comes in low are both written into the offer.

Closing date

Matched to the seller's needs where you can. Sometimes the right date beats a higher price.

Seller credits

Toward closing costs or repairs. A credit can do more for your cash at closing than a lower price.



"AS IS" is not what it sounds like

Most Florida offers use an AS IS contract. You still get to inspect, and you can still cancel during the inspection period. What it means is that the seller is not obligated to make repairs.

The best offer is the one the seller can say yes to fastest. Sometimes that is the price. Often it is the terms.

WHAT IT COSTS ALONG THE WAY

The money, line by line.

Approximate, and every one of these is quoted to you before you commit to it. The two Florida taxes on a mortgage surprise most out-of-state buyers.

ITEM	TYPICAL	WHAT IT IS
Escrow deposit	**Often 1–10% of price**	Held in escrow and credited to you at closing
Inspections and appraisal	**Quoted before you book**	Inspections are yours to order; the lender orders the appraisal
Lender, title and settlement	**About 1.8% of price**	Lender fees, title, recording and settlement charges
Florida tax on your mortgage note	**0.35% of the loan**	Documentary stamp tax on the note, set by statute
Intangible tax on your mortgage	**0.2% of the loan**	Also set by statute, charged when the mortgage is recorded
Owner's title policy	**Custom varies by county**	Who pays is customary by county, and negotiable
Prepaids and reserves	**Varies**	First year of insurance, prepaid interest, tax and insurance reserves

Budget above the closing-cost number, not at it

The 1.8% figure does not include prepaid interest, your first year of homeowners insurance or the tax and insurance reserves the lender collects. In Florida those are a large part of what you actually send to closing.

Your deposit goes to the escrow agent named in the contract, usually the title company, within the time the contract sets. You get written confirmation when it lands.

Source: Escrow deposit range: NAR, Consumer Guide to Escrow and Earnest Money. Closing costs: Bankrate, citing LodeStar Software Solutions closing-cost data. Mortgage taxes: Florida Statutes §201.08 and §199.133.

DURING THE INSPECTION PERIOD

Inspect what you cannot undo later.

An inspection is not a pass or fail. It tells you what you are buying, what it will cost you, and what your insurer is going to ask about.



General home inspection

Roof, structure, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, appliances, attic. The baseline for every purchase.

Four-point

Roof, electrical, plumbing and HVAC, on the insurer's form. Often required on older homes; the age cutoff varies by insurer.

Wind mitigation

Documents hurricane features like roof shape and roof-to-wall attachment. Florida insurers must offer discounts for them.

Wood-destroying organisms

Termites and wood rot. Some loan types require it, and in Florida you want it either way.

Septic, well and pool

When the house is not on city water or sewer, or has a pool, those get their own specialist.

Anything the first one flags

Roofer, plumber, electrician, sewer camera. Quotes in hand before the period ends, not after.

Be there for the last half hour

The inspector walks you through what matters. A forty-page report reads very differently once you have seen the three things that are actually a problem.

HOME WARRANTY

A service contract for mechanical breakdown — HVAC, plumbing, electrical, appliances — the things homeowners insurance does not cover. Worth it on a house with original systems. Read the per-call fee, the coverage caps, the exclusions and the waiting period. It can also be something you ask the seller to pay for.

Source: Wind mitigation discounts: Florida Statutes §627.0629. Home warranties are regulated under Chapter 634, Florida Statutes.

THE FLORIDA VARIABLE

Insurance is the line that breaks budgets.

It surprises people from out of state, and it varies more house to house than almost anything else in your payment. These are the things that move it.

1

The roof

Its age and type are the first thing a Florida insurer asks about. An older roof can limit who will write the policy at all.

2

The four-point and wind mitigation

The four-point can decide whether you are insurable; the wind mitigation report earns discounts.

3

Flood zone

Standard homeowners policies exclude flood. In a high-risk flood zone a federally backed lender will require a flood policy.

4

Your hurricane deductible

Usually a percentage of the dwelling coverage, not a flat dollar amount. Know the number in dollars.



Ask for the flood disclosure

Florida sellers must disclose, at or before the contract, whether they know of flood damage, flood claims or federal flood assistance on the house.

Get a real quote — bound, not estimated — before your inspection period ends. After that, a bad number is your problem, not the seller's.

We know what rentals we own and manage cost to insure. When a quote looks wrong for the house, we will tell you, and we will point you to an independent agent who shops several carriers.

Source: Flood insurance requirement: Flood Disaster Protection Act, 42 U.S.C. §4012a. Seller flood disclosure: Florida Statutes §689.302. Wind mitigation: §627.0629.

PROPERTY TAXES AFTER YOU BUY

The seller's tax bill is not yours.

This is the budgeting mistake we see most in Florida. The number on the listing is the seller's tax, and it will change once the house is yours.

1

Your assessment resets

A homesteaded seller's taxable value has been capped for years. After a sale the house is reassessed at market value the following January 1. We estimate your real bill from the county's rates.

2

File for homestead by March 1

If you own the home and live in it as your permanent residence on January 1, file with the county property appraiser by March 1. Miss it and you pay that year without the exemption.

3

Moving from another Florida homestead?

Portability may let you carry part of your old capped savings to the new house. It is not automatic — you have to apply.



Why your payment can go up after year one

Your lender sets the first escrow payment from the current bill. When the reassessed bill arrives, the escrow catches up — sometimes with a shortage to repay. Budget on the reset number from day one and it never surprises you.

Exemption amounts are set in the Florida Constitution and can change by vote. We pull the current figures from your county property appraiser for the house you are buying, rather than printing numbers here that could go out of date.

Source: Florida Statutes §196.011 (filing by March 1) and §193.155 (assessment at just value after a change of ownership; portability).

