

Last Minute

Houseguests?

Tips for Tidying Up in a Flash



Nothing sparks panic like an unexpected guest – especially if your house isn't tidy. Don't worry. "Clear looks clean", says Linda Cobb a former cleaning company owner. Here are a few of her tips for a quick cleanup:

Hide the evidence. Stash clutter in the dishwasher, laundry hamper, oven or garage. Avoid the hall closet which you're likely to use when you have company.

Be strategic. Focus your tidying on your living room and the main bathroom. Once you've wiped the mirror and counters, close the bathtub curtain and replace your everyday towels and mat with attractive ones.

Focus on the center. Clean the center of any room at eye level (both standing and seated), which is where eyes naturally gravitate.

Use window cleaner or wipes to clean countertops and dull surfaces, including bathroom chrome, mirrors, kitchen

appliances and your front door. Everything will shimmer softly.

Throw visitors off the scent. Mask pet odors with room fresheners. Or chop lemons in your garbage disposal and simmer apples or oranges with cinnamon on the stove. "It smells natural and is comforting, not like you've just used cleaning products," Cobb says.

Let there be light. Open the curtains and light some candles. Everything will look cleaner and brighter, and it doesn't look like your trying to hide something. Great music also distracts guests from seeing clutter.

"Last but not least, don't sweat it," Cobb says. Take a deep breath. As long as you're smiling when you open the door and are enjoying yourself, your guests will, too.

Part two of a five part series

Target renovations for the best return when you sell

1960s houses: Replace windows, update cabinets and evict termites

Sid Davis, a Salt Lake City real estate broker and author of *Home Makeovers That Sell* says, "Single-pane windows are as dated as love beads."

If you've got the old, single paned aluminum slider windows, absolutely upgrade those. You can do wonders with a '60s kitchen by replacing dated cabinet hardware with stainless steel or nickel knobs, pulls and hinges. If the cabinets are solid wood, Davis suggests these steps before replacing them: clean, sand, stain or paint, and re-veneer. If that won't help, try replacing the doors before getting all new cabinets.

Termites, if present, will have had sufficient time to cause significant damage to '60s homes in Southern states, says Wendy Patton, co-author of *Making Hard Cash in a Soft Real Estate Market*. Her advice: Inspect immediately and treat annually.

If your home is from another decade call me for tips regarding renovating your property.

Mortgage rates poised to jump as Fed cuts funds

The Federal Reserve is poised to turn off a major money spigot that has helped to sustain the ailing real estate sector, as an extraordinary program under which the Fed has pumped \$1.25 trillion into the mortgage market is slated to end March 31st. "Housing has been on government life support, and without it the crash would have been much more severe," said Mark Zandi, chief economist with Moody's Economy.com in Pennsylvania. "This spring and summer as those policy efforts unwind; we most likely will see mortgage rates move higher and more house-price declines"

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers."

-- Lord Tennyson

| Santa Cruz County Single Family Residential | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----|----------|-----|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| Dec. 2009 | Closed Sales | 143 | Avg. DOM | 95 | Median Price | \$555,000 | %LP Rec'd 96.5 |
| Jan. 2010 | Closed Sales | 94 | Avg. DOM | 92 | Median Price | \$480,000 | %LP Rec'd 98.9 |
| Santa Cruz County Condos | | | | | | | |
| Dec. 2009 | Closed Sales | 35 | Avg. DOM | 104 | Median Price | \$350,000 | %LP Rec'd 95.4 |
| Jan. 2010 | Closed Sales | 22 | Avg. DOM | 131 | Median Price | \$313,500 | %LP Rec'd 94.8 |

Interest Rates*

30 year fixed conforming
5.00%
30 year fixed jumbo
5.25%
5/1 ARM conforming
4.00%

* As of 03/01/2010

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