

Home staging can provide a new way to sell

By YUDISLADY FERNANDEZ

With competition stiff in residential real estate sales, local interior designers are in high demand for their staging services, capable of turning an empty condo into a fully-furnished home in 24 hours.

Home staging gives real estate agents new tools and — possibly a needed edge — to market a home for rent or sale.

“People cannot visualize a home unstaged,” said home designer Monica Suleski, owner of Miami-based Eclectic Elements. “In this economy, people want to lowball you,” she said, so the way to get the best price is to make the house look good.

Staging services are commonly used by residential properties from mansions to condos, hotels and office spaces.

Ms. Suleski, who has been in the design business 20 years, says to prepare a home for sale or rent, professional stagers have to work with the layout of the home, eliminate clutter, and edit and arrange furniture to enhance the home’s appeal.

Designers focus on all the details, from the paint for interior walls to selecting furniture and lighting fixtures and decorative plants to dress up the space, she said.

Time also plays a factor.

With the rental market in an upswing, some real estate agents need homes to be staged within 24 hours, she said, because each day, homeowners have a property Ne on the market they lose money.

To meet those deadlines, Ms.

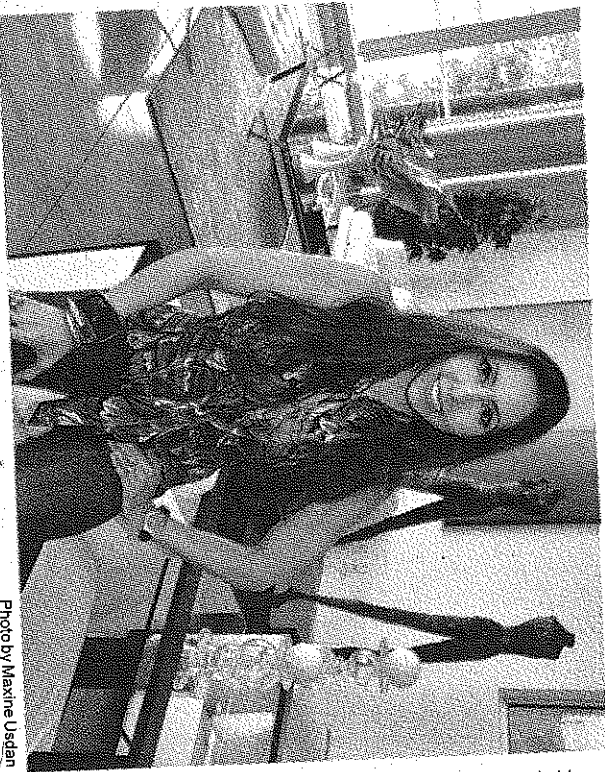


Photo by Maxine Usdan

Monica Suleski of Miami-based Eclectic Elements sees home staging as a way to make a house more appealing and garner a better price.

Suleski has a warehouse where she keeps a large stock of modern and contemporary furniture. She also has a 20,000-square-foot showroom at 2227 Coral Way.

With a team of 20 designers working by her side, Ms. Suleski transforms properties in Coral Gables, Miami Beach and Bal Harbour as she stages properties ranging from \$200,000 to \$20 million in value.

But it’s not just developers and real estate agents who are keeping interior designers busy.

Ms. Suleski works with local production companies and networks, renting them luxury furniture for their programs such as Telemundo soap opera El Cartel and BET’s reality show College Hill.

While real estate agents are skilled at buying and selling

“The owner doesn’t have to renovate, but instead can dress the place without costing as much money or effort,” she said.

If the buyer wants to keep the furniture it can be added to the sale price, she added.

Design company Tui Lifestyle is assembling complete design furnishing packages at the recently completed three-property development Icon Brickell, showcasing three floor models: traditional, contemporary and Asian-themed.

“For sale associates it’s great because a lot of people can’t visualize space,” said Jason Atkins, president of Tui Lifestyle.

The model units are stocked with kitchenware, linens and sheets, artwork and furniture, he said.

Package prices range from \$2,800 up to \$26,000 and de-

sign elements can be mixed and matched.

If a buyer opts to buy an Icon unit and requests for the design to be duplicated, Mr. Atkins said, the company can do that within 72 hours. “We have inventory for everything.”

Tui Lifestyle’s turnkey service at the Icon includes a division at which it rents furniture to residents in the rental apartments.

The company also designs model units for residential properties such as condo complexes 50 Biscayne, the Trump Towers in Sunny Isles Beach and the residences at New Harbour House in Bal Harbour, Mr. Atkins said.

“People are attracted to a building for the property and common areas and amenities, but at the end of the day, people get it [the property] for the home.”

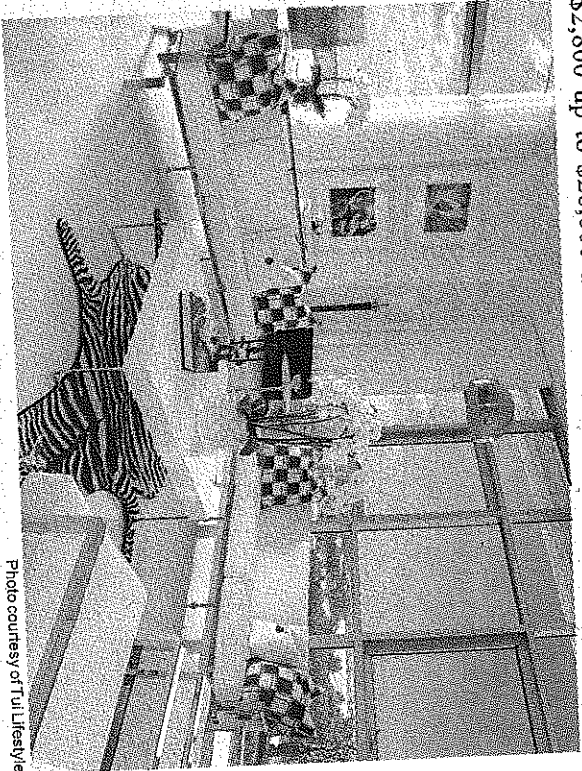


Photo courtesy of Tui Lifestyle

An innovative living room from design company Tui Lifestyle, which is assembling design packages for the Icon Brickell development.