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# BROKER★AGENT<sup>TM</sup>

magazine

## Rick Miner

broker/agent of the month



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# Rick Miner:

by Dana Kehr  
photography by Ken Blarjeske,  
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broker/agent  
of the month

## “No Duck—No Glory”

You may have read about him before—maybe even visited his website and seen those cute little duck feet at [www.duckin.com](http://www.duckin.com)— but nothing really prepares you for an actual visit with “The Duckman”—Rick Miner—one of the top REALTORS® for Coldwell Banker Bain for years running...or rather, should we say “paddling.”

His ready smile and friendly, casual style immediately put him in rapport with visitors who may later—even years later—become his valued clients.


Together—Rick and Joyce Miner are successful for many reasons but foremost because they were bold enough to do something a little unusual to stand out in a crowded business.

With their famous Rubber Duck—they created a memorable brand that is well-known and noticeable in the vast sea of real estate marketing.

“I wanted to be the first on the internet with a popular website,” Rick said during a recent interview in his floating home and office on Lake Union in Seattle. “My goal was to produce a website that would be fun, original, creative, rich with photography, unique and entertaining. All the ingredients of a successful TV show.”

### Getting Started

Back in 1992, when Rick made the transition from successful film and TV producer and director to real estate sales, he drew on his background and experience to launch his new career.

A few years later, he traded his film producing talents to become a creative director of his own real estate website. With Yahoo and Amazon and other catchy, wacky new names in the marketplace—Rick wanted to join in the fun. Hence, the web-footed— [duckin.com](http://www.duckin.com).

“I felt that websites would be vital to audiences searching for homes, so not long after I got [www.duckin.com](http://www.duckin.com) up and quackin’ on the internet, I went to a Coldwell Banker national convention in San Diego,” Rick continued. “I attended an Internet seminar that was packed with other REALTORS® eager to learn how to brand and market on the Net. At that session, I asked Michael Russer, who is an internationally recognized Internet marketing guru and trainer known as ‘Mr. Internet’ a question about search engine optimization. I had never met him before and when he asked me to identify my website, I yelled out ‘[www.Duckin.com](http://www.Duckin.com).’ With his microphone, he said, ‘If you are the Duckman—then you are a pioneer in this business.’”

“That certainly was a confidence builder,” said Rick. “For me, it was a turning point. Mr. Internet continued to encourage us to be bold and brave.”

Later Russer would write in *REALTOR® Magazine*: “Rick Miner and his wife, Joyce are the branding geniuses behind the tremendously successful [Duckin.com](http://www.duckin.com)...” And, he confirmed that in a second article in *REALTOR® Magazine* when he encouraged other professionals to “Take a cue from [www.duckin.com](http://www.duckin.com)—one of the best-branded sales associate sites on the net.”

There was another Michael who also had an influence on Rick’s transition from successful producer and director to successful real estate businessman.

“Michael E. Gerber—author of the famous book *The E-Myth Revisited*—also was important in my development as a business entrepreneur,” Rick said. “I attended one of his seminars and that really helped me get my ducks in a row in developing a successful small business plan.”

“Over the years, we’ve worked hard and spent tons of money marketing and branding [Duckin.com](http://www.duckin.com) into a real estate buzz word. It’s been fun; it’s very different; and in the beginning, it was a bit risky—but time and success has taught us to trust the power of the duck. We believe ‘No Duck, No Bucks.’”

“The [Duckin](http://www.duckin.com) brand is a perfect fit for my style and personality,” Rick continued.

**“Duckin out” on Lake Union, Seattle Wash.**



"Friendly; full of humor; creative; original; one of a kind; distinctive; happy; colorful... and entertaining with a capital E. Some have said that I'm still in the entertainment business. The look and feel comes to me naturally."

## Everybody Loves the Duck

"From VIP's to little kids... who doesn't love the rubber ducky?" Rick asked.

"Our clients seem to love it and they do embrace it. I get calls and emails from all over the world from people I haven't met who tell me they love our duck. What's fun is to have our friends, clients, kids and E-strangers smile when they see the yellow ducky or enjoy using duck lingo. Usually by the second email, they will try to out quack me. I'm even planning on publishing an audience participation 'DUCKtionary.'"

Rick has been a longtime top producer with Coldwell Banker Bain—the largest single-ownership residential real estate company in the Pacific Northwest. Coldwell Banker is the largest real estate company in the world and the largest seller of luxury homes in North America.

"I appreciate the strength of their local, national and international brands," Rick said. "I believe they add tremendous value to my marketing and personal brand."

Rick is Coldwell Banker Bain's number two listing and sales associate in the Greater Seattle Metropolitan Area. He is a member of Coldwell Banker's "International President's Elite" group. That puts him in the top three percent of nearly 56,000 Coldwell Banker associates in North America.

He is also an Exceptional Properties Specialist, a Certified Residential Specialist (CRS), a Certified E-Professional (E-Pro), and a Coldwell Banker Previews International Specialist.

## What it Takes to Succeed

Rick credits his success to five key principles that he follows:

- Providing exceptional service
- Being 100 percent available
- Highly-tuned people skills
- Experienced negotiating skills
- Innovative marketing talents

"When I was a Hollywood producer, I worked eight days a week," Rick quipped.

"Now that I'm in real estate—I only work seven days a week. It's great—I've gained a full day." Rick is often asked what came first, the duck or the webbed feet?

