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Staging pays in high-end market

■ Consultants help showcase homes stand out to buyers.

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Most people understand that when you put your house on the market, you need to make it show well.

You need to clean and declutter and paint where necessary.

However, when do you need to take the more drastic steps shown in TV shows like HGTV's *Designed to Sell* and A&E's *Sell This House*?

The easy answer is that any home could use help.

However, there is a larger market for mid-sized homes in the Rochester area right now, so a professional consultation might only be necessary if you want top dollar or you know your home needs updating.

A staged home will bring a higher selling price at any price point, said Leona Piro of Act Two Home Staging in Mendon.



KATE MELTON

Leona Piro of Act Two Home Staging recently staged this 3,300-square-foot contemporary colonial on Merryhill Lane in Pittsford. Competition is fierce for buyers in top price point, especially homes more than \$500,000.

Staging

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And the consultation cost of about \$250, depending on the size and condition of the home, might be worth it to you as you hit the market.

It is difficult for buyers to envision themselves living in someone else's home, Piro said.

A staged home allows buyers to see the house as it really is, without the distractions of the homeowner's clutter, personal collections and decorating style.

But if you're in the higher-end home market in Rochester, you need to have your house stand out against its competition and staging is critical, said Mike Drouin, an agent at Nothnagle Realtors.

When Drouin listed Jo Hainsworth's 3,300-square-foot Pittsford home in May for a half-million dollars, he called Piro.

"A house like this needs that special artistic touch," he said.

Competition is fierce

for buyers in top price point, especially homes more than \$500,000.

"Currently, in the local market higher end homes are harder to sell," Piro said. "Therefore, sellers need to make use of every available selling tool, especially home staging."

Home staging differs from home decorating as decorating reflects a home owner's personal tastes and styles while staging is designed to sell, Piro said.

In Hainsworth's home, Piro moved existing furniture and decluttered to give the contemporary colonial on Merryhill Lane a showcase-house look. And she used garden cuttings to spruce up the spaces.

The living room is large but was not being fully used. Piro suggested hanging one large piece of art over the fireplace to accentuate this focal point. She filled in with furniture from another room. "You can do a lot by moving things around," she says.

Next to the living room is the gourmet kitchen, which was decluttered to give it a clean spacious

look.

Bar stools were brought in to show prospective buyers that they are able to use it as additional dining space. A high-end, brass-colored espresso machine accents the kitchen counter.

The dining room has a formal feel with a touch of Jo Hainsworth's love of home and garden as the wall is accented with a large flower wreath and the table decorated with garden cuttings.

Upstairs in the master bedroom, the walk-in closet is neatly organized to show prospective buyers the available space. Organization is very soothing to buyers, Drouin said, noting he doesn't know anyone who doesn't like an organized home.

But the wall retains some of that personal charm with whimsical artwork by the Hainsworth children. It was the one piece of personality that Jo Hainsworth wanted to retain.

Feedback so far has been positive, Drouin said. □

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