

# SPRING HOME

Park City *May 2014*

## INSIDE!

LOCAL SPRING TIPS

PROS SHARE SECRETS  
TO STAGING YOUR  
HOME TO SELL

MOUNTAIN  
LANDSCAPING

SPRING EVENTS  
AND ACTIVITIES

THE JOYS OF  
CHICKENS  
AND EGGS

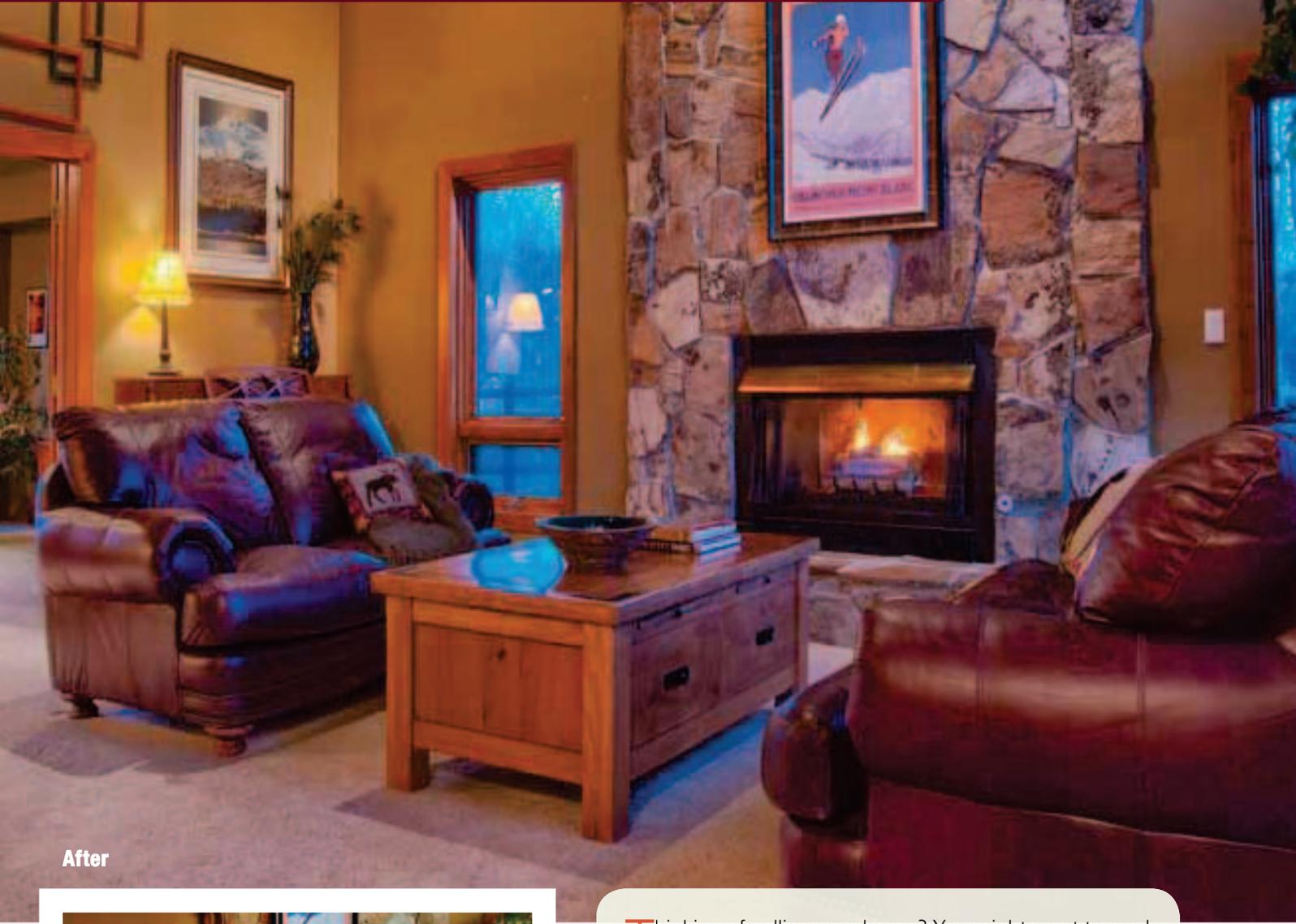
DECORATING  
TRENDS

The complete guide to  
planting, building, and  
enjoying spring in Park City

The **Park Record.**

# Stage Coaching

by *Patrick Cone*



After



Before

Thinking of selling your home? You might want to read this first.

