



Money Well Spent Power Range

WHO Kathleen MacDonald, 47, Thousand Oaks, California

WHAT Thermador Pro Grand Dual-Fuel Range

HOW MUCH \$10,000, plus \$4,000 for the hood

WHY Even when it's just her husband and teenage son for dinner, the six burners, two ovens and titanium griddle make MacDonald feel like top chef in her own four-star bistro. She'd long coveted a friend's high-end range but couldn't get past the price—until she and her husband remodeled. MacDonald likes to entertain crowds and invite soldiers from a nearby base. This Thanksgiving, she'll ask eight or 10 (up from four, pre-range), with a turkey in each oven and six pots bubbling on top. "Working with this range is like dancing. It just flows." —KATE ASHFORD

Q+A

Unreal Estate: Buy? Sell? Scream?

In her witty memoir, *Diary of a Real Estate Rookie*, Alison Rogers, 41, chronicles her trial by fire in the New York residential market. Now a wise and wily veteran (she's an agent at DG Neary Realty in Manhattan and runs the housing Web site frontporchllc.com), Rogers tells *More* how we can best maneuver through this uncertain market.

Lots of empty nesters want to sell, downsize and change lifestyles. Is that still a good move?

It's great for marriages, but not always great for saving money. Huge numbers of homeowners are moving from suburbs to cities for the restaurants and museums. But in many cities, such as San Francisco and Chicago, prices are still high, so the small apartments cost as much as the big houses they're selling in the burbs. I say do it for the adventure.

If prices are heading down, is it time to buy a second home?

It's probably a good investment; the demand for vacation homes is not going away: We all want to live near the beach. But for the same reason, don't think you're going to get a huge bargain now.

If local prices are soft, should you wait—if you can—to sell?

Most midlife owners have built up tons of equity over the years. A recent dip won't wipe that out. So don't wait in hopes of a four percent price swing.

Many postcollege kids need help with a first down payment. Do you write that check?

Absolutely. Couples can now give up to \$24,000 a year without incurring any gift taxes. Plus, a bigger down payment might get those kids a better rate—so it's a 30-year gift. —DANIEL MCGINN