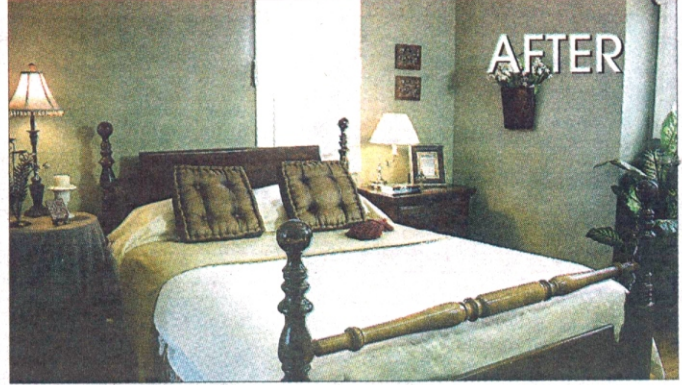


housewise



BEFORE



AFTER

► Colleen O'Hara has used many of the homeowner's items, in addition to a few of her own, to refine and refresh both rooms in preparation for sale.



BEFORE



AFTER

Staging your home to sell STORY AND PHOTOS BY SANDY BUNYAN

"With staging everyone wins," says Colleen O'Hara, Accredited Staging Professional (ASP) and owner of Maximum Staging and Decorating. "Staging makes you money – it's cheaper than your first price reduction."

Homeowners will often decide to lower their price instead of getting their homes ready to sell. Costs vary, but if you consider that it's only a small fraction of your asking price, often lower than one per cent, having your home professionally staged is a very wise investment. "Offers generally come in close to, or at the listed price – between 96-100 per cent of the price," states O'Hara. But she has also made a few sellers very happy with above-asking-price offers that they just couldn't refuse.

It's not just homeowners that hire O'Hara. Realtors use her services as well, some hiring her right from the start, but often she'll be called in to stage a home that

just isn't selling. "Ideally, your home should be ready before it's listed," says O'Hara, "so that when it hits the market, it looks its absolute best. First impressions count. Potential buyers will start to make up their minds within seconds of seeing your home, so it's vital that the entrance and first floor 'wow' the buyer."

O'Hara guarantees to make your house look like a model show home, and not all homes require a lot. Working with what you've got, when possible, she will transform your home into a 'showpiece', by editing, reorienting or relocating your items and renting pieces you need. She will provide all that's required, offering a huge range of services. She'll work within your budget, with no job being too large, or too small. With access to a large network of tradespeople, O'Hara organizes and co-ordinates all of the necessary services – painters, carpenters, electricians, landscapers, etc., – and the process is quick. "Normally, your home is ready

to be listed within four days of my initial visit."

O'Hara will supply all of the accessories including rugs, pictures, plants, etc., and the first two weeks of rental is free. Her staged homes usually sell within 10 working days, but in the unlikely event that your home hasn't sold after two weeks, rental fees will commence. Costs vary, generally ranging from \$50-\$70 per week. Furniture rentals are extra, with weekly rates of approximately \$9-\$22 per room.

For more information, or to purchase O'Hara's new staging, organizing and getting your house on the market DVD, visit www.maximumstaging.com, or call 905-975-7411.

Housewise is designed to advise and educate buyers and sellers in the real estate market. Send questions or suggestions to sbunyan1@cokeco.ca with "spechousewise" in the subject line.