

Spring Market- Prepare Now

Despite the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, now is the perfect time to start laying the groundwork for a successful sale. This is especially true in Lamorinda where the “spring” market has gotten progressively earlier; school enrollment begins in the early spring which means many buyers are looking to close on their new home even earlier in the year to ensure that their child is able to attend neighborhood schools. It is more important than ever to start making your to-do list now if you want to take advantage of this typically strong early selling market.

We always suggest that sellers spend time decluttering and getting rid of things that they no longer use or need. Consider donating your unwanted treasures. These donations not only help deserving non-profits, but your generosity will be repaid come tax time when you are looking for those itemized charitable deductions.

Now is also the time to start getting quotes, picking finishes and lining up contractors if you plan to make updates to your home prior to selling. Make sure that you consult with your Realtor throughout this process to ensure that you are making choices that will appeal to current buyers. It is important to make sure that the money you put into upgrades will translate into more profit at the close of escrow. However, there are some circumstances in which it does not make financial sense to make updates in advance of a sale. In this case or when the budget for repairs and upgrades is limited, I often recommend just a simple coat of paint. It can go a long way to brightening up a house.

And finally, take a good look at what your home is worth before you go full speed ahead. This means looking beyond your Zestimate and seeking the advice of a local Realtor who understands the nuances of the Lamorinda market. They can help you to evaluate your situations and make sure your expectations are realistic and that a move makes financial sense.

We wish you and your family a wonderful and restful holiday season.

Please feel free to contact us with your real estate questions - Erin at erin@MartinHomesTeam.com or Darrick at darrick@MartinHomesTeam.com.



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Making your holiday parties bright

By Amanda Eck



Photos Amanda Eck

The Holidays are fast approaching and there's lots of hustle and bustle happening. The endless list of gifts to buy and parties to attend can be daunting. But I do enjoy setting aside time to entertain friends and family in my home. Over the years I have hosted countless cooking exchange parties, Christmas tea parties, and pajama and wine nights. I have learned to streamline my party preparedness so that I can actually enjoy my guests instead of feeling completely wiped by the time the doorbell rings.

Here are a few of my holiday party tips:

A week before your event shop for all your nonperishable items: Paper goods, wine, coffee, etc. Keep your list with you at all times, so when you are out and about you won't forget something. Or if you are tech savvy, download a “to-do” list app. I am old school and still prefer to write things on paper.

Keep the décor simple: Fresh flowers or greenery and candles are your best friends. Make sure to use unscented candles near food. No one likes to smell aude de gardenia while eating hummus dip.

Keep the menu simple: This is not the time to try that new recipe you found on Pinterest. Keep to your “go-to”s and crowd pleasers. Or be sneaky like me and pick up some yummy pastries from La Chataigne bakery in Lafayette or some tasty orzo pasta from the Whole Foods' deli. From that point on it's all about presentation. I like to use unique items to serve or display the food.

... continued on page D10