The snowbanks have melted and it's springtime again in Park City. Sales signs are blossoming like daffodils all along our streets. Every seller is hopeful and optimistic that they'll sell fast, for more than the asking price, and be able to move on. But what can you do to make that happen? How can you stack the odds in your favor? The difference can often be in what's called "home staging."

Saying what shouldn't need to be said, when you put your home on the market, you're going to need to fix it, clean it, and keep it that way until it sells. That might mean a few gallons of neutral paint, some soft lighting, clean carpets, and removing most of your possessions can mean the difference between a fast sale, or no sale. It also means doing a deep clean that would make your mother proud.

PHOTOS: TOP-COURTESY OF SUMMIT SOTHEBY'S  
BOTTOM: KELLEY ROGERS - KR HOME STAGING & DESIGN



But as you sell, and live in the home, life will be different. You may have raised your kids here, cycled through pets, and made the place cozy and comfortable, but to make a sale you'll need to pare down. You'll try to show the potential for new families and lives in the home, not show off yours. So, whether you're downsizing, upgrading, or pulling up stakes after you've put down roots, making the right presentation to potential buyers is essential.

So how do you go about fixing up your home? After all it will be a showcase for the parade of agents that will be breezing through with their clients in tow. You want someone to fall in

love with the house.

What makes a good impression? You want the buyers to focus on the house, not your possessions, cleaning habits, or reading material.

What sorts of things will turn a buyer off? Perhaps it's time to deal with that smell that you haven't been able to track down. And what can you do as the homeowner to make it look great, that leads to a quicker sale, and better offers? There's plenty you can do yourself, get some advice, or even hire a professional to stage the house.

The simplest thing to do is declutter. You're moving, anyway, right? So

wouldn't now be a good time to donate old items, move things into storage, or just plain throw things out? The next three steps are hard but simple: clean, clean, clean.

Louise Holland of Park City Home Stagers, says, "It should be like going into a nice hotel room." That means good lighting, few objects, nice furniture and super immaculate. But once clean, "It's the homeowner's responsibility to keep it nice for showing," she says.

You'll want to show off the things about the house that attracted you to it in the first place too. Move the couches away from in front of the high stone fireplace. Don't block views of the mountains through the windows. Think of your home in terms of view corridors, and movement in the space. Staging combines psychology, showmanship, and theatre to impress a client. There are great lists of things you as the homeowner can do to stage your own place. And, while you can do-it-yourself, there are professionals who are willing help. They'll look at your home with a buyer's eyes. Their consultation might seem brutally honest, but their only desire is to help you sell your home, not judge your lives. Holland is sensitive to the homeowner's attachment to their possessions, and packing away their treasures can be distressing. "But, this isn't personal," says Holland. "I'm not there to judge." If it's hopeless, then you'll be selling as a fixer-upper.

For instance, if your refrigerator is covered with political cartoons and comments, it's a pretty good bet that you'll offend half the buyers. If you're too attached to the almost-artlike painting on the wall, it'll be time to pack that away for the move as well. Buyers will be opening closets and medicine cabinets, and looking in places you've never even looked.

Professional stagers will make a list of suggestions after surveying your home.....a very, very precise list. And the good news is, more often than not your real estate agent will pay their bill. They know that a staged home consistently sells for more and sells quicker. That's a pretty good incentive.

Sandra Racz has been staging Park City's homes for the past dozen years; "It's about buyers making an emotional connection to a home." She adds, "Only 10 percent of the population can visualize things. Smells can be one immediate thing to put buyers



PHOTOS: LOUISE HOLLAND - PARK CITY HOME STAGERS

off a home. Pet odors, musty, moldy, or food smells have to be neutralized. Some stagers will use smells of cookies, herbs, and even popcorn to make it seem more welcoming.

How specific will the staging list be? Take the case of John and Kristin Russell's recent home sale, after three kids and 20 years in the home. Kelley Rogers of KR Home Staging and Design came to their rescue.

"Kelley gave us a point-by-point list on what to do, and we did as much as we could ourselves," says Kristin. "It was a three week process," she says. "We rented two pods for storage and took out two-thirds of our stuff. It made the home look huge!"

And, did it help? The Russells finished their work on a Wednesday, had photographs online by Thursday, and had a cash offer (over what their Realtor told them to expect) by Sunday. "And the move was so much easier," she adds. "We were already packed." Rogers says they were suc-

cessful, "because they totally did everything on the list and it paid off." The 51-item list included things like: "clean light switch plates," "repair the wall damage in the closet", and "prune your overgrown bushes."

