

Clean, uncluttered design helps attract buyers in today's competitive market. Hardwood flooring, a wall-mounted ethanol fireplace and simple furniture shows how space can be used.



# CLEAN LINES HELP A HOME SELL: SURVEY

**G**etting your home ready to sell? Think, clean, uncluttered interiors to make an impression on buyers, according to a new survey of real estate agents.

Last month there were 5,552 homes for sale in Greater Vancouver, 2,480 in the Fraser Valley and 445 listed in Chilliwack, according to real estate board MLS statistics. Total listings are down slightly from a year ago but remain relatively high.

Because of the competition, "Sellers are becoming increasingly aware of the value of presenting a home with buyers appeal, and are becoming more willing to go the extra mile as they compete for buyers," the survey found.

The survey of 700 real estate agents, found the following:

- \* 94 percent say their sellers are getting rid of clutter and making cosmetic updates, such as fresh paint and minor repairs.

- \* 60 percent of Canadian respondents agree that cli-

ents are willing to "de-personalize" the home.

- \* 59 percent of respondents say sellers are even bringing in new home decorations or furniture to help make the home more appealing.

"When marketing your home, it's important to help buyers imagine themselves living in the property. De-cluttering and de-personalizing is crucial to this process," says Susanita de Diego, a consumer specialist with Coldwell Banker. "Sellers need to recognize that while demand remains strong, their home is competing with other listings to get results. I always advise sellers that if their home is presented with a minimum of clutter and distracting personal items, it will improve their chances of a successful sale."

Sellers take note: when it comes to selecting a home, buyers are going back to the basics. They value new or updated kitchens, bathrooms and open floor plans as the most important features for a new home.

- \* 33 percent of agents surveyed say that a new

or updated kitchen is the most important feature to homebuyers.

- \* 14 percent say the most important feature to homebuyers is an open floor plan, while 12 percent say it is a new or updated bathroom.

- \* Only 1 percent of the real estate professionals surveyed say they believe that entertainment rooms or finished basements are the most important feature.

Most Canadian home sellers believe they have priced their home at market value and less than one-third said they likely reduce the price dramatically to land a sale, the survey found.

"Canada continues to enjoy near historic low interest rates, and a good inventory of homes for sale. This supports demand, and sellers are continuing to price their homes according to our healthy market condition," the survey concludes.

Talk to your local Realtor about the best sell strategies in today's market.