

# THE JILL VEGAS STAGING REPORT

by Jill Vegas

Summer's here — full of sunset cocktails, lazy afternoons, and BBQs galore. For some, the perfect place to end the workday is at festive party hosted by a developer. With so many developments popping up it's always fun to see the latest designs. This surge in new construction allows buyers more choice when selecting a home. With such saturation, many developers have been using innovative ways to make their place stand out from the pack.

Check out Roebing Square in Williamsburg, everyone's raving about the success: 80% of the units sold in a matter of weeks. This is just the beginning for Christine Blackburn and Lior Barak (Douglas Elliman) who live in the neighborhood and understand their clients. Designing hip model apartments and sales offices is crucial to attracting the right buyers and the right offers.

Dottie Herman credits a glamorous model unit as key to this success. The staging that I did for Roebing Square seemed to make an impression on her; she was amazed with the chandelier in the bedroom and said, "I would have never thought to put the chandelier in here but it works." Dottie toasted all for doing a great job. What fun, especially during a time when developers are dropping prices and watching their building stagnate for months, even years.

Now that staging is all the rage, many people have been asking for guidelines on what they can do to make sure their model apartments and sales offices are styled to sell. Here are a few tips:

Interior designer...Decorator...Stager...What's the diff? Interior designers or decorators are trained to tailor a space to an individual's taste. Unlike interior designers or decorators, stagers are marketing pros that create the model based on the target demographic. The staging trend continues to flourish because stagers have the developer's agenda in mind: selling.

Is West Elm the only answer? Indeed, West Elm, Crate & Barrel, and Design Within Reach sell beautiful things, but ordering a bunch of stuff from a catalog and plopping it into a room doesn't guarantee results. Dozens of model units have the same generic look.

When choosing items for the model units think about whom the specific demographic is and make sure all items look like something they would like. This way your model and sales office will have a little more spark.

People who work with stagers have an easy time putting together their models and creating a unique look. The bottom line of having a soulful model is that it helps buyers see the potential of the space so that they can make that offer.

Style sells. Whatever the budget, style is affordable — crisp linens, a bouquet of tulips, votive candles, or a really good stack

of books. The way to sell as many units as possible in the shortest amount of time is to have furnishings and decorative accessories that make a fabulous first impression.

Recently a downtown development consulted with us to help transform their sales office. The apartments were going for \$2.6M and up. Many buyers were touring the sales office but few were signing contracts. When we stepped into the sales office this is what we saw: mustard leather furniture. We asked the sales manager what kind of impression this furniture made. Her response: "A horrible one!"

When shopping for furnishings and decorative accessories make sure they maintain proper brand integrity and that all items appeal to the largest number of buyers. Style definitely boosts the bottom line.

In advertising they say you get 30 seconds to make a first impression, that's when a buyer is going to make a decision to buy or not to buy. So that first impression may mean the difference between having a quick sale or having it sit on the market.



Before: Dining room is a construction mess!



After: Transformed clutter and chaos into a sophisticated sexy dining area.

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