

Agent Spotlight: Lynn Van Norman

BY SHANNON BULLEN

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INTERNATIONAL REALTY

Lynn Van Norman is more than just a real estate advisor, she is also the eco-friendly realtor. Using her background as a naturalist and her roles in the Cape Cod community, she helps her clients not only find their dream property on the water but how to maintain its beauty and be stewards of the land. Recently rated among the top nine percent of Realtors on Cape Cod, Lynn takes the sometimes daunting task of buying or selling a home and turns it into an exciting journey that eases her clients into their next chapters.



You are known as the eco-friendly realtor, what does that mean to you and your clients?

Not all of us are lucky enough to say that we live on water view property, but all of us here on Cape Cod, from Bourne to Provincetown, can proudly say that we live on waterfront property. My grandmother, a long-time realtor from Chatham, liked to remind me that the first line of the Realtor Code of Ethics is “Under all is the land.” My parents have that as a sign on their barn in Orleans. I grew up following that code throughout my life as a gardener, chef, and naturalist but now, as a realtor myself, I take that line one step deeper by saying “Under all is the water.” While our homes do of course sit on the land, we all must embrace the fact that that land sits upon the water. And here on Cape Cod, where our sole source aquifer is under serious threat from overdevelopment, overwhelmed storm drains and road runoff, leaching septic systems, and careless landscaping that allows excess fertility and runoff to damage local habitats as well as the home itself, I take this very seriously. Whether I am representing a buyer or a seller, the first thing I establish is their deep understanding of the role they have or will play as responsible stewards of this beautiful, yet incredibly vulnerable, place we call home. We must all strive to go beyond mere maintenance, to step deeper into the role of ecosystem strengthening and rehabilitation by embracing the challenges of climate change and ecosystem degradation right outside our front doors. While we cannot change the climate above our heads, we can change the climate below our feet. If my clients learn to embrace this fact, that is what makes them great stewards of their slice of real property.

Do you have any tips on how people can be eco-friendly home buyers and owners?

Environmental stewardship is not a given, it is a choice we must all make. Even the smallest actions can make a huge difference when it comes to home resilience, and overall ecosystem health and strengthening. This is because neighbors see the enhanced beauty, safety, and curb appeal as a result of simple actions then they are likely to follow the same path. And this becomes an eco-friendly community, rather than just a house. Actions such as: managing downspout runoff through the soil rather than over it; choosing to limit the use, if indeed not eliminate, the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides; decreasing the size of lawns and replacing lower sections near roads or waterways with terraced, runoff collecting, pollinator-friendly meadows; learning how to better manage fallen leaves as overwintering habitat for native insects, composting, or mulch amongst native shrubs. These are all simple acts that build ecosystem resilience as well as home beauty, structural integrity, safety, and an overall pride of place. Whether you are looking to buy or sell your home, in these days of environmental consciousness, these actions are vital. People should look at the outside, not just the inside.

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Have you noticed any trends recently relating to eco-friendly homes or home-buyers?

There is a welcome and growing understanding of the need to increase pollinator and wildlife habitat along with new construction and home renovation. A growing desire to plant low-maintenance, native landscapes that focus on building soil quality and moisture retention. A deeper understanding of the need to limit the use of fertilizer. The spraying of lawn and mosquito pesticides does more harm than good, especially when it comes to our songbird populations who rely on those insects for food. All these environmental trends coexist with curb appeal, privacy, peace, and security of the physical home. This makes my role vital as a real estate advisor who can also be an ecological advisor.



How did you first get involved or interested in sustainability and what role does it play in your personal life?

I have been a careful observer of nature all my life, all around the world. Whether on land as a gardener and naturalist, or on the sea as an angler, I thrive when I am learning. Recently, it has been through my partnership with my husband and his work across the globe as a regenerative agroecologist and agricultural educator that my scientific understanding has truly deepened. We work as a team both here and around the world, on his ecological restoration efforts and during home assessments, and exterior stagings. When someone engages with me as a buyer or seller agent, I bring all this background

with me. Together we look deeply into the simple ways to make the outside of the home safe, beautiful, and nourishing to the surrounding wildlife habitat just as the inside does the same for, us humans.

What do you love most about your role as a real estate advisor?

