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BRUCE KELLMAN | THE NEWS TRIBUNE

Sandy and Gary Sample listen to instructions from camera operator Chris Raau on Monday. Standing in the doorway is Tanya Memme, host of the A&E television program "Sell This House." The show's designer is giving the Samples advice on "re staging" their home at 6117 N. 23rd St. to better attract a buyer.

Lights, camera, now let's 'Sell This House'

TV program

features fix-ups

of couple's

West End home

to make it sell

quicker

BY BARBARA CLEMENTS
The News Tribune

Sandy and Gary Sample open the door to welcome A&E producer Tanya Memme into their split-level home.

"Hi, Tanya," Sandy Sample enthuses as Memme, the host of the new home fix-up reality show, enters their West End home off North Defiance Street. A camera crew catches every moment.

"I've never been to Tacoma before," Memme chirps back.
Cut.

"Let's do it again," says the show's producer.

Last week, at the urging of their Realtor, the Samples agreed to become the first Tacoma home to be featured on A&E's "Sell This House," a new series just renewed by the cable network for a second season.

On Monday, the filming began.

On the way back to her front door to reshoot the scene, Sandy Sample asked, "What have I gotten myself into?"

This time, the producer urged more sparkle, more enthusiasm.

Despite the good-natured grumbling and some eye rolling, Sample went back for another take. Anything for the cause — which in this case is selling the couple's home, deemed too big for retirement living.

The premise of the TV series is simple, and low-budget. Producers go to a city and find a home that has been on the market for awhile. The Samples' home hasn't sold for three months and recently was reduced to a list price of \$219,950.

The A&E hosts — Memme and show designer Roger Hazard — take in prospective buyers to review the house, as is, then give the couple tips on fixing it up for around \$300 to \$400. On Wednesday, the same prospective buyers will take another walk-through to critique the results.

In between, the homeowners will get their friends and family to help with the needed touch-ups in order to sell the house quickly — which usually happens, Memme said.

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Sell

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She's seen houses sold on the second walk-through.

Many of the homes featured in the series are like the Samples' Tacoma residence — cluttered, with outdated styles and furniture, Memme said.

"The first thing you typically see in a house that isn't selling is that the staging is wrong," Memme said.

Some of the strikes against the Samples' house:

- Old, rust-colored shag carpets.
- Lots of souvenirs from the couple's travels to Bangkok.

Three tips from the pros

Recommendations from the A&E crew on selling a home:

Emphasize the best: Move things around to highlight strengths. Many homes emphasize the wrong things, said host Tanya Memme. "Staging," she said, "makes a huge difference."

Get rid of clutter: If you're not going to bring it with you, get rid of it now, said show designer Roger Hazard. At least rent a storage unit while showing your home, he said.

Depersonalize your home: Think neutral colors on the wall and for the carpet, Hazard said. And lose the knickknacks — they distract potential buyers, who can't see past your family pictures to the home's potential.

friends, under Hazard's direction, will be in de-clutter mode. As of Monday afternoon, Hazard was unclear on his plan of action for the shag carpet.

But Hazard was certain of one thing: The Samples would be doing most of the work themselves.

"Hey, this is reality television," Hazard said. "This is what you do when you sell your home."

This episode, and the fate of the Samples' home, will air on the A&E network about a month or two from now, as will two other South Sound makeovers, one featuring a home in Gig Harbor and another home in Auburn. The show airs at 5:30 p.m. Sundays.

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