



Designer Red Barrineuvo says when taking photos to sell your home, don't stage it to look like a showroom. Instead, create a comfortable vibe to give a lived-in yet organized impression.

# GET YOUR HOME READY FOR ITS CLOSEUP

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It's often been said that a picture tells a thousand words and that's never been truer in real estate, as prospective buyers flock to the internet in the wake of cancelled open houses, with many even purchasing a home through an online listing.

Red Barrineuvo, principal designer of Redesign4More and property stylist for HGTV Canada's Hot Market, shares some of his secrets to transforming lived-in living quarters into dreamy spaces through the lens:

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**EDIT YOUR FURNISHINGS**

Remove furniture that doesn't need to be there, such as desks in bedrooms, to create more space. "You're selling the space, so you have to show as much of it as possible. Most people looking at the photos want a bigger house or to upgrade their living conditions," he says.

In the kitchen, have no more than two appliances, such as a blender and an espresso machine, on the countertop. Remove family photos, personal hygiene and other personal belongings that might distract potential buyers.

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**REPAINT IN A NEUTRAL COLOUR**

Giving your walls a fresh coat of paint is an affordable upgrade, especially if you haven't painted in a while, or if your home has "over-bearing colours" like red or lime green. Creams and off-whites are new again, greys remain on trend and beiges are returning to the spotlight.

Barrineuvo recommends painting the entire house in the same colour, including bathrooms and the basement. "Even if it's just a slightly open concept, it will look like one big space if everything is the same colour." If you're not up to the task of painting the entire home, paint at least the main floor in one neutral colour.

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**INTRODUCE POPS OF COLOUR**

When introducing colour through accessories like pillows,

area rugs and artwork, Barrineuvo takes his cues from the season. If it's summer, he's drawn to blues and greens with splash of yellows and oranges, and in the spring he recommends pinks, greens and lavenders.

In the fall and winter, he opts for warm colours like oranges and yellows with greys and blacks or organic colours like browns. Incorporate each hue throughout the house. "That way, the whole house looks put together properly."

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**PAY ATTENTION TO FURNITURE**

Consider the size of your furniture in proportion to the space, and remember its placement should define areas and can make or break the look and feel of a room. Floating sofas and chairs in the middle of the room instead of against walls can make an oversized room feel more intimate. Find or establish a focal point, such as an architectural feature, a window, a painting or a light fixture, and arrange furniture accordingly. "Without a focal point, a room will look disoriented," says Barrineuvo.

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**CREATE A COMFORTABLE VIBE**

Don't stage your home to look like a showroom. That means foregoing things like a dining room that has been formally set in favour of a lived-in yet organized look, the stylist advises. Hide cables along baseboards, under carpet or behind walls. Use cable or zip ties to neatly run cables at the back of the TV and on computers alongside or behind furniture, media consoles and cabinets. Everything that needs to be repaired should be done before photos are taken.

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**HIRE PROFESSIONALS**

Home staging may be part of your real estate agent's services, but if not, consider investing in a professional, and when it comes to taking photos, don't rely on your smartphone. Barrineuvo recommends hiring a professional who can produce magazine-quality images that will allow prospective buyers to imagine themselves living there.



Have no more than two small appliances on the countertop, such as a blender and an espresso machine.



Giving your walls a fresh coat of paint is an affordable upgrade. Use a neutral colour, says Red Barrineuvo.



Introduce pops of colour through accessories like area rugs and artwork, taking a colour cue from the season.



Consider the size and placement of your furniture in each room.