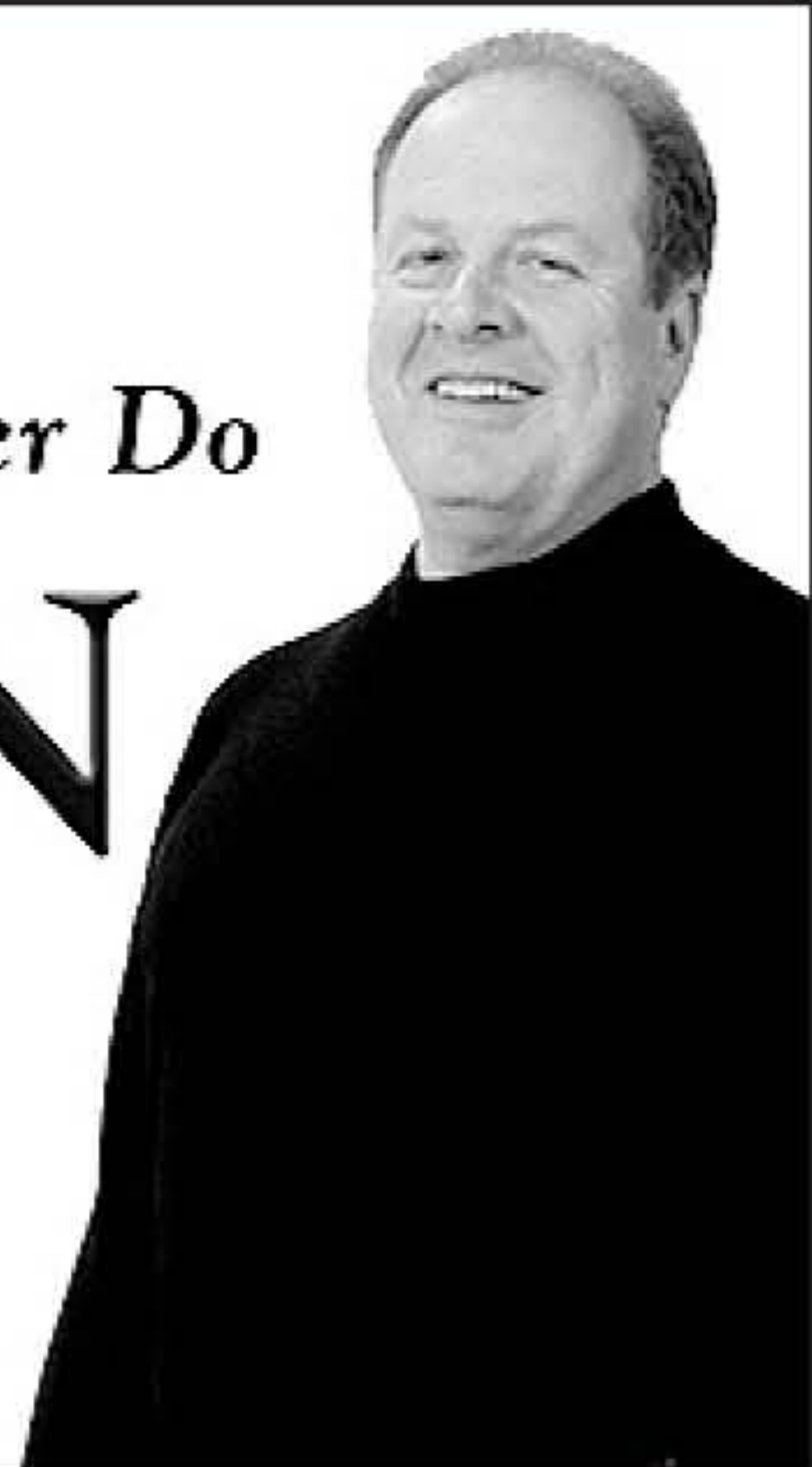




Selling Real Estate... There's Nothing Else I'd Rather Do

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By Jonathan Widran

For many artists and producers, one of the distinct benefits of the ProTools era of recording has been the simplicity and convenience of creating and working in a home studio environment. Established commercial facilities continue to thrive, but for major players and indie up-and-comers alike, these smaller, personalized facilities offer the perfect mix of state-of-the-art equipment and the casual comforts of home. Both literally and figuratively, nobody understands the value of home studios better than Brian Bord, a 40-year real estate veteran who moved to Los Angeles from Great Britain in 1989. Just as the digital revolution was starting to happen, he hooked up with a young producer who was looking to buy a bigger house in which to build a new studio.

As he tells it, "one good deed led to another," and 17 years later, Brian — whose Encino office is affiliated with Coldwell Banker — has created an incredible niche market in Southern California, matching clients' recording needs and specs with the best available properties. These days, he estimates that 70 percent of his clientele are in the music or entertainment business.

"When I first got to town," he recalls, "I was lucky enough to meet people in L.A. connected to the recording business, and have worked hard to develop this niche market for myself. It's all been about selling myself and dedicating myself 120 percent to providing what I call Rolls Royce service to the clients. Music people tend to work round the clock, with their day starting at noon and ending at three a.m. There have been occasions where I've had to go get contracts signed at three or four a.m., but I accept that as part of the job. It's really a people-oriented business and I've found that if clients like you, you've made a connection for life.

The music industry has changed over the years and Brian has made his adjustments to the transformation. "The trend has gone from big commercial studios dominating the landscape to top artists working out of high-end homes," Brian adds. "Some like to work at their

own home facilities, but others are just as likely to build studios in upscale homes, or convert garages or guest houses, and rent them out for specific amounts of time."

Brian says that with all the digital technology, many producers don't need the big sound rooms they used to, unless they're bringing in a full band or large ensemble. A lot of artists take two to three months or more to complete an album and, he has found, that many prefer to do it in a home environment. If they are in from out of town, this eliminates the hassles and limitations of a hotel room. They can bring in their personal entourages, including chefs, and even bring the husband/wife and kids for some family vacation time.

Like any other specialized sales, Brian's goal is to seek out properties that match a client's specific set of criteria. He finds out how much of the home is for their personal use, and how much will be dedicated to the studio operation. Specification challenges include finding space with square footage that will perfectly fit their console and array of equipment (99 percent of people who buy an existing studio don't purchase the old stuff), sound issues (muffling, sound-proofing walls and the proximity of the nearest neighbors), and construction logistics. Brian owns a small moving van that he loans to clients who need to move equipment from one space to another. A photo, plus all current listings, is available at www.brianbord.com.

Interestingly, Brian estimates that 80 percent of the properties he sells have guest houses that clients want to turn into home studios, and only 15 percent of his home sales have studios already built in. "My job is basically putting the jigsaw puzzle together," he says. "I start with a set of parameters and then I tie it into reality. Often, they start out shooting for the moon, and it's my job to bring them back to a logical ground level. I know I've achieved my goal when the clients I serve keep the referrals coming."

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