

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By Andi Peterson Brown

It's beginning to look a lot like the most wonderful time of the year. And if your home is still on the market, you might be contemplating pulling it for the winter. Hold that thought. Even though real estate activity tends to decline during November and December, the season can in fact be a great opportunity to showcase your home in its holiday best.

Buyers who are out looking during the holidays are usually more serious about their search. To capture their hearts and secure a sale, here are some quick and easy tips for holiday staging.

Tip #1: Keep it natural, keep it simple. While it might be tempting to display your cardboard cut-out Buddy The Elf or put your Clark Griswold skills to the test, it's best to keep things simple and natural at your front door. Beautiful wreaths, poinsettias, and tasteful, classic twinkle lights will put buyers in the spirit and make a lasting first impression.

Tip #2: Keep it natural, keep it neutral. It's important for buyers to see themselves living in your home, and universals such as winter greenery, decorative candles, pine cones, and glass jars of candy canes and marshmallows all invoke the warmth of the holidays and spread good cheer to the widest pool of buyers.

These tips, coupled with the fact that Lamorinda currently has a low housing supply, might just make the difference for that one buyer. And remember: it only takes one.



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Shelve It!

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Yes, some garages are actually used for cars, she said.

The classic car show will be held all afternoon, ending when the tour does at 5 p.m. All proceeds go to the foundation to support neighborhood projects.

Yet the heart of the tour will be behind the garage doors. (Or in Fulcher's case, works of art by Real Carriage Doors he went and fetched himself from Washington state.) Gerringer said the foundation modeled the garage tour after the Lafayette Juniors' kitchen tours, but instead targeted those who have "boring, cluttered" garages and want inspiration for fresh ideas for storage, storing tools, or a place to hang out.

"We have a good cross-section," she said.

Fulcher started the actual work on his garage about five years ago, but he dreamed of it for decades while working in the GIS (geographic information systems) field. He would call it the Green Barn Canoe and Kayak Company, he mused to himself for many hours while writing code. Finally, when he retired, he got to work to make his dream come true.

And so it has, although now he's hardly retired, having built some 14 or 15 canoes and rehabbing a fishing trawler.

He designed the spacious workshop himself, then worked with a company in Canada that cut the timber and framing, ordered up the SIPs (those are "structurally insulated panels," which is the kind of thing you learn on garage tours), then he and friends from Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club did the rest.

To say the least, Fulcher has taken the "tool bench out in the garage" to another level altogether. He will list his power tools for you, "drill press, band saw, table saw, edging sander, joiner, planer, lathe..." until you tell him to please stop. Then he won't be able to help himself and show you the rotund dust-collection system he installed. He will even proudly open his cabinets to reveal pull-out shelves and tools precisely placed so there is never a "where's the Phillips head?" kind of discussion.

"In the whole place, though, people like the ladder best," Fulcher said, which reminds visitors that one would indeed need a way to access the loft. Fulcher reached up and gently spun a horizontal ladder on a fulcrum that he built himself using a big lazy Susan, and popped it into place. Voila.

"People are going to like this," he said, and lifted the ladder back up, just as effortlessly.



Fulcher with Teresa Gerringer of the Lafayette Community Foundation in front of his garage, which he lovingly calls the Green Barn Canoe and Kayak Co., in Lafayette.
Photo Chris Lavin