Forming deep relationships with people who find themselves within one of the most daunting, overwhelming, and exciting times of their lives and need a calm, reassuringly, knowledgeable, and savvy guide on their journey. Taking that 'first look' walk with a new client to truly see what excites them or scares them and turn any anxiety or problem they see into an opportunity. Real estate transactions are a journey; but the journey, IS the destination. And that process, while daunting, should be embraced from a position of confidence that the answers lie within. My role is to help people feel confident and eager in their decisions.

What are some of your favorite local hobbies, activities, or organizations that you participate in?

I give back to the community through education and use my home as a showcase for ecological solutions that you can see in action. I have hosted events and am a member of The Brewster Ponds Coalition, Orleans Pond Coalition, Orleans Conservation Trust, Pollinator Pathway Cape Cod, and Wellfleet Garden Club. I volunteer at my local church in the kitchen, garden, and clothing swap. I love tending to my garden giving away flower arrangements and dividing perennials to share with fellow garden enthusiasts.

What do you love most about where you live and work? Any favorite spots in the Brewster and Cape area?

To live on Cape Cod, year-round, is to embrace the joys and beauty of all her seasons. It is not just a place of pretty spring flowers; it is a place of brown grasses blowing in the winter wind. I find that the dormant season, where the landscape is at rest, is the most beautiful for that is the time our aquifer is recharged, much like it is for all of us who are so active during the growing seasons. Be it a cold and rainy day in February or a hot and dry day in July, the sun will always rise and set over water. The beauty of every Cape Cod town can easily be found if we all take a moment to truly see what we are looking at. When I say, "Under all is the water," I truly mean it. Clean water is what brings people here and makes them want to stay. But if that water becomes dirty, it is what will make people want to leave. Water can be kept clean, through our individual and collective actions. But once it becomes polluted, it is a problem beyond our grasp.

What My Clients Say

"You will never find a better Realtor than Lynn!! Not only is she the nicest and most caring person you will meet, but she works incredibly hard, every single day, until you find a house you are looking for. With Lynn's help, we found the right house for us! We then retained Lynn to sell our house, and again she has been amazing!! If you don't hire Lynn, you are missing out - she's the best in the business."

—Karen and Neil H.

"Lynn Van Norman is an exceptional realtor. We have bought and sold multiple personal and business properties on the Cape, and recently have had the opportunity to work with her with excellent results. She was also able to locate and close on a unique property for friends of ours. Lynn goes beyond the usual copy and paste of MLS listings, and will research aggressively based on your needs. She is very pragmatic and has a contractor's sense of the quality of a listing, so she can give you a honest assessment of the value of a property. Having grown up on the Cape she is extensively familiar with all of the neighborhoods. Lynn takes the time to listen and fully understand both you and your property's needs without judgment. I highly recommend her both as a buyer's and a seller's broker. She has integrity and is hardworking."

—Carol P.

"As a first time home buyer, I was in way over my head. Luckily I found Lynn, who made the entire process easy and stress free. In a tough market, she got me exactly what I needed and I can't say enough good things about the entire experience."

—Daniel S.

"We enjoyed our experience working with Lynn. We found she truly listened to what we wanted (or what we thought we wanted!). She cared deeply that we found the perfect home for our family and went the extra mile. Lynn will work tirelessly to ensure you find your dream home!"

—Amy M.

My Value Propositions

- Become your trusted real estate professional for life by providing exceptional service.
- Provide local knowledge and share the natural beauty of Cape Cod and all of its ecosystems.
- Search tirelessly across Cape Cod for your dream home.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity throughout the entire home buying process.
- Provide timely communication of all necessary details.
- Negotiate diligently on your behalf. Maintain a positive attitude at all times.
- Educate myself every day by following local news and the real estate market.
- Share all current data in order to make your real estate journey successful.

I truly enjoy being a Realtor®, assisting clients in finding their next, forever or vacation home is the greatest part of my job. Receiving testimonials and positive feedback after our time together is an added bonus. Let me put my expertise to work for you.

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30

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500+

Local Agents

3,900+

Clients Served

1,075

Global Affiliate Offices

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Lynn Van Norman

REALTOR®, ABR®, SRES®

RATED AMONG THE TOP 9% OF REALTORS® ON CAPE COD

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