

Kristin McKean & David Heckley MorningLight Properties

MorningLight Properties is a boutique family brokerage in Southern Oregon. David Heckley, principal broker has over 35 years of real estate experience. Kristin McKean, broker and daughter, has over 20 years of real estate experience. They strive to offer unparalleled real estate service to all their clients here in Southern, Oregon. Historically, they have built their business upon a strong word of mouth referral that has turned many clients into life-long customers and friends. With a strong focus on Ashland and the surrounding communities, the MorningLight team knows this area inside and out, so you can rest assured that they will help you make your next real estate transaction your best ever!

Hi Dave and Kristin, welcome back to LocalsGuide!

Thanks Sheilds! It's hard to believe another year has come and gone. It feels like I just blinked, and here we are again! It's always nice to chat with you and to reach out to our community via our annual interview and monthly column. Every month I receive feedback on our column from long term and new community members. It has been a great way for us to provide helpful information about real estate, our family, and happenings in our valley!



What's been going on with the real estate market over the past 12 months?

Well, the market just keeps powering forward! Just when I think things are calming down and we may actually have a lull in business, the phone rings and the emails fly in! Locally, we continue to see relatively low inventory and high demand. There continues to be a strong influx of people from other areas moving to the beautiful Rogue Valley! And on that same note, there are still many people living in the area that want or need to buy. So there's demand coming at us from all avenues, and the bottom line is there are just not enough houses to go around! In 2021 interest rates remained historically low, and that added fuel to the real estate fire. We have noticed a little bit of a cool down as interest rates tick up, but when the right house comes up... at the right price... in the right location, we are still seeing multiple offer situations and a very competitive market!

Kristin how have you adapted to the current demands and what has been required to do so?

As I mentioned, when a nice house comes on the market, at the right price, it gets a lot of attention and activity. You have to be the first to see it, you have to be the first to bring your clients through, and if they like it, write a strong offer! That said, often times our clients are out-of-town buyers or unable to get through the door at the drop of a hat. So, walking through a house "virtually" has been a more common trend. FaceTime walk-throughs allow our client to get a true sense of the feel and layout of a home and its neighborhood and surroundings. It's become a crucial technology tool in our business. It gives our buyers confidence in making an offer, and allows them to be more timely. For instance, I had a client recently moving up from LA on a job transfer. They were going to be here for one weekend and needed to buy asap! As we were collecting the list of houses to see that weekend, most of the listings kept going pending, and my clients were getting very nervous about how, logistically, they were going to make this happen. That Wednesday, a wonderful house came on the market in South West Medford. I made an appointment with the listing agent to virtually walk-through with my clients, and they loved it! We promptly wrote a very strong offer, and we had it accepted by the sellers the very next day. When the buyers came into town that weekend and were able to walk through in person, they loved it even more. They were grateful to be given that opportunity to jump on the house

"Kristin McKean has been an absolute pleasure to work with. My husband and I had a short timeline to buy a house and Kristin has made the entire process simple and seamless. We have heard how stressful it can be to buy a house, let alone in today's market. Kristin was great at communicating with us often and made the process worry free. She was pivotal in the entire process. We couldn't be more grateful. She will be our lifelong realtor and she should be yours too!"
~Brittney and Michael Lacey – Buyer – Medford OR

even though they weren't physically in town. I am confident that if we had waited until the weekend, they would have been out of luck.

Dave, any thoughts on how the market might look as we go through 2022?

We get this question a lot. And our answer is often the same, "if only I had a crystal ball!" Of course this question is hard to speculate. I think the overall market locally will stay strong. Even with rising interest rates, they are still incredibly low compared to the interest rates of the past. Hard to even imagine the double digit interest rates of the 1980s! When Gina and I bought our first house, we had an interest rate of 19%... and we still made money on it! And one thing to take into consideration is that the influx of buyers moving to the area are selling in areas with higher prices and are bringing more cash in hand to combat the negative impacts of rising interest rates. We have also had such a strong demand for housing in the valley for years. We simply can't build houses fast enough to accommodate the amount of buyers who want them. So for these reasons, I do expect our local market to stay strong.

Kristin, what are some of the steps you run your clients through in preparing them to buy or sell their homes?

