

BOSTON HOMES

THE COMPLETE GUIDE

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HOME PORTRAIT

On the Waterfront A condo with views



Unit 904, a two-bedroom waterfront condo at the Mariner at 300 Commercial St., offers spectacular views from its multiple windows and private, wrap-around deck. It is listed at \$1.55 million.

PHOTO BY CINDY BAILEN

BY CINDY BAILEN
CORRESPONDENT

The breathtaking skyscraper and harbor views from the wraparound deck of an elegant condominium at the Mariner at 300 Commercial St. are among the most striking on Boston's waterfront. Unit 904's sunny interior is just as eye-catching, with the appeal of a New England farmhouse in a location high above the city.

Carmela Laurella of Otis & Ahearn Real Estate

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Office can represent buyer, seller

A new Massachusetts law, which went into effect July 1, allows different real estate agents in the same office to represent a home seller and homebuyer in the same transaction.

In the past, traditional brokers represented the sellers; homebuyers were on their own. The new law allows a real estate company to "designate" one agent to represent the seller and another agent within the same office to represent the buyer of the same house.

A similar law was first proposed in 1977 and was defeated. Today, 27 other states have a designated agency law.

This type of legislation gives consumers an option in the way they want to be served, according to David Drinkwater of Scituate, a past president of the Massachusetts Association of Realtors and chairman of its agency implementation committee for several years.

"Fifteen years ago, the majority of buyers did not even understand the concept of buyer

agency," having someone represent them only, he said.

'This law tries to expand the opportunity in the marketplace to work with the broker who best suits your objectives.'

*David Drinkwater,
past MAR president*

"But buyers realized, especially those who were transferred and had buyer agency in

their part of the country, that they want their own representation too."

Buyer agency means a broker exclusively represents the buyer, while traditional agency, when seller agents are legally responsible to represent only the seller but often work with buyers who do not get that same legal representation, can be confusing to buyers who do not realize their "broker" really isn't working for them.

Most real estate is handled locally, and both buyers and sellers want to work with people they know, said Drinkwater. "The personal relationship is the driving force when working to buy or sell a house, and having some consistency on both sides of the buying and selling side has been very critical to many consumers.

"Sellers say a broker helped them sell their house and don't want to give them up (when they want to buy again). Why should we dis-

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In South Boston, two penthouses One renovated in 2002, the other in 2005



Unit 3, a two-bedroom penthouse at 12 Swallow St. in South Boston, features decks of each bedroom as well as a roof deck. It is listed at \$415,000.

PHOTOS BY PENELOPE LANE

BY PENELOPE LANE
CORRESPONDENT

Two penthouse condominiums that are currently on the market in South Boston offer some interesting similarities and some distinct differences. Both feature loft-style open floor plans for the living/dining/kitchen spaces, and both have roof decks with wonderful views.

Unit 3 at 22 Gates St. in the Thomas Park neighborhood occupies the top floor of a grand Second Empire Victorian building with its distinctive slate mansard roof and turreted dormers. Unit 3 at 12 Swallow St., just a few blocks away on a quiet block-long street, is housed in a more modest building. Glenn Forger of Olde Forge Realty is marketing both properties. The two-plus bedroom, two-bath penthouse at 22 Gates St. is priced at \$559,000; the two-bedroom, one-bath penthouse at 12 Swallow St. is \$415,000.

At the top of the skylit staircase at 22 Gates St., one enters a large

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Unit 3 at 22 Gates St., South Boston, is a two-plus-bedroom penthouse within a grand Victorian home that was converted to condos this year. It is listed at \$559,000.

Spacious waterfront condo features wraparound deck

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is marketing this fabulous home for \$1.55 million.

In the entry hall the oak floorboards are wider than usual, and crown moldings enhance the ceiling. To the right, a charming galley kitchen has gleaming white cabinetry, a white sink with prep section, laminate and mahogany counters and up-to-date appliances. The Bosch dishwasher, Whirlpool smoothtop range and side-by-side GE refrigerator are opposite a small breakfast bar conveniently located to provide a bird's eye view of the skyline. Adding to the kitchen's convenience is an additional door leading into the living room.

The open living and dining areas have a gracious look and allow for a very flexible floor plan. According to Laurella, new owners would be able to configure the space almost any way they want, since none of the walls are weight-bearing and two columns provide all the necessary support.

