

Cool comfort can create a hot sale



CHYKA KEEBAUGH

Engage the senses and add warmth when selling in winter, writes **Jack Boronovskis**

AS the mercury falls and the days shorten, many Melburnians — including homebuyers — settle into hibernation. So it's important for your home to make a good first impression if you're planning to sell.

We asked industry experts for their tips on how to style your property in winter to get the best sale price.

A SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Le Grand Maison director and founder Rod Le Grand said it was important to take a holistic approach when styling ahead of open for inspections in the colder months.

"For me, styling is about engaging as many senses as possible for a potential buyer," Mr Le Grand said.

"I truly believe that regardless of size or price point, it's all about the whole experience."

Simple options to add a sense of warmth included putting out hot cocoa and quiches, Mr Le Grand said.

Sherbrooke Manor, a charming Sherbrooke estate styled by Le Grand Maison ahead of its sales campaign, sold earlier this month after less than a week on the market.

"It was cold on our opening weekend so I got there early and lit every fireplace. I put on green wood so it crackles, so you actually hear the warmth," Mr Le Grand said.

"I made sure the bathrooms were dry and there was no condensation.

"It sounds so simple but it makes a massive difference in the eyes of people viewing it."

Too often overlooked in colder months, outdoor entertaining spaces could easily showcase full-year appeal, Mr Le Grand said.

"It's worth going and buying a gas heater, getting cafe blinds installed, particularly for young families, because that's an extra living space for them," he said.

"If you go to Bunnings or any of the outdoor stores, you can buy portable fire pits. That's three senses engaged just by one thing."

Although winter often felt bleak and dreary, Mr Le Grand said you should try to let in as much natural light as possible.

"Winter sunshine's different to summer sunshine," he said. "In the rooms that do have natural sunshine coming in, make sure the blinds are fully up. It will only make the room feel cosier."

Celebrity Melbourne homemaker and author Chyka Keebaugh said looking at your home's spaces through a fresh set of eyes gave a new perspective on how to make them work to your advantage.

The former *Real Housewives of Melbourne* star said winter was the time to evoke a sense of warmth in your home.

"In winter I love beautiful warm shades of tan, caramel and leather," Ms Keebaugh said.

"Use cushions and throws to add these colours onto your couch and chairs.

"You will find these neutral tones work well pretty much with any colour.

"If you have a fireplace, fill up a

COST-EFFECTIVE STYLING TIPS

- Clean up and declutter
- Display fresh winter flowers and plants
- Don't forget the outdoor spaces
- Take advantage of fireplaces
- Use glowing scented candles
- Use neutral colours
- Maximise sunlight
- Layer up with cushions and throws
- Put the heating on before the inspection
- Use umbrellas and outdoor heaters in the backyard
- Check for condensation
- Put out hot cocoa
- Request shoes off and have doormats

basket with firewood to create that cosy feeling."

Ms Keebaugh said preparing for open for inspections was a great opportunity to declutter and make your home look the way you always wanted it to.

In winter, wicker baskets as toy boxes created warmth in indoor playrooms, while lanterns and battery candles made the outdoors glow invitingly and winter flowers and potted plants added life indoors and outdoors, she said.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

Property Stylists of Melbourne director Krystal Johnson said it was little things that counted when selling in a winter market.



SHERBROOKE MANOR



"Request that shoes remain off, or invest in decent doormats to avoid scuffing or dirtying floors," Ms Johnson said.

"Heat the house a degree or two warmer than usual and then set the temperature at normal — this prevents the heat from kicking on when the buyer is present.

"You want the temperature inside to be comfortable and to give the buyer more incentive to linger, especially on a cold day."

Rich jewel tones paired with neutral colours were Ms Johnson's must-use colours over winter. "Think forest green, plum, navy, rusty orange and rich mustard," she said.

Adding extra layers to beds made them look denser and allowed

potential buyers to imagine themselves slipping under the sheets and snuggling in. "Layers in the form of throw rugs, plump cushions and plush floor rugs — especially in non-carpeted living spaces — play a vital role in ensuring your home feels cosy in winter," Ms Johnson said.

Vendor Marketing principal adviser Craig Knudsen said the colder months were as good as any time to sell a home, if well prepared. "Winter actually brings an opportunity to show off some of your home's most appealing characteristics," Mr Knudsen said.

"Nothing says 'comfortable and cosy' like a blazing fire, warm rooms, a few glowing candles and soft music.

"People think, 'if it's so nice in winter it will be great at any time.'"