

# What's wrong with my house?

*'House Detective' co-host Steve Ramos gives people the bad news on HGTV*

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"Oops, I didn't know about that." That's what homeowners often say when visited by home inspector Steve Ramos on the HGTV show "House Detective."

Ramos, a Petaluma resident, comes in at the beginning of the show to help people address concerns about their homes. After an inspection in which he uses high-tech gadgets to see inside walls and hard-to-spot places, Ramos tells the owners the hard truth about what needs to be fixed. Then, in the second half of the show, co-host Mike Nelson (otherwise known as "No Name" from Alice Radio 97.3 FM) brings in a contractor and/or electrician to demonstrate how the proper repairs are made.

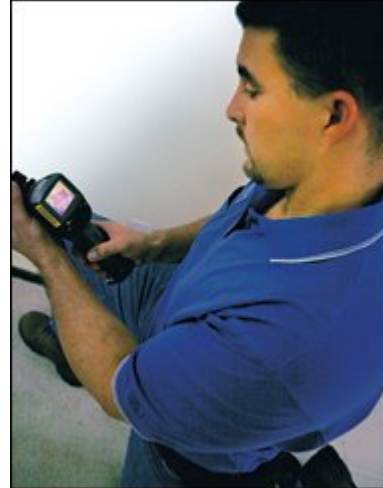
HGTV runs two episodes of "House Detective" Sunday mornings, at 10 and 10:30 a.m.

Ramos, who owns the Petaluma-based home inspection company EnviroVue, says that inspectors are increasingly turning to new technologies in order to meet the higher expectations of owners and homebuyers.

"Inspectors are looking to technology to provide a more comprehensive service, because that's what the public is demanding," he said. "In order to fill that gap, you have to plug it in."

Ramos' favorite gizmo is an expensive infrared camera, which he uses to spot moisture and electrical problems. Built upon technology originally developed to assist soldiers in combat, thermal imaging also has applications for looking through drywall to find suspicious water seepage, which gives a different heat signature than the wall.

The device can also tell him if a dimmer switch is close to overheating and should be



Terry Hankins

Petaluma-based home inspector Steve Ramos is the co-host of HGTV's "House Detective," which is on Sunday mornings from 10 to 11 a.m.

[Zoom Photo](#)

## HOUSE DETECTIVE

Channel: HGTV

Co-host: Steve Ramos

When: Sundays, 10 and 10:30 a.m.

Web:

[www.hgtv.com/hgtv/shows\\_hdt](http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/shows_hdt)

swapped out, and a host of other things.

As part of his mold inspection, Ramos might use his borescope, a three-foot long flexible snake-shaped camera, which enables him to check inside walls without making a big hole.

Ramos says that using the cutting-edge gadgets, which many inspectors don't yet use, are essential in doing a complete job.

"I really think we need to raise the bar in the home inspection profession," he said. "There's a lot you can't see in a house. Can you tell me what's behind a wall? Can you tell me if there's leaking in there? Maybe, maybe not. Can you tell me if that plug is overheating by looking at it? Maybe not."

He also recommends that sellers get an inspection before their home goes up for sale.

"If you're a prospective seller, the last thing you want to do is go on the market with a home that's in disrepair," he said. "You're already going to give up a lot of money versus what you would have six months ago, but now you've given the buyer a second round of negotiations."

"The way as a seller you insulate yourself is get your home inspected and address those issues at the beginning of the negotiation process, taking the wind out of the buyer's sails, and coming to an agreement based on fact rather than presentation."

"House Detective" has taken Ramos to a variety of homes around Northern California. Once the show was even shot in a Petaluma home. Over the past two years he has done more than 70 episodes.

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