One day about ten years ago, he hit on the idea of using the rubber duck to enhance some photos he wanted to use in selling a waterfront home.

He had jumped into the water to get a shot of the home with a ten dollar waterproof camera—but was unhappy with the dark colors of the water. He wanted something brighter and more colorful to catch the eye. "I needed a prop," Miner said. "And the idea of a rubber duck hit me."

## "Duckography Moment"

So, back into the water, this time with a second disposable camera and a rubber ducky—and the rest is, shall we say, marketing history in the real estate business in Seattle.

Although the initial emphasis of his business was on listing and selling residential homes and condominiums, the duck in the water inspired him to find the perfect niche... waterfront, waterview, houseboats and other creative nests. Rick says his real estate business zoomed far ahead of the flock.

"Some people think all we do is sell waterfront and houseboats. But, we wouldn't even be on the charts if we only sold homes on or at the water's edge." Rick continued.

"We sell quality homes throughout the Greater Puget Sound region. And, although the rubber duck is a very memorable marketing brand; it is our commitment to quality service and follow through that most people want and appreciate."

## Keys to Success

"I love my work, it is my life. And why shouldn't I want to work all the time? This is what makes me happy." Rick continued. "I like everyone. I think you have to have a passion for the business. You also need a sense of humor, and when slow times happen, you have to let them just roll off your back."

"Like any job where you are successful, you have to have a talent for it," Rick continued. "I didn't know I had that talent until I did it. I didn't know I was born to be a REALTOR®."

Rick's philosophy is to put yourself out there "and it will come back to you."

## A Time for Growth

When he moved to the Northwest from California, he found his soon-to-be-wife—Joyce riding up and down in an elevator in a Condo building near Lake Union where they both lived at the time.

Now, they live on a floating home on Lake Union that is their World Wide Duckin Headquarters. Across the lake, a drive or short boat ride away is their Coldwell Banker Bain office. So, their lives are a perfect blend of work and fun.





### **“Paddling around in the Tax-deduction”**

Joyce’s, real estate career started eight years ago, changing her 25-year career from being a Certified Gemologist and selling high-end jewelry—to selling luxury homes and residential real estate.

Also joining the Duckin team ten years ago was Kelly Hatchel. Rick does 99 percent of the showings, listing presentations and negotiations and is the consummate Director-Producer...Top Duck.

Joyce is Vice President and Chief Financial Officer managing the business and accounting. Being in charge of the buck\$ is a role that Joyce loves.

Kelly, is Creative-Director and the webmaster, Adobe Photoshop artist and New Media Developer. The trio works like birds of a feather.

“We like to establish trust with our prospective clients,” Rick explained. “When you work with us, you make a new friends—whether you like it or not.”

### **The Value of Team...**

Friendship means a lot to our team... as it did in 2001 when Joyce was suddenly diagnosed with Leukemia.

To complicate matters for her, doctors told her she also had a rare Philadelphia chromosome, which caused her chromosomes to act in a way that would prohibit traditional chemotherapy from bringing long-term remission. A stem cell transplant was Joyce’s only hope for beating the cancer.

“We were devastated at the time,” Rick recalled. “What helped get us through this was a personal website that Kelly and I produced with Joyce being the superstar patient. Family, and friends could keep up with the progress we were making in our battle with cancer.” Daily, the website included progress reports and photos—and may have been one of the first “blogs” on the internet.

Friends and loved ones provided help and support in many ways... the doctors at The Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center

performed their medical miracles. Everyone was positive and upbeat—and eventually the cancer went into remission and the stem cell transplant was a success.

Today, Joyce is cancer free and she helps other people facing transplants by volunteering at the University of Washington Medical Center, the Leukemia Lymphoma Society, and the Blood and Bone Marrow Transplant Information Network.

This year, Joyce was honored to be the co-chair of the Hutch Holiday fundraising gala for the Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center. This is one of the largest fundraisers of its kind in the country. “We are honored to be taking part in the Fred Hutchison Center’s goal to find a cure for cancer,” Joyce said.

### **What’s Next?**

Rick anticipates business will continue to be strong for them in the coming years.

And, he feels his biggest marketing challenge is to let people know that they sell all kinds of residential real estate—not just waterfront properties.

Rick is looking forward to next year when they will be introducing major web site updates. It will have a new look and feel—but Rick assures all that the duck won’t be thrown out with the bath water. Visitors to the revised site soon will enjoy high definition home search and other new media enhancements that will pop to the surface.

“People contact us because they’ve seen our duck on the website and they naturally assume we have a sense of humor,” Rick said. “And, they’d be right.”

Even though Rick and Joyce may seem to be larger than life, they are really down-to-earth, positive role models and they never take anything for granted. They know and appreciate that they are very lucky ducks in business and in life.

Whether it’s fair or “fowl” in the Northwest, clients understand that the Duckin.com team produces powerful real estate results. Rick’s marketing efforts in selling waterfront, luxury homes, urban retreats, and floating homes—from cottages to castles in all price ranges—along with the quality and world-class service they provide are sought after by both buyers and sellers.

If you get a chance, just duck-in and say “hi.” Chances are, Rick will have something funny to tell you that will really quack you up. After all, no duck, no glory. ★

## **Rick Miner-Coldwell Banker Bain**



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