ASSOCIATIONS AND DISTRICTS

Read the rules before you buy them.



An HOA, a condo association or a community development district can change what you pay and what you are allowed to do. Florida law gives you time to read before you are committed.

HOA communities

- The seller must give you the HOA disclosure summary before you sign. If it comes later, you have 3 days after receiving it to cancel.
- Read the covenants for what matters to you: leasing rules, pets, parking, vehicles, fences, exterior changes.
- Ask for the current dues, any special assessment, and whether the association must approve you.

Condominiums

- On a resale you receive the declaration, bylaws, rules, budget and financial statement — plus the milestone inspection summary and the structural integrity reserve study where they apply.
- You then have 7 days, not counting weekends and legal holidays, to cancel in writing.
- Underfunded reserves become special assessments. Some buildings cannot get conventional financing at all — we check before you fall for one.

CDDs

- Common in newer communities. A separate assessment on your property tax bill, on top of county taxes.
- It must be disclosed in the contract for an initial sale. Ask how much is debt repayment and how much is ongoing maintenance.

Buying to rent it out? Read the leasing rules first. Minimum lease terms, rental caps and approval requirements decide whether the numbers work at all.

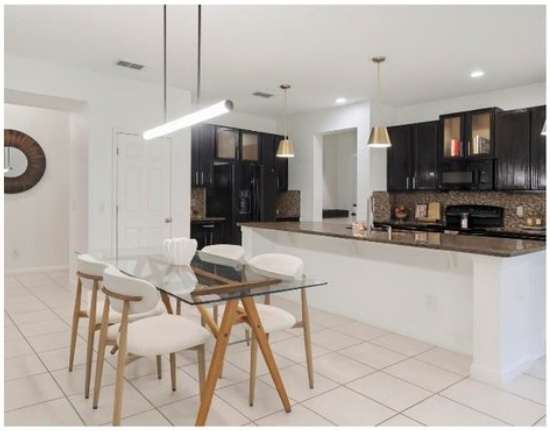
Source: Florida Statutes §720.401 (HOA disclosure), §718.503 (condo resale documents and cancellation), §190.048 (CDD disclosure).

UNDER CONTRACT

Contract to close, and where deals wobble.

Between the signed contract and the closing table is where purchases fall apart — almost always for one of five reasons. We watch all five.

1. **Financing**
   New job, new car, new credit card, a missed payment or a large unexplained deposit can end a loan in the last week.
2. **Inspection**
   It is a decision point about whether to proceed. Treat it as a second round of price haggling and you can lose the house.
3. **Insurance**
   No bound policy, no loan. This is why we quote it in the first days, not the last.
4. **Appraisal**
   If it comes in low you can renegotiate, cover the gap, or use the contract's way out. We decide together, fast.
5. **Title**
   Liens, open permits and unrecorded problems surface in the title search. The title company clears them or we hear about it early.



The final walkthrough

Just before closing. Everything works, agreed repairs are done, nothing that stays with the house has left.

WIRE FRAUD

Never wire money on instructions that arrive by email alone.

Call the title company at a number you looked up yourself, and confirm the account before you send anything. We will never email you new wiring instructions.

IF YOU ARE BUYING AS AN INVESTMENT

Most agents can't price a rental. We run them.

A buyer's agent who has never operated a rental is guessing at the rent, the vacancy and the repairs. We own and manage rentals, so the numbers come from operating them.



1. **Keep it and rent it**
   Long-term, mid-term, furnished or by the room — whichever the numbers favor for that house. We manage rentals across Central Florida, so we can run it for you.

2. **Buy it to fix**
   Price it against what it will be worth after the work, with real repair numbers. We buy and renovate houses ourselves.

3. **Buy land and build**
   We source lots for builders and investors. Slower, and a different risk profile entirely.

Rent from real comps
Leased comparables for that address and bedroom count — not an online estimate.

Insurance and taxes after the reset
Priced for you as the new owner, not copied from the listing.

The association's leasing rules
Minimum terms, caps and approvals, read before the offer.

Condition and big-ticket systems
Roof, HVAC, water heater and plumbing, with a replacement budget.

Run a deal yourself at calc.myencoreteam.com. Bring the output and we will go through the assumptions with you.

LEARNED THE HARD WAY, BY OTHER PEOPLE

Mistakes that cost buyers money.

Every one of these is avoidable, and every one of them still happens. Most are covered earlier in this guide; this is the short list to keep.

Looking before getting pre-approved

You find the house you cannot move on, and someone who did their homework buys it.

Budgeting from the seller's tax bill

It resets after the sale. Budget from the reassessed number, and file for homestead by March 1.

Getting the insurance quote last

In Florida the policy can decide whether the house works at all. Bind it before the inspection period ends.

Skipping the HOA or condo documents

Leasing rules, special assessments and reserves live in the paperwork, and the paperwork wins.

Changing anything financial under contract

No new job, car, card or large unexplained deposit until the keys are in your hand.

Waiting overnight on a house you love

In a competitive price band, overnight is a decision. It is usually the wrong one.

Trusting wiring instructions from an email

Call the title company at a number you found yourself. Every time.

Anything not in this guide, ask. If we do not know, we will tell you that instead of guessing.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

One conversation, a real budget, no pressure.

Tell us what you are solving. We will come back with a budget that includes the insurance, the taxes after they reset and any association costs, and a search built around the answers on page three. If the answer is that you should wait, rent a while longer or buy something different than you planned, that is a legitimate outcome and we will say so.

1. **Book a call**
   No cost, nothing to prepare, and nothing to sign on the first conversation.
2. **Get your plan**
   The real monthly number, the cash you will need, and the areas and homes that fit both.
3. **Tour, offer, close**
   With a team behind every step, and a broker who will tell you when to walk away.

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