The best thing a buyer can do is partner with the right team. And by that I mean having a trusted mortgage broker to help guide them through the loan process and to help them understand how a slight shift in interest rates can change their buying power. Having a preapproval letter from a lender prior to looking for a property is key in a market where multiple offers can be a possibility. Simultaneously, using a local real estate broker who understands and knows the market is paramount. We keep a strong pulse on the market and the availability of inventory. We know what's on the market, and we keep our eyes and ears open for new listings that haven't yet hit the market. This gives our buyers the best chance of getting into the home of their dreams. We talk about the challenges and competition in the market on the first meeting - setting real expectations, so our buyers know what it will take to win the deal.

For sellers... First and most important... Don't rely on Zillow! A true market value and accurate price is key in this market! It drives me bananas when a seller says, "But Zillow told me my house is worth 'X'!" Please stop looking at Zestimates! They are almost always wrong, in both directions. The only real way to know the worth of your home is to hire a trusted agent to help show you the correct price based on local comparable sales and one who knows where the market lies at that very moment. The market is strong and favorable for sellers with a home that is priced correctly.

Dave, what does it look like right now for investors?

It's an interesting time for investors. Rents keep rising in the valley, which is good for landlords and hard on a lot of renters. But from an investment perspective, that market is very strong and could be lucrative. That said, prices and interest rates continue to rise, so you have to invest smartly. I help our investor buyers really assess the long-term benefit of each investment property to make sure it works for their goals. In addition, it is so challenging to purchase multifamily properties because there is simply not a lot of inventory or options out there. And when something good comes on the market, expect a lot of competition. Often, we have to get creative to find off-market options for our investor clients.

Kristin, any crazy real estate story for 2021?

Yes. Always! Real estate is always a wild ride! I've been licensed for over 22 years, and every day is a little different. I'm always learning something new! It's one of the things I love most about my job! It's also one of the things that can be the most challenging; but when you love what you do, it's all worth it! I always joke that we should write a book about all the random things that happen in a real estate transaction... things you could just never come up with in your imagination. Like negotiating a snow blower into a sale on Thanksgiving Day in order to complete the offer for acceptance... or trying to get a seemingly simple septic inspection, but then no one can find the darn septic tank on the property because it was never mapped. Add into the fact that the property is out by Hyatt Lake... and it's winter! This brings on its own set of challenges... But with a little creativity and perseverance... and the use of a blow torch to melt snow, tools to take apart a deck, and a 2-ton excavator to dig out three feet of dirt... Voilà the septic tank was found! Problem solved! It's part of the job that demonstrates experience and resiliency. My goal is to support my clients, whatever it takes, and I go to great lengths to make this possible.

"Kristin has represented our family in both sales and purchases over the years. She is knowledgeable, compassionate, hardworking and very attentive to details. When the situation gets tough she figures out a way to make things work and sees the project through until the last signature. We value our relationship with Kristin and MorningLight Properties and highly recommend her for your real estate needs."

~Pam Hammond and Richard Morris – Seller/Buyer – Ashland OR

What was one of your real estate highlights from the year?

Hands-down, one of the most amazing things is watching Talent and Phoenix rebuilding! We had so many friends and family and some of our own properties go up in flames in 2020. To watch and help our clients and friends as they go through the process of rebuilding has been such a gift. To walk through a partially constructed home and watch my client's eyes light up as they talk about the granite countertops that will go here, and the skylight they added up there, and what colors they're going to paint, and to see the joy in their eyes is heartwarming and rejuvenating. From the ashes and sorrow, there is a blossoming of hope and a bright new future for so many! Grateful for the insurance companies, builders, trades people and so many more making this new construction a reality for so many.



September 2020



February 2022

Kristin, what do you love most about this business?

First, I love that I am always learning. That after 22 years of being a licensed agent there are still exciting obstacles to overcome and new challenges to turn into solutions and resolutions. This year I sold my first property with a land lease on BLM land. There were so many nuances to this transaction, and I greatly enjoyed learning about the differences from a normal purchase. I love that no two days are the same in my job...that I can get up in the morning and think I know what my day will look like, but then after a series of emails and phone calls, it can change completely. OK, that last part might be a love-hate relationship. Ha!

Second and most importantly, I love selling a dream. I don't think of real estate entirely as a business transaction. For sure it is important to recognize that this is usually the largest purchase anyone ever makes, but a house is more than a house. It's a home, where memories are created and life is lived. It is a place where you watch your kids grow up, and host holiday dinners, and laugh and cry and live. I love that I get to be a part of creating some of the most important memories in my clients' lives!

