

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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Setting the Stage for a Home Sale

By Cathy Dausman



Before staging.

Photo courtesy Sarah Kellar, Dana Green Team



After staging.

Photo Jennie Norris, Stagedhomes.com

You need a bigger home; you want a smaller home; you need to live in a different location. For whatever reason, you've decided to sell your home. You've hired a real estate agent and signed a contract. The stage is set for foot traffic; now let the offers start rolling in. Or will they? Do you think your home looks marketable? Should you elect to have your home-sweet-home professionally staged, and what advantages will that bring?

Home staging has ceased to be an add-on real estate strategy and has become the norm, says realtor Dana Green of Lafayette's Dana Green Team. Where remodeling focuses on what Green calls the cosmetics of a property, she says staging breathes life into a property, represents each room with its proper scale, and declutters and neutralizes a home. Professional stagers, Green says, focus on preparing homes for sale to appeal to the broadest market of buyers while maintaining a fresh and updated inventory of accessories.

"I always hire a professional stager to come into the property and do a consult once we have signed a listing agreement," says Hollie Howell of Fusion Real Estate Network in Walnut Creek. Howell is a full time Realtor who has earned Accredited Staging Professional credentials. She is confident enough in the value added of home staging to split the cost with the seller as a credit against her commission. "I have yet to have a case where (staging) has not paid off," she said.

Not all Realtors are stagers, says Jennie Norris, president and CEO of Stagedhomes.com, but they all need to know how to educate their sellers about the process. Norris, a past resident of Danville, Walnut Creek and San Ramon, says staging really took off in the San Francisco area 15 to 20 years ago. Before Norris listed her own home she says, "I had never heard of the term or process" but when her Realtor brought in a stager "our house looked great, (and) we got sold."

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