

Tips For Staging Your Own Home

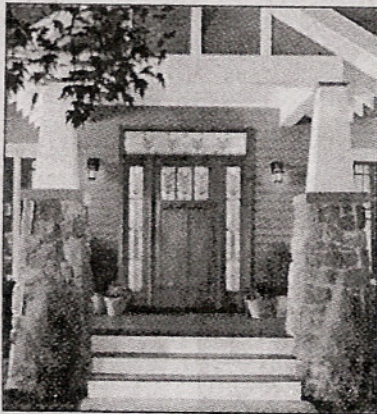
- Use soft lighting. Lamps are kinder than overhead lights. Keep blinds open.
- Place furniture so there are clear pathways through the house.
- Thin your furniture collection to make the room appear larger.
- Avoid placing sofas or big chairs so that you see their backs
- Declutter. Pack up framed pictures, odd artwork, crafts. Clear stuff off tables.
- Clear magnets, notes, artwork, etc., from front of refrigerator
- Make sure toilet seats are down and personal bathroom items stowed. Put out fresh towels. Limit your colors to one or two.
- Clean out your closets. Buyers want to believe they'll have plenty of storage space.
- Right before a showing, light a scented candle and turn on quiet music (easy listening or jazz).
- Hide pet boxes.
- Keep indoor plants and flowers looking fresh.
- Buy new doormats.
- The front of the house is a potential buyer's first impression. Keep shrubs and trees trimmed, grass mowed, walkways cleared; lay fresh mulch. If you can afford a landscaper, hire one.
- Put all outdoor toys away.
- Place flowers on the porch or front stoop.
- Wash the house.
- Keep the front door freshly painted. Replace any fixtures on the door, such as brass plates at the bottom.
- Make sure light bulbs outside work

Sources: Cheryl Cox, Stagecoach Homes; Sharon Garfield, Traditions Interiors and Accessories; Kristina Kegley, Allen Tate and Staged Homes

REMODELING

More homes going with front porches

Front porches are among today's most popular home features, and they're among the most popular remodeling projects. In 2003, 50 percent of all single-family new homes had a front porch, according to the National Association of Home Builders, up from just 42 percent in 1992. Porches add appeal - and value -



to homes. Therma-Tru says an updated entryway, which often anchors a porch project, can add up to 6 percent to the perceived value of a house. The door and window maker says it's easier than ever to replace your old wood door with a stylish, high-performance fiberglass door. Designs are available with smooth finish or realistic wood graining. You can choose styles with decorative glass in the door, or in sidelights. Therma-Tru door systems are available at Lowe's, as well as other dealers nationally. Information - and lots of pictures - www.thermatru.com. — ALLEN NORWOOD