They packed away their personal photos, had their carpets and windows professionally cleaned, and put away their skis and winter clothing. They went through the list methodically. They were able to emotionally detach themselves from the house. Then Rogers rearranged furniture, rehung artwork to focus a buyers attention on the selling features of each room, and even placed vases on tables, and cutting boards on counters.

"Staging definitely works," says Kelley, who has worked as a designer for the past 18 years. It's about knowing what buyers are interested in seeing. "What might make a home comfortable - overstuffed chairs in front of the fireplace, a dog bed, leafy plants - isn't what makes a buyer interested," says Rogers. "It's the overall

impression of the home," she says, "It's totally different trying to market your home to the widest range of buyers...We want people to notice the home not the decorating."

Watching her and assistant Crystal Hoogeveen at work in a very large home recently, it was evident that they knew exactly what to do, and did it quickly and with lots of muscle-power. The living room was opened up by rearranging couches and storing chairs. In the study graduation and wedding photos were boxed. Green plants were added for accents in the kitchen, and windows were unblocked to let visitors walk up to them.

"Buyers will notice every flaw in a house," says Kelley. The trick is to reduce the flaws, show off the features, and let the home sell itself. It's a bit like detailing a car. After all, when you saw your future home, something grabbed your attention, and made you commit to a future there.



KELLEY ROGERS  
PHOTO: PATRICK CONE



PHOTO: PATRICK CONE



*Kelley Rogers of KR Home Staging & Design says:*

**1. Make a great first impression.**

That first impression from the street can make or break a buyers interest in requesting a showing or attending an open house. Make buyers fall in love from the curb and leave them wanting to see more! Add potted plants and flowers near the front entry, power wash patios and walkways, remove weeds from the garden beds, mow and edge your lawn and wash windows and screens.

**2. Clean and move-in ready.**

Every buyer notices and appreciates an immaculately clean and move-in ready home. The upside of this psychology is that when buyers experience a clean and organized

home they also perceive it as being well maintained mechanically.

**3. Take care of repairs and maintenance.** This may sound obvious but I am often surprised with how many sellers miss this one. No one knows your home better than you do. If you know of a leaky faucet or broken baseboard just take care of it now.

**4. Remove distractions.** Many people have heard the terms, de-clutter and de-personalize, and few things deter buyers more than a cluttered home. Potential buyers are really only interested in seeing your home and not your stuff. Excessive personal items like family photos, personal awards, electronics and collectibles more often than not distract buyers and make it difficult to see past your personal style. Your objective is to edit to a point where your home will appeal to the broadest range of buyers possible and allow buyers to imagine themselves living here. A professional home stager can help a seller to strategically guide a buyer's eye to the selling features of each room and edit the excess

that works against a sale.

**5. Fresh paint.** Fresh paint in a neutral color is always one of the most economical ways to freshen up a dull or dated room.

**6. Don't forget to look down.** Floors in Park City always take a beating and if you have pets and kids they have taken their toll for sure. Buyers always notice and comment on flooring whether it is stone, hardwood or carpeting. Have your carpets professionally cleaned to remove stains and odors. Have your hard wood floors cleaned and polished and don't forget all the baseboards. Remove all those little area rugs to reveal your homes stone and tile in the bathrooms and kitchen.

**7. Outdoor living.** Outdoor living spaces are high on the list for buyers in the Park City area. Make sure to showcase them - whether it is a small patio or an expansive deck - all outdoor spaces can be staged to show buyers this additional living space.

**8. Furniture arrangement.** When it comes to showcasing your living

spaces, furniture plays a key role. Too much furniture can make your rooms appear small and cluttered. Old, worn and outdated furniture never appeals to buyers either. A professional stager can help to rearrange furniture to show off the rooms assets, create desired flow, and focus on the selling features.

**9. Wonderful wood.** Homes in this area feature lots and lots of wood which buyers love. Take the time to clean all wood surfaces with a good wood soap such as Murphy's oil soap and then give the wood a conditioning treatment with wood polish or oil. Your kitchen cabinets and bathroom doors will look brand new again.

**10. Pack it now!** You are moving anyway - isn't that the whole idea here? Pack up your stuff: clean out your closets. Pack up all your winter clothing and boots (It's summer now anyway), extra coats, linens, blankets, toys, etc. The more you have packed up now the less you will have to deal with later and you will also be making it so much easier to maintain your streamlined home for showings.

