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Odd New Home Buying Trend Might Creep You Out

This out of the box home buying trend could save you from buying the wrong house.



Ever wish you could test-drive a house before you buy it?

A new trend in real estate is encouraging potential buyers to do just that. They're getting the opportunity to spend quality time in the home before putting a penny down. It might sound a little odd, but it can also help you make a more informed decision — and possibly save you from buying the wrong house.

In the accompanying episode of *Destination Home*, we follow Roy Berenholtz, a New York anesthesiologist, who tests out this strategy.

Berenholtz is interested in the one-bedroom, East Harlem apartment in New York City shown in the video. But before he decides to make an offer, the realtor is letting him and other serious buyers spend the day or night in the apartment to put it under some extra scrutiny. Berenholtz jumped at the chance.

"You can't get better than having the opportunity to try it out before you actually [put in an offer] and move in," he says.

Limor Neshar is the New York realtor behind this selling strategy, and it's catching on in other markets. Cities like in Santa Rosa, Fla., Harvey Cedars, N.J., and Colorado Springs, Colo., are boasting “try before you buy” options, allowing buyers to preview the home before contracts are signed.

In this case the apartment’s sellers handed over their keys, so Berenholtz had the entire apartment to himself for 12 hours. And after exploring the home without the pressure of a realtor around, we sat down with Berenholtz for a debriefing. (Watch the video above to find out what he really thought of the apartment.)

The experience, Berenholtz says, was invaluable in helping him come to a final decision. "Living there for a few hours made me realize the fine details that I would not have picked up on when coming in for a 10-minute viewing in an open house."

Berenholtz and others like him may be dodging real estate bullets with this “try before you buy” approach, but was the hassle of the visit worthwhile for the realtor and the sellers? According to Neshar, "Especially if you have a unique product, you might get a better price or even a faster sale."