



Start Stripping!

by Jill Vegas
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"Begin by thinking of your rooms in the nude."
-- Dorothy Draper

It seems appropriate as we enter the fall season when trees drop their leaves and nature becomes skeletal, that we discuss how to strip your home to sell. And I mean strip down to the barest bones. Envision your room completely bare – "see" its bones and find its curves. Discover the pockets of sun that make a room feel expansive and cheery, find that corner that was hidden by a large, domineering armoire and empty it so that the room feels balanced and graceful.

The more stuff that's lying around, the more claustrophobic buyers feel and they won't make an offer. Strip your kitchen of tired utensils, dirty-bottomed pots and pans, and dishes in the sink. Make your floors shine so that they reflect the light and bounce it happily around the room. Head into your bathroom and hide excessive grooming products. Discard dingy towels, dress your shower with a new curtain and hooks, and get your mirror to sparkle.

And using strip again as metaphor, get going in your bedroom – by getting rid of all those piles of clothes, books, and bottles of perfume. Bedrooms should evoke feelings of love and intimacy, sleep and peace. Whenever I make over a bedroom, I think about how I'd like to feel – safe, relaxed, free, and calm. Usually this involves taking it off. Make your bed look neat, clean, and inviting. Invest in a gorgeous pillow and plush linens that pull together the room's appeal. I don't like to see dirty laundry, threadbare sheets, or shoes lying about; buyers don't either.

When I stepped into the bedroom of my first client, my work was cut out for me: bookcases were stuffed to the gills and towered over the bed, sickly trees and plants convalesced by the dirty window, and massive home office sprawl congested the room with a printer, fax, files, and papers galore. The bed looked tired; faded comforter and tattered pillows crowned with a droopy tapestry. The dresser was hidden under a pile of magazines, vitamins, and other distracting flotsam and jetsam.

My clients had lived in their home for forty-three years and were proud of their possessions. The wife, especially, told me she rarely threw anything away. Since both husband and wife were professional musicians, they had traveled extensively and collected enthusiastically (meaning they had lots and lots of STUFF). I remember sitting at the couple's kitchen table and discussing the difference between living in a home and selling a property.

They are two completely different things. She understood the concept and took my advice. Her property got four offers the first showing and sold for 7% above asking price.

My advice then and now: Start Stripping!



1) Bedroom or storage room? Straggly plants, excessive books, and furnishings cramped this spacious bedroom.



2) Stripped the bedroom of dusty bookshelves, mildewy curtains, plants, and old rugs. Dressed the bed in crisp new linens and the window with frothy gossamer curtains transforming this into the ideal room to dream.

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