

The Ebb and the Flow

By Andi Peterson Brown

The spring selling season is upon us, and our market has never been hotter. While most people are aware that our housing market is part of broader economic cycles, many people do not realize that there is also a seasonal influence affecting market activity throughout the year. And when it comes to this annual cycle, all months are not created equal. Sleepy August cannot hold a candle to lively March, spirited April, and bubbly May. And poor January. It tends to get lost in the shuffle.

Why is this? The answer is quite logical. The spring and early summer weather is the perfect backdrop for selling a home. Gardens are blooming, the sun is shining, and it's easy for buyers to get out and see what's available. Many of those buyers also pay attention to kindergarten and school registration dates. Thus, market activity is almost always at its highest during April, May, and June. We tend to see activity drop off towards the end of July as both buyers and sellers take their vacations and enjoy their summer days. Here in Lamorinda, once the school year kicks in and routines are established, there tends to be a second surge in market activity. This "mini-spring" lasts through the beginning of November, but once Thanksgiving hits, market activity usually drops off. Most people are in holiday mode, and buying or selling real estate slides onto the backburner if it is not a necessity.

Spring buyers are out in full force. If you've been thinking about selling your home, there has never been a better time.



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Stylish Solutions

Discovering New Design Trends "Behind the Drapery"

By Ann McDonald



Ambiente Trade Show tabletops are drool worthy for this lover of all things dining. Exhibitors come from across the globe to showcase what's new and next. Here, for 2016 we see pastels and primary colors in bakeware and tabletop. Official press photo, 2016 www.messefrankfurt.com

Welcome to "the season," as we say in the design business. We are in the middle of a time of year when trade shows abound, and comfortable shoes start traveling with us discreetly in purses, whipped out for the walk between booths and parties. From the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show in Las Vegas to the shows across the pond, I thought it would be fun to give you, Stylish Suburbanite, an inside peek at a few standards, as they say, "behind the drapery."

These are industry-only trade shows where designers, architects, builders, suppliers and manufacturers showcase their wares. We glean training, access to unreleased products and test models, and learn about what will hit the market six to eight, or in some cases, 12 to 16 months out.

KBIS: The Kitchen Bath and Industry Show. Held in different locations across the country, the 'mac-daddy' for the western United States is held in Las Vegas, often in conjunction with several smaller home-gear shows having to do with drapery, building and property development.

At KBIS, designers learn about new introductions from appliance manufacturers to tile companies, hardware brands to lighting manufacturers. What was the hot ticket this year? Custom cabinetry and pretty much custom everything.

Ambiente. Just finished, this is the leading international consumer goods show held in Germany. Here we find the newest from enamel cookware to Versace home's latest porcelain introductions to the next best-unknown lighting designer. Ambiente is an extraordinary show, and often showcases trends that will hit the U.S.

market, six to 12 months out. The trends this year? Nature on and in man-made materials, including porcelain. We see sand and other raw materials transferred and printed onto and into anything from porcelain to textiles. From table linens to tiles, nature influences, from raw to overtly floral and colorful, were everywhere.

Maison Objet. The show. Well, not the only show, but considered "the" show, here you find the most fabulous introductions of textiles, product and furniture design as well as historical and educational seminars with inside access to designers and fabricators. Exhibitors come from across the globe. One of the hallmarks of this show, as well as Ambiente is the use of unusual and custom materials.

The use of hand formed objects, from hand blocked fabrics, to non-assembly line pillows, and lighting fixtures where even the 'same form' was not an exact replica of the one adjacent stands out. There is a return to perfectly imperfect in the design world, a stronger sense of couture level production, where you are acutely aware that a hand has made this, not a machine alone.

Maison has a U.S. show scheduled for the second time this year in Miami.

High Point North Carolina. Every year, twice a year, designers pilgrimage to High Point for new product releases, fabrics and furniture, accessories and educational seminars. This actually is "the show" for furniture and fabrics. Due to the overwhelming volume of product at this show, my team and I plan for weeks in advance depending on the goals for our time in North Carolina each season. Many brands and designers debut new furniture lines and use High Point to educate on product construction or uses. We will often spend half our time behind the scenes on private tours or in closed-door sessions with those leading the market.



This photo showcases a traditional look, still popular with clients. Cabinetry by Teddwood Fine Cabinetry, Design and Installation by David Calvani & Sons, David Calvani

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