

# Suburban spit and polish

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Ours is a purely functional house. There is no great aesthetic at work here. It is clearly the home of two working parents and a growing child. While the place is far from being in shambles I'd say what best typifies the design motif is suburban hillbilly or maybe white collar trash.

The majority of furniture is begged, borrowed or stolen. We're a single rung above student housing. Cinderblock shelves give way to pressboard and laminates. The gerry-rigged Led Zeppelin curtain is replaced with off color blinds and the prized Reservoir Dogs poster is now generic framed art, the stock photography of interior design.

With the prospect of selling our home becoming a reality we knew we needed professional help. Off to the Twitter verse where I follow a local Real Estate expert, I figured he might be able to recommend a good stager. And so that's how we ended up with [Lynda Schmidt](#). Lynda is the real deal.

Lynda scheduled two hours to go through our place, top to bottom. She's careful to preface the inspection. "*Don't take it personal – your house has been set up for the way you live, now you need to set it up to help you sell.*" Our dog's breakfast of cabinets, shelves and tables that barely contained the onslaught of day to day stuff that accumulates over the course of years needed to go, along with the day-glow pumpkin on the kitchen walls. That was determined in the first five minutes.



Over the next few hours Lynda pulled together a comprehensive binder of recommendations. Simple, commonsense stuff working with the bones of what we have and our willingness to invest some sweat equity into the project. 2" blinds throughout, carpet cleaning, neutral but not insipid paint colors, a complete purge of personal effects, updated lighting, new countertops and some minor repairs. Open up the space and be sure each room's purpose is clear.

It sounds easy doesn't it? Seems like anyone can be a stager. Sure you've picked out the absolutely perfect vase to accompany your Victorian table in the front lobby of your home and all your friends tell you what impeccable taste you have – doesn't mean you're going to be doing much good staging a down on it's luck two storey with hand me down furniture and a limited budget. A good stager needs to work with what they have at hand. Lynda's been at this for over 25 years so we're not just getting a clear perspective forged over years of experience — we're getting her contacts as well. Her carpenter was fantastic! As someone with experience working with more "fly-by-night" journeymen, an honest, skilled labourer is worth his weight in gold. Lynda provided a great deal on an inexpensive countertop and install, we even got her discount on paints. But really we got armed with a plan, lots of moral support and an unflinching eye. We've got enough balls in the air trying to sell the place – it's nice to have professional help.

You're not going to see us on the pages of Architectural Digest anytime soon but the glamour shots that are going to accompany our listing look like they're from someone else's home. All things considered I'd say that's a good thing.



**DAVID AND CHRISTINE YOON - AYR**