

Christine Estes



Connected... to meet your needs

"Design can have such a positive impact on the way people live and on their relationships and moods."

– Genevieve Gorder

Dear Friend,

June 2009

Sometimes we just need to make some minor changes to our living space to make it feel 'better.' Or you may want to do something more major, but are unsure where to start. This month's flyer is dedicated to new design trends around the home. You will find innovative and affordable tips that can dramatically improve your home's look (and these do contribute to value), such as adding accent lighting and replacing outdated plumbing fixtures.

There are many resources available to you if you just don't know where to start or know what you really want (and, of course, I have people to refer to you!). Perhaps it's just moving what you have around, and perhaps divesting of a few things. Maybe it's some new paint, or fresh landscaping. A new light fixture in a foyer or dining room can make a huge difference. Many of you have heard me say that I'd much rather have you make changes for yourself than to wait until you're thinking about selling and then making them for someone else!

Enjoy your home – make it the most comfortable and relaxing and nurturing place for you that it can be. And if you'd like some help to get it there, just give me a call and I'll get you to some great resources.

Since we're always working to be sure that we have resources of all kinds available to you, here's this month's example of our highlighted vendors:

Spotlight Vendors for June:

Adam Brehm - Executive Upgrades - 206-391-0506 - ABrehm@ExecutiveUpgrades.net
contractor

Ken Morris - A Advanced Carpet Cleaning - 425-355-4810 - AAdvancedCarpet@msn.com
carpet cleaner

Jon Hansen - Spot On Services - 206-588-1068
handyman services

Darin Bryant - 206-778-0658 - darin@dbmetals.com
stainless steel refinishing

Mel Craig - Apple Hardwood - 206-364-9860
flooring

Christine Estes 206-910-7926
Chris@TheChristineEstesGroup.com
www.TheChristineEstesGroup.com

Windermere
Real Estate

Windermere Real Estate Northeast, Inc.
11411 NE 124th Street, Suite 110
Kirkland, WA 98034

As you've come to expect, we also have a market update for you. The local numbers have all been updated on my website. I'll include a snapshot here because the direction that we're going in is normalizing across the board and numeric comparisons are the easiest way to see that.

	Q1 2009	April	May	Apr/May Average
King County				
Inventory in months		8.9	8.1	
Average selling price	\$452K	\$443K	\$456K	\$450K
Eastside				
Inventory in months		13.8	12.1	
Average selling price	\$602K	\$563K	\$610K	\$587K
Seattle Metro				
Inventory in months		5.9	5.6	
Average selling price	\$474K	\$465K	\$476K	\$471K
Snohomish County				
Inventory in months		10.1	8.7	
Average selling price	\$330K	\$331K	\$329K	\$330K
Pierce County				
Inventory in months		10.5	9.5	
Average selling price	\$257K	\$249K	\$260K	\$255K

So what do I see as the highlights here?

- Of primary importance are the inventory numbers – they are all coming down. The market cannot balance when there is an over-abundance of supply. This is the first step toward a more normal market.
- Please also note that all three counties as a whole are showing stability when you compare the Q1 average selling price to the average of April and May. Another important sign because we don't expect values to appreciate until they have been stable for some amount of time. Stability is the second step toward a more normal market.
- Seattle Metro is also very close to the same average sale price position that it saw in Q1.
- And while the Eastside is still down in comparison to Q1, May was up substantially over April (and May alone was also higher than the Q1 average).

You may have already seen some of the articles predicting that we have already seen 'the bottom.' The June close should substantively show us whether the bottom has truly come and gone... or not. Regardless, now that inventory is moving, many sellers are more hopeful and as a result are working harder to get your attention with the right prices and well prepared homes. And buyers *are* buying; that's the main reason the inventory numbers are coming down. If you've been wondering when is the right time for you, please consider jumping in! I'm happy to help.

Wishing you a wonderful end to Spring as we roll quickly into Summer!

Sincerely,



Whether your budget is small or large, here are some design essentials you should know when it comes time to upgrade your home.

design trends

S WARM IT UP

Strictly utilitarian is out when it comes to kitchens and bathrooms. Rather than doing a complete kitchen remodel, resurface cabinets and replace laminate countertops to breathe new life into your kitchen. Adding accent lights can create warmth. Spa bathrooms with large whirlpool tubs, heated floors and towel warmers are popular in upscale homes. More economical options include installing multiple shower heads and upgrading sink fixtures to create that high-end spa feel.

