

HYPE

EVERY HOME'S A STAGE ...



EXTRA

YOUR
MULTINETWORK
UNIVERSE

... AND A&E'S "SELL THIS HOUSE" MAKES THE OWNERS ITS PLAYERS.
BY ELAINE BERGSTROM

What's a former Miss World Canada and a recent guest star on *The Practice* and *C.S.I.: Miami* doing in front of a camera dressed in coveralls with a paintbrush in her hand? For Tanya Memme, the multiskilled host of A&E's *Sell This House*, it's in her blood. "I grew up on a farm and am definitely a tomboy at heart. I remodeled my apartment. I painted it. For me, this show wasn't that big a change from what I've always done."

Sell This House, airing on A&E Sundays at 4pm, also has an economic premise that Memme relishes. "With a lot of other home decorating shows, changes can get really expensive. With *Sell This House*, we do them on such a small budget that people watching think, 'Wow! I can do this myself,'" she says.

Aided by one of its sponsors, a national real estate firm, the show searches the country for properties that are appropriately priced but have been on the market for weeks longer than average. "We narrow our list down to just a few houses, then we interview

the owners. We look for people who are enthusiastic about what we are going to do," Memme says.

Shooting for each house takes three days. This includes an initial tour of the house, meeting the owners and taping the first open house with hidden cameras. The home makeover — which Memme calls "restaging" rather than remodeling — takes an additional day and a half. Shooting concludes with the comments of the same potential buyers who toured the home earlier coming back for a second look.

Memme works alongside the sellers to redo each house, following the suggestions of the show's designer, Roger Hazard.

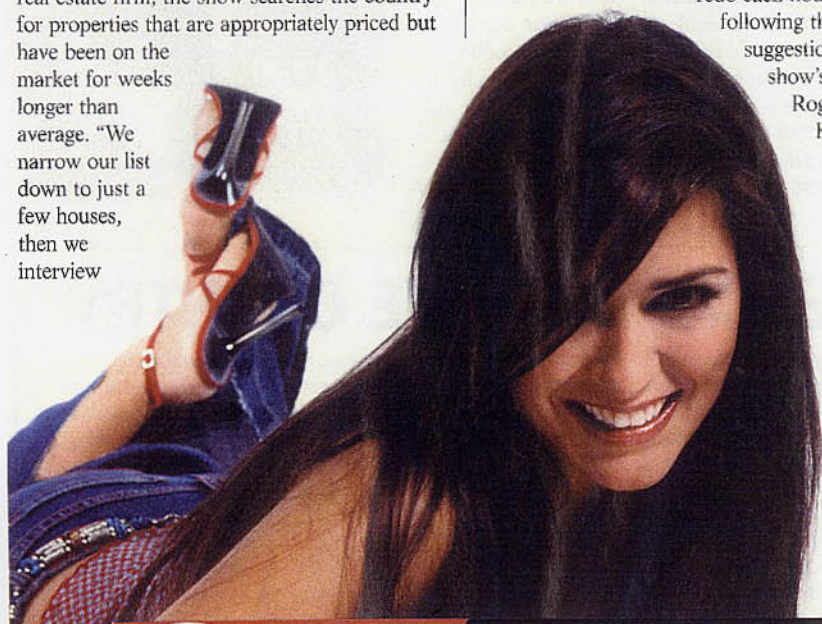


Tanya Memme and Roger Hazard

"I'm the show psychologist," says Memme. "My role is to make the homeowner feel comfortable. One reason I help out with the restaging is to let them know I am there for them, too; that I'm a part of the process."

Memme adds that restaging is done to create a neutral space, one in which buyers can see themselves living. "There is a tremendous psychological element at work here. Whether buyers know it or not, so much depends on how they feel when they first enter a home. Is it homey? Is it comfortable? Does it smell fresh? If a house doesn't pass these [tests], buyers aren't going to go to the next level of really looking at the construction and the architecture. It's unbelievable the difference restaging makes."

Sell This House, which will begin airing new episodes in January, has attracted an audience beyond the realm of home sellers and real estate agents, and Memme isn't surprised. "The home design and restaging idea is epidemic right now. People are addicted to watching it. I can't tell you how many people on the street have stopped me to say how much they love this show."



Channel Guide[®]

December 2003

Magazine

WA