

To Stage or Not to Stage

by Andi Peterson Brown

Home staging refers to the act of preparing and showcasing a property for sale in the real estate marketplace. Many people associate the term only with carting in a houseful of rented furniture and painting the walls an unassuming white. And for certain homes, that might be the case. But in reality there is a spectrum to home staging, and for some sellers it may simply mean dressing up and rearranging what's already there, decluttering rooms, or merely removing some personal items during home showings. While it is common for sellers to initially feel some resistance towards staging their home, the truth is that staging is a tremendous asset. And here's why:

- **It makes for a great first impression.** Staging a home creates a neutral palate so that many buyers can see themselves living in the home and making it their own.
- **It enhances the emotional experience.** A lighter, brighter, cleaner, warmer, more organized and more cheerful home will win a buyer over every time.
- **It eliminates distractions.** Personal effects should be minimized and rooms should be used for their intended purposes. Many buyers can't see past the play room that ate the dining room.

It is important to remember that staging a home can be accomplished on any budget. It is a sound investment toward the ultimate goal of obtaining the highest price possible in the shortest amount of time. And really, isn't that what it's all about?



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Battling and Blankets and Loose Fill... Oh My!

Attic Insulation Upgrade for an Older Home

By Cathy Dausman



Replaced new insulation

Photos Cathy Dausman

Your Lamorinda house may be warm in the winter, and comfortably cool in the summer, but paying utility bills to keep it that way can make you hot under the collar.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) says heating and cooling accounts for up to 70 percent of the energy use in your home. Maybe it's time to consider an insulation upgrade?

Home insulation may be found in attics, walls or crawl spaces, but

when considering attic insulation you first need a physics lesson: heat flows from warm to cool. (You probably already knew that, since in winter you try to corral the warm air inside.) During summer, mid-day sun wants in, and tends to heat up the house. Insulation slows or prevents such unwanted changes.

Insulation is rated in terms of heat, or thermal resistance, and is expressed in R-value (the more insulation the greater the R-value). R-value

is found by multiplying thickness in inches by a number from 2.5 to 3.7 (based on insulation type). Fiberglass fiber has the lowest R-value, and cellulose (newsprint) the highest. If your attic has yellow, pink or white rolls or batts, it's likely fiberglass. Loose fibers in light colors are probably fiberglass, and darker colored fibers could be rock wool. If you're seeing light-weight granules, that might be vermiculite or perlite.

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