

EXPERT ADVICE



A PROFESSIONAL MAKEOVER

Pre-sales styling is a powerful tool in adding to the appeal of a property. Karen Muller, Colour Designer and Interior Stylist of Real Living Interiors, briefly describes a project she recently worked on.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TONY POTTER



Imagine that you've been searching for a home of your own for over a year. You drive through a leafy north-shore suburb in Sydney and notice wide streets graced with lovely freestanding homes. And the location is perfect – it's only a 15-minute drive to the CBD; schools and amenities are easily accessible, plus the four-bedroom home you are about to view is only a five-minute walk from the train line and shops.

A CLOSER LOOK

But wait; could this really be your dream home? You are greeted by a small frontage with an overgrown and untidy garden. Upon entry, the house is ominously dark and the yellow walls cast a dull glow throughout. The empty rooms look hollow and unwelcoming, so how could you envisage yourself and your family living here – not

ABOVE: Cane tub chairs and a low-rise sofa added textural differences to the formal lounge room.

RIGHT: Original, teal-coloured decorative tiles ran down the side of the fireplace.

OPPOSITE: The subtle floral prints are surrounded by large ornate frames.





to mention your furniture fitting into what appears to be such a small space? You might put in an offer to the agent but there seems to be so much work that your offer is low and half-hearted.

Now look at these images. Is it the same house? Absolutely! Interior styling is a wonderful way to increase the appeal of a property when you are preparing to list it for sale and want to entice prospective buyers inside.

Styling a home in preparation for sale is very different from

working with a client who wants to live in their house for many years to come. Pre-sales styling is about maximising the look of a home to appeal to the target market or potential buyer. I work with the selling agent's marketing campaign, sourcing furniture and tradesmen, all within quick turnaround times and tight deadlines. This is much different from helping with a residence for a homeowner and tailoring the look and feel to their taste, lifestyle and timeframe.



A mirror was hung on the wall in order to reflect the second fireplace, interior greenery and the garden outside.

ABOVE: An imitation Persian rug in warm neutrals was laid under the dining table.

FULL OF CHARACTER

At the beginning of this assignment, I met with real estate agent, Adrian Solti, on the site. Adrian described the target market for this property as ‘young families or homeowners upgrading from a townhouse or an apartment’. Despite the pre-loved condition of the home, I immediately looked for items I could highlight to show off its great character. I was delighted to see that the tessellated tiles on the porch were in good condition. The old, wide skirting boards, picture rails and decorative work on the high ceilings was a bonus – and I knew that changing the paint colour on the walls would give the house a new lease of life.

The formal lounge still had its original cast-iron fascia and teal-coloured decorative tiles running down the side of the fireplace.

Once the exterior was tidied, it was time to say goodbye to the yellow internal walls.

To highlight the home’s traditional Federation features, Dulux Hog’s Bristle was applied at half-strength to enhance the existing white ceiling and frieze. Offering a strong contrast, this immediately altered the dull appearance of the home, giving it a calm and harmonious atmosphere.

Now the neutral canvas was applied, I wanted to create a welcoming look and feel. To set the ambience of the house, the master and spare bedrooms were critical as they were the first two rooms to be seen upon entry. I dressed the master bedroom in linens, and complemented the natural fibres with a soft, cosy throw. To emphasise the size of the room a sideboard and decorative items were added to draw the eye around the walls. I carried the soft tones through to the spare bedroom where moody, blue bed linen played with the traditional feel of the home, finishing with modern lamps and a macro suede bedhead gave the room a contemporary twist.

MIX AND MATCH

In the formal lounge room, warm neutrals were chosen with accent colours picked up from the decorative tiles within the fireplace. A mix-and-match effect was created with the furniture, such as cane tub chairs and a low-rise sofa, which added textural differences. The room is completed by a mango-wood lamp base and large ornate frames that surround the prints on the wall. The dining room was positioned in an ideal location – right next to the kitchen – and I chose a simple yet effective look. I hung a mirror on the wall to reflect the second fireplace, interior greenery and the garden outside; and to carry the harmonious palette around the home, an imitation Persian rug in warm neutrals was laid under the dining table. Oversize dining chairs



ABOVE: Karen dressed the master bedroom in linens and she complemented the natural fibres with a soft, cosy throw.

RIGHT: Modern lamps and a macro suede bedhead give the spare bedroom a contemporary twist.

in cream added depth and created a perception of comfort.

The homeowners were delighted with the transformation that took place. “In addition to the final result being exceptionally styled,” they stated, “we were also extremely pleased to work with someone with such high standards of professionalism.” Adrian Solti reported that the home sold within two and a half weeks of it being listed on the market.

If you wish to increase the sale value of your home, “Advice from an experienced stylist such as Karen is invaluable” says Jenny Langmaid from McGrath Estate Agents. “Styling can be worked within budgets utilising existing furnishings and accessories through to full-scale makeovers. Pre-sales styling services are accessible and the affordability is more so than ever”

For further information about Real Living Interiors Colour Design and Interior Styling services, please contact Karen on (02) 8003 4447 or see the Real Living Interiors website: www.reallivinginteriors.com.au