Traditionally furnished, with the current owner's Oriental rugs adding warmth and color, the home's living room is arranged around a fireplace with a marble hearth and surround and a white painted mantel. "Just a

few floors in this building have fireplaces," Laurella notes. Two sets of built-in shelves flank the fireplace. These are perfect as display space for crystal or china, or they could accommodate books and family photographs. The dining room, with its long wall, is a showcase for art. There is a sculpture niche on each of the other walls. Custom overhead lighting can be arranged to accent artwork or architectural features.

Of course, the most salient feature of these light-filled rooms is the view. Two sets of sliding doors lead out to the private wraparound deck that hugs the building. Opaque, curved greenhouse windows are positioned over the sliders, and the interior space around them creates a little solarium in each room. "They're warm in winter and provide a shield from the sun in summer," Laurella says.

This unit has two generous bedrooms on opposite sides of the home. Either one of them could be the master bedroom; the distance between the two bedrooms increases the feeling of privacy. One bedroom, which currently serves as a guest room, has walls painted the softest shade of blue, echoing the color of the sky and



Glass sliders in the living room open onto the wraparound deck. The curved greenhouse glass above the sliders creates a solarium-like space.

the water. Again, sliders lead out to the terrace. Across the hall, the full guest bathroom sports a combination tub and shower and a vanity sink. Mahogany cabinetry, rich paisley wall covering and a floor of composite marble give this bath a sumptuous feel. Next to the bath is a utility closet holding a stacked Maytag washer and dryer. A triple closet in the hall provides ample storage space.

The master bedroom on the opposite side of the unit evokes comfort with grasscloth walls, built-in bookshelves and access to the terrace via sliding doors. The view from here includes the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge right in the middle of the vista. "You should see it at night," says Laurella. The room's ensuite bath in white is a relaxing sanctuary. Like the guest bath, it has a vanity sink, a combination tub/shower and composite marble flooring.

In addition to the unit's amazing terrace, there is outdoor space on the 10th floor, on the building's common roof deck. Included with the sale of the unit is a deeded indoor parking space in the building's garage, with valet service from 6 to 10 in the morning.

The Mariner, like many of the buildings on the Boston's waterfront, has a rich history. Built in the early



From the terrace, the views are striking, no matter what time of day or night. In the distance is the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge.

1900s, the building was once a chocolate factory, and later, it was occupied by the old Gerard freezer plant. The building was converted to condominiums in the mid-1980s.

Unit 904 is a unique residence, pleasingly designed and offering dramatic views of the water and the city. Admiring the view from the terrace, Laurella says, "To me, this is a little strip of Gold Coast in Boston, from Christopher Columbus Park on down."



The dining room features crown molding and oak flooring and a long wall to display a large painting.

PHOTOS BY CINDY BAILEN



The galley kitchen boasts white cabinetry and appliances and contrasting laminate and mahogany counters. It also includes a breakfast bar.



The living room is spacious, and built-in bookcases flank the fireplace with its marble surround and hearth.

COURTESY PHOTO / OTIS & AHEARN

DETAILS

Address: The Mariner, 300 Commercial St., Unit 904, Waterfront

BR/BA: Two bedrooms, two baths

Age: Early 1900s; 1984; 1992

Price: \$1.55 million

Size: 1,530 square feet

Taxes: \$8,258 (FY 2005; includes residential exemption)


Condo fee: \$1,477 per month

Features of building: Early 20th century warehouse converted to 105 condominiums in the mid-1980s. Ten-story, elevator building with professional management by Barkan Management, concierge and common roof deck. Included with the sale is one deeded parking space in the building's garage.

Features of unit: Charming, spacious condo at The Mariner with spectacular city and water views and access to private wrap-around deck from almost every room. Hardwood floors, crown moldings, greenhouse windows, sliders, marble fireplace and many built-ins. Generous closet space, laundry in unit. Condo fee includes water, sewer, master insurance, security, elevator, exterior maintenance and snow removal.

Close by: North End restaurants and shops, Faneuil Hall, Financial City Hall Plaza, Government Center, Boston Harbor, Access to MBTA green, blue, and orange lines, Logan Airport, and by car to Storrow Drive, the Mass. Turnpike and Route 93.

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 This property may be seen by appointment.