S CHOOSE HARD FLOORING

The biggest trend in flooring is the transition away from carpeting. New wood products, contemporary linoleum, stained concrete and travertine tile are being used not only in kitchens and baths but throughout the entire home. Greener options like bamboo and cork also prove durable and attractive. Laminate and vinyl flooring are a less expensive alternative. Consider pulling up old carpeting if you have wood underneath, and refinish back to its natural beauty.

e CREATE STORAGE SPACE

Storage space is a must. Homes today feature walk-up attics, walk-in kitchen pantries and room-size bedroom closets. Builders are adding recycling bins and appliance garages in kitchens, butler's pantries and computer niches. Increase your storage space with built-in dressers and shelving systems.

n DESIGN WITH LIGHT

Lighting is being used in more dramatic ways than it has been in the past. It enhances both traditional and contemporary living spaces. Accent lights highlight architectural elements, uplights draw eyes to a high ceiling, undercounter lights brighten countertops and dimmers help set the mood in each room.

a i s t a g i n g

IT'S ALWAYS TRENDY TO STAGE LIKE A PRO

Whether you are selling your home or just hosting friends and family, here are some easy and inexpensive ways to make your home look its best:

- Place fresh flowers on tables. Replace unsightly artificial plants with real ones.
- Purchase a new shower curtain and white towels for the bathrooms.
- Select color-coordinated seat cushions and throw pillows for couches.
- Display a seasonal wreath or ornament.

3 home improvement ideas you can do easily.

Select a cozy space in your home and create a "summer room." Freshen the walls with a hue found on a warm summer day. Consider a flower bloom, the sky or a vibrant green from a favorite plant or vegetable as your inspiration. It's a fun, inexpensive project that makes you feel warm—even in the middle of winter.

Great fabrics never go out of style. Lighten up any room by replacing heavy fabrics with light and airy ones. Old drapes can be replaced with an open weave fabric such as chiffon or organza. Throw pillows and slipcovers also make a trendy statement. Add crisp white, a bright solid or even modern, floral patterns for accent and interest.

Do it with mirrors. A well-placed mirror will add more natural light in your home and make any room look larger and more appealing.





stage your home for



U C C e S S

HOME STAGING IS AN EXCITING WAY TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL, WARM ENVIRONMENT THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY ALL.

Whether you are staging your home to sell, opening your home to friends or you desire an instant face-lift, home staging is an easy and affordable design option that can be done room-by-room.

- **LIVING AREAS** - When a room is in order, it looks good, feels good and allows potential buyers to visualize their own things in the home. Make sure everything has its own place. Splashes of color can be achieved with flowers, artwork or accessories.
- **BATHROOM** - Expect guests and prospective buyers to use your bathroom. Make sure your towels are clean and properly hung up. A common trick is to place fresh white towels for display purposes and keep your everyday towels out of sight.
- **BEDROOMS** - The biggest problem with staging a bedroom is to make sure there is ample storage available so that clothing and toys can be put out of sight. Invest a little money in a good closet organizer and you will be able to keep your bedrooms clutter-free and orderly.
- **KITCHEN** - A creative spice rack will keep your counters clean and can bring some flair to your kitchen. Spices come in many different colors and textures, so find a way to make them work for you. If you use copper pots, consider displaying them with a hanging pot rack.
- **OUTDOORS** - Keep your tools and the kids' toys out of sight. Maintain your landscaping properly; mow the lawn and trim the edges regularly. Prune any bushes or trees that block the view out of your windows.

10 inexpensive ways to freshen up your home:

- 1 Buy new towels for the bathroom
- 2 Upgrade outdoor lighting
- 3 Install new doorknobs and cabinet handles
- 4 Make a centerpiece for your dining room table
- 5 Buy a new mailbox
- 6 Polish or replace your house numbers
- 7 Place fresh flowers or houseplants around the home
- 8 Buy color-coordinated pillows for the sofa and bed
- 9 Replace your worn doormat
- 10 Set out subtle potpourri or scented candles



7 steps to prepare for an open house

- 1) Hire a cleaning service. A spotless, clean home shows off a home better than anything.
- 2) Mow your lawn and make sure the yard looks great.
- 3) Park your cars away from the front of your house or driveway.
- 4) Lock up all your valuables, jewelry and money. Although your real estate professional will be on site during the open house, it will provide fewer temptations.
- 5) Turn on all the lights, even in the daytime. Incandescent lights add sparkle.
- 6) Send your pets to a neighbor's house or take them outside. If that's not possible, crate them or confine them to one room and let your agent know where to find them.
- 7) Visit friends or run some errands. It's awkward for prospective buyers to look in your closets and freely express their opinions with you there.

