



AZREIA Advantage: Land Sales Expert

The Niche Will Get You Rich



by
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As an AZREIA member, investor and Realtor, I can attest that a niche will, in fact, make you some pretty good money. A little over two years ago, I was new to real estate investing and trying to learn and make sense of the real estate market of 2005. I took some classes, got licensed and bought a couple of houses. Then I took a class at the Arizona School of Real Estate and Business taught by Stan Strom of Acres4U Land & Development, entitled "Vacant Land as an Investment". This is where I discovered my true niche.

What caught my attention right away was the concept of the five-split. Short version: Buy a big piece of land, break it up into smaller pieces and sell them for double the price (per acre) of the big piece. Of course, it is a little more complicated than that. You may need to bring in power, water and other utilities or need to install roads and culverts, etc. But overall, I found the concept works exceptionally well. Not having been gifted with the virtue of patience, the ability to sell for a profit without waiting for the market was a big advantage to me. I am able to create, rather than wait.

So my first niche is *land*, or more specifically, *rural land*. There is a world of difference between an acre of vacant land in downtown Phoenix and rural acreage. I chose to focus exclusively on one area with great promise and learn everything I could to become an expert in that area. This has allowed me to be involved in the purchase and sale of over 2500 acres in Willcox, Arizona.

Now I have another niche: *vineyard land*. You can read the story about my first land deal on my website www.arizonalandbaron.com. The land just happened to be across the street from a vineyard. I saw the classified ad in my head "Across from a vineyard". I figured that was more appealing than "Across from some cows". As it turns out, it has been a very effective marketing strategy.

There are very few pieces of land with all of the necessary ingredients to be suitable for growing wine grapes. I have learned quite a bit about the Arizona vineyard industry since then and, in fact, have created a publication called *Arizona Vines & Wines* that I distribute all over the state. It can be downloaded at www.arizonavinesandwines.com. As you will read, Willcox is the center of activity for new vineyards, being designated as one of the prime locations in the state of Arizona to fulfill the necessary conditions for growing superior wine grapes. When famous winemaker Dick Erath purchased 200 acres there, it really put Willcox on the radar screen in the viticulture community.

Within the Willcox area, or more appropriately, the Sulpher Springs Valley, there is a lot of land. Some has water; some does not. Some has the appropriate soil types and Ph balance; some does not. Some is in high frost risk zones; some is in low frost risk zones. Some has good stable soil; some has fissures. Some has legal access; some looks like it has legal access and does not. I could

go on, but you probably get the point. Land is not an area to go treading without an experienced expert in the local market and by becoming the expert in Willcox I have become an asset for investors who want to find a great long term investment or for a winery looking for some land to plant grapes.

The point is that land values are based on supply and demand. There is a very low supply of good vineyard land and there is growing interest in growing wine grapes in the Sulpher Springs Valley. Prices here today are from \$7,000 to \$10,000 per acre for good vineyard land. Compare that to Napa Valley at \$250,000 to \$350,000 per acre. It may never reach those levels here, but I believe there is still a lot of upside potential.

The thing about a niche is that it is a special area outside of the overall market. Would you believe there is actually a shortage of housing right now in Willcox? That is quite a contrast to the current market in Phoenix. All real estate is local, hence the niche. Will it make you rich?



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