Talk about the perception that the big brokerage can do more than a small boutique firm.

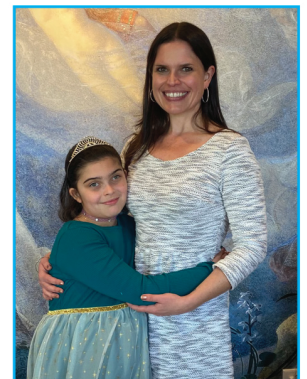
We love being a small boutique brokerage! We would have it no other way! It allows us to give our clients a level of service and support and love that we truly want without having work within the confines of a larger firm. That said, it can be frustrating when we lose the opportunity to represent a seller because of the perception that the larger brokerage has more to offer than our boutique brokerage. Ultimately, whether you are a big brokerage or small brokerage, we all do the same general things to sell a house. Between the MLS and the Internet and our personal connections, we can market a property in the exact same ways. And we have found over the years that there are a lot of people who gravitate toward a small, family owned business. We recently met with new clients, and after they chose to work with us, she mentioned that the reason why was because she felt like we would fold her into being "part of the family" and we had her best interest at heart. For us, that is the highest compliment we could receive!

"I highly recommend Kristin McKean and Dave Heckley at MorningLight Properties. Kristin and Dave were very easy to work with - - responsive, professional, warm and knowledgeable. Kristin's expertise is backed by a great team who did a tremendous job positioning our home for a profitable sale. Kristin's attention to detail and responsiveness were evident from the first call through closing. They answered all of our questions, helped us navigate all the decisions in the process and provided support from beginning to end. You are in great hands with MorningLight Properties."

~ Samantha Malloy – Seller - Ashland OR

Ok, we've talked business, now tell us what's been going on outside of real estate? Kristin?

Life continues to be so full! Not just with real estate but with everything! My daughter Kaya turned 11 last year! She's going to start middle school next year! It is wild how fast time flies. So I'm trying to soak up all the moments with her before she turns into a rotten teenager! I also continue to be very active in my Rotary club! I sit on the board, I am chair for the third year in a row for one of our largest service projects: Ashland Reads, which is a literacy project celebrating the first graders in the Ashland School District. In addition, my club has started an environmental effort, locally promoting and acquiring a grant for a community compost program with more environmental efforts to come! I was honored to recently receive a District Service Award for my efforts within Rotary. Rotary is something that continues to bring me so much pleasure and feed my soul. I guess the last big thing this year is that I made it to a new decade! I am 40 years old and it feel like the best is yet to come!



Dave?

In addition to being the patriarch of our firm and family, offering the "behind the scenes" support and connection to clients, I enjoy my swim class at the "Y", keeping in touch with friends and family, being the chief cook, spending time with our granddaughter, Kaya; watching my daughter continue to grow into a strong woman. Gina and I are "knee-deep" in managing the rebuilding process of our Talent properties and looking for the right time to get to the coast for some ocean air. My love of the farmers market remains strong and we have taken a deeper interest and made recent investments in regenerative farming to help combat climate change.



You clearly work very hard for your clients, Kristin, how do you continue at this pace?

My dad instilled in me, from a very young age, the importance of a good work/life balance! My dad always worked so hard when I was growing up, but I can distinctly remember him taking afternoons to drive over to Santa Cruz and take a run on the beach in between client meetings. I work so hard, sometimes seven days a week. But I find time to slow it down, sit with a friend, share a meal, play a game with my daughter, go for a run, enjoy a glass of wine at one of our beautiful wineries. It is important to keep your cup filled...and stop and smell the roses. That, and the fact that I love what I do so darn much, keeps me going at what sometimes looks like an insane pace.



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FEATURED LISTING



4878 HWY 66 ASHLAND OR 97520 3 Bd 2Ba 1700 Sq Ft 3.66 Acre Lot

This well maintained ranch style single level home was built in 2006. Open concept, vaulted ceiling and lots of light! Gorgeous property with forest, pasture, fenced garden and wine grapes. EFU zoning and seasonal TID rights. In addition, this property has a greenhouse, workshop, plenty of room for horses and a newer well. Seven minute drive to downtown Ashland!

LISTED AT \$725,000