



Real Estate



International baseball

In 1934, perhaps the greatest American All-Star team set sail for Japan. **Page I-20**

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THE NEW MEXICAN



DEBBIE TRAVIS
House to Home

Tracking trends into next year

Given what my business is, you might imagine that I trend-hop at least once a year to keep up with the latest and coolest designs. Not so. I repaint and decorate my home about every five years, which is not excessive. But tracking the trends keeps life interesting.

I will always cleave to the character and beauty of Old World finishes. I find that the warmth and textures of plaster and wood patinas have unbeatable longevity — they are soothing and comfortable. However, I am also passionate about innovation in design. A new color that makes me smile, a fresh combination of shapes and materials, or a clever twist on a common feature is thrilling to me.

We can't completely redo our homes every year any more than we can throw out last year's wardrobe. Smart shoppers know how to integrate a few new pieces into their existing scheme. This is the secret to feeling au courant in the real world. So what's up for 2007?

Humor seems to be a big part of the eclectic design picture this year. That flocked wallpaper we loved to hate is hot once again, but this time in bigger and bolder patterns. No more thought of as stuffy, this retro paper pairs up with molded contemporary furniture and bright, spicy colors for a fresh, new look.

Building an aura of opulence continues to be a strong trend. Take the cue from grand hotel foyers. Look up and marvel at the ornate ceilings that are works of art. Rows of plaster moldings, carved medallions, gilding and fantasy murals crown these entranceways in luxurious glory. You can transfer this decorative element to your own home, suited to a dining room or den as well as the hall. Look for ornamental trims and medallions made from wood, MDF and paintable plastics specifically designed for ceilings at your building center to replace the labor-intensive and high-cost hand-plastered details from the past. Paint will unify the overall pattern, then highlight with color and gold paint.

The rich and exotic allure of wood plays a big part in luxurious living. Dark mahogany or walnut wood and veneers, and wood that has been painted in a smooth, dark shade are most popular. Expensive wall panels, bookshelves and built-in storage in the library shown here evoke a sense of sumptuous comfort. However, all is not as it appears. The walls are actually constructed of simple plywood, wood veneer and moldings, and then aged, stained and varnished to a rich sheen.

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Photos courtesy of Casa Milagros Interiors

Staging during the holidays creates a challenge — utilizing tasteful, simple decorations that work with the home's design enhance, rather than detract, from the space's features. Creating a warm, welcoming palette is key and utilizing what a homeowner already has saves time and money. Realtor April King of Equity Realty, LLC, Santa Fe, hired Casa Milagros Interiors to stage her soon-to-be listed condo in the South Capitol neighborhood for a holiday open house. Above is the result. Below is the condo before the staging.

Setting the stage for a sale

Preparing a home for the market can pay off big time

By **Heather Wood**
For The New Mexican

Most Realtors and homeowners are familiar with the concept of staging a home for sale. But often, when people think of staging, they tend to think of high-dollar vacant homes filled to the brim with designer furniture. In fact, staging is simply the process of preparing a home for sale, vacant or occupied, high-dollar or not. The reality is that most homes on the market today are occupied and could benefit from some TLC before showing.

Like it or not, a home buyer perceives a home purchase as buying something new — even if the home is 100 years old.

Also referred to as home enhancing, home fluffing, etc., the end result of staging is that the listing stands out from the competition — and sells for the highest possible price in the shortest possible time.

According to the National Association of Realtors, for every \$1,000 sellers put into staging, they get \$4,000 back. The average increase over the listing price is 6.32 percent — enough to cover the Realtor fees. On a \$500,000 house, the added value of staging is an impressive \$32,000.

It's best to stage a home



before listing, before open houses and promotional photos are taken, so it shows beautifully from the start. And it's always a good idea to stage before a price reduction.

Tom Trujillo of Prudential Santa Fe Real Estate offers a complimentary staging consultation from a local stager/home enhancer to all his listing clients.

"It helps sellers understand

what buyers want to see when they're buying a home," Trujillo said. "When a home is not properly staged it slows down the selling process. ... Working with a professional stager really helps move a listing."

Television shows such as HGTV's *Designed to Sell* and A&E's *Sell This House* have increased consumer awareness about the benefits of staging. Yet most people are slow to

implement changes in their own home or listing because they have many unanswered questions.

How much will it cost? Where do I find a qualified stager? I know it works in California, but what about Santa Fe? And why do I need to redecorate? I like how my house is decorated!

The goal of any good staging is to help a house stand

out from the competition so it will sell as quickly as possible and for the best possible price. According to ShowHomes.com, in a 2004 survey of Realtors, almost two-thirds of respondents estimated that a staged home, kept in "show to sell" condition, sells for a price that is between 10 percent to 20 percent higher than an unstaged

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