

AGENT PROFILE

KRIS BERGER, BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES KOENIGRUBLOFF

It wasn't until she became a homeowner herself that Kris Berger discovered her niche in residential real estate.

"I decided I really loved it," said Berger, now an agent with Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices KoenigRubloff Realty Group in Hinsdale.

She was enjoying a career in commercial real estate when she decided to make the switch. With a new son in tow, she began helping friends find homes in the suburbs. And she helped herself to find a few, as well.

"We have rehabbed nine houses," Berger said. "The first six were before our son was 5."

Berger said she sees potential in properties, and she calls upon her background in design to bring homes up to that potential.

Serving as her own general contractor, Berger was flipping houses before it was fodder for cable TV.

One notable project was particularly reminiscent of a popular television show. When Berger's mother- and father-in-law decided to downsize, the family sent them on a 19-day trip while Berger oversaw a complete makeover of the house. While her in-laws were away, the

house was renovated, decorated and prepared for move-in.

"We even hung their clothes in the closets and the pictures on the walls," Berger said. "It was like an HGTV reveal."

Berger honed her artistic eye by earning degrees in fine art and photography, both of which she puts to use in her job as a real estate agent.

"You never know when old tools will come in handy," Berger said.

While she doesn't take the pictures herself, she said she is very particular about the photos used to market her listings.

Having grown up in Hinsdale, Berger chose to move back to her hometown to raise her family. She's owned several houses in Hinsdale and knows the market well.

She said the hottest items on the Hinsdale market right now are homes built 10 to 25 years ago. As she has done with her own houses, Berger helps clients to see how a few cosmetic changes can turn a slightly dated home into just what they are looking for.

Berger's most recent project is her own 1960s ranch, which she is transforming into a California-

style beach house. Instead of an ocean, she's installing a 65-foot pool that will allow her, husband John and their two college-age children to pursue their love of swimming.

"I'm a bit of a workaholic," Berger said.

By turning her home into a retreat, she will be able to vacation without taking time away from the job she loves.

She'll also be able to keep up on her newest way to enjoy the water — water running.

"It's just like regular running, but in water," she said. "It's so great for toning. It's an awesome exercise."

While the pool will be large, the house is decidedly smaller than the Berbers' previous houses. It's a change that Berger said fits well with the new life she and John are enjoying as empty-nesters.

"It's been really fun," she said of the couple's first year without children in the house.

And even after 23 years in the business, her life as a Realtor is still fun, too.

"It almost never feels like work," Berger said.

— by Sandy Illian Bosch



Realtor Kris Berger said many Hinsdale buyers want move-in ready houses, but she helps clients to see the potential in listings that, with a little work, could become someone's dream home. (Jim Slonoff photo)