

The Glorious Rent-Back

By Andi Peterson Brown

Without a doubt, the Lamorinda real estate market is currently a seller's market. Scores of qualified buyers continue to flock to open houses and inventory remains tight.

But many would-be sellers looking to make their next move feel stumped by the catch-22 of the current market: they want to move, but where will they go? They need the equity from their current home for their next down payment, but they are watching buyers write a few offers before finally securing a home. If they put their home on the market, how are they supposed to find and purchase their next home in the typical escrow period of a mere 30 days?

Thus enters the saving grace for this dilemma: the glorious rent-back. A rent-back is a contractual term that allows a seller to remain as tenant after the closing. And just why is this rent-back so glorious? Because it buys the seller time. Essential, priceless time. Knowing there's an option available that provides breathing room means that more sellers are bringing their homes to market, boosting our much-needed inventory. Many sellers today are getting 30, 60, even 90 day rent-backs. While eager buyers have to wait longer to move into their new home, a well structured rent-back is usually crucial in writing a winning offer and thus a vital component to keeping our market moving.



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Valentine's Day Décor

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Don't go that route stylish suburbanite! You are better than that. I am calling you stylish for a reason. Engage your power. Let's keep it simple this year. Simple does not mean austere, it just means fewer elements done well and completed.

Pick three elements and use those as your starting and ending points. This year, mine are: red grosgrain ribbon, tall candy, and pheasant tail feathers.

Admittedly, my children are grown and out of the nest, but what if you focused on doing three things really well this year? Your growing family might remember the holiday as one of love and appreciation instead of chaos and sticky fingers from paste trying to hand craft Valentine cards for every relative under the sun. Leave those crafts to the preschool teachers we love so much.

3) Purchase good quality storage and inventory. Storage and inventory keeping are the backbones of a well ordered home. Budget the proper storage into seasonal purchases. If you are taking the time to build a body of seasonal décor to serve you over the next three to five years or longer, preserving it properly and then knowing where it is when you need it may save your sanity.

Simple things like proper storage boxes, blocks of cedar, moth balls and/or eco-friendly natural herbs can keep your décor safe for years to come.

Use Google Drive or some other program to develop an inventory of your home and holiday décor. You will be pleasantly surprised how an hour on the computer will save you many hours of searching next year. You also won't re-purchase the thing you have in your shed but can't find. Been there, done that.

I am also passionate about storage and inventory because when it's time to pass your décor along to those less fortunate, those pieces and items will be in their best shape. How much kinder and more respectful it is to bring beautiful, well cared for items in proper storage to your local shelter than all mucked up in a brown paper bag. Let honor be the language of your home.

May your Valentine's Day be blessed and your home be a place of peace.



Photos courtesy Couture Chateau llc, photography by Couture Chateau llc

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Behind the Studio Door with Ann McDonald

Upcoming design workshops

"How to Build a Lifetime Design Clientele and Monetize Creativity Without Selling Yourself" – for designers, decorators and working creatives from 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26 at Taylor Blue Designs in Berkeley. Learn about different client types and how online access has changed what they pay for, how to structure your business model, and how to source ideal lifetime clients without losing yourself in the process. For information and to register, visit <http://studiodoor.eventbrite.com>.

"Managing and Planning a Luxury Project As Your Own Designer" – for the savvy, stylish suburbanite from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, March 20 at the Orinda Country Club. Learn how to run your own design project like a professional designer and how to utilize professional receivers to complete projects in one day. You'll also receive insider access to downloadable materials on a private online dashboard for one month. For info, go to <http://luxurydesign.eventbrite.com>.

For more information, visit <http://couturechateau.com/workshop/> or ring us at (925) 386-0720.