

Ask a Designer – by Claire Nagy, Newcastle Interiors As Published in the March 2007 Issue of SNAP Barrie

We are thinking about selling our home this spring, what can we do to improve on the sale of our home?

Home staging or real estate showcasing is the process of preparing a house for sale, at any price level, to appeal to a variety of buyers so it sells in the quickest time possible for the most amount of money.

We've all heard the importance of first impressions. Statistics show that prospective buyers decide in 90 seconds or less whether or not they like your home. This tells us that it is of the utmost importance of creating a great first impression.

As home owners we know that when selling a house, everything must be sparkling clean and personal photos should be packed. While this is true, however staging goes beyond tidying and hiding of personal things. Staging a property is improving the overall look and feel of a house so it has outstanding appeal so buyers can see themselves living in the space.

When a property is staged to its' fullest potential, the result is a house that is sold more quickly and at a higher price because the buyer has made an emotional connection to the house. It's having prospective buyers think "This is exactly what we were looking for!" Today, buyers are looking for homes in move-in condition where the most they have to do is paint, if that.

When a house is staged effectively it stands apart from other competing properties on the market and typically makes buyers more aware of the space. First, by reducing visual distractions such as clutter and second, by creating focal points in and outside of the house to ensure that it is memorable.

Funds invested (1-3% of the asking price) in real estate staging is often returned with a quick sale and at a higher value. This occurs as a staged house doesn't sit on the market for endless weeks, and isn't forced to lower the asking price.

It's difficult to be objective about your own house and know where it's best to spend money for maximum return when it comes time to sell. In addition, it can be a challenge to create focal points and features inside and outside of your house. Any house, condo or townhouse regardless of location or value can be transformed from tired and cluttered, to a *hot property* with proper planning and carry-through.

To help you get started, here are a few tips to keep in mind when staging your house.

- Create a welcoming entrance; use fresh flowers and keep the entrance clear of clutter
- Clean like you've never cleaned before
- Pack photos and fridge art
- Remove accessories from above kitchen cabinets, including faux flowers, vases and collections on walls
- Paint rooms in a neutral colour

Create the fantasy and reassure buyers that the property they are viewing is cared for and in fact the most spectacular home for them.

Stage It Today!

Claire Nagy is an active community citizen involved in a number of charities that support families in need. She is a graduate of the Staging Diva Home Staging Business Training Program, a certified professional Interior Redesigner and a member of the Interior Redesigners Association. To learn more go to www.newcastleinteriors.com.