



After staging

The living room at 444 W. 19th St., Penthouse 2



Before staging

## Innovative Ways to Market Real Estate

BY CATHERINE YANG  
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

With supply as constrained as it is in Manhattan, most properties don't need much help to sell quickly at the asking price. Many agents are telling sellers to make prices nonnegotiable and buyers who have already lost out on properties know that.

Nonetheless, presentation still makes a difference, and a well-presented property can add value for a seller.

Typically, a listing agent will try to create a sense of urgency when putting a property on the market. By reaching out to as many potential buyers as possible and getting everyone in at an open house, the property can sell very quickly.

The purpose of marketing the property is to create visibility and desirability, and Shaun Osher, CEO and co-founder of the boutique real estate company CORE in New York City, said his team takes it to the next level.

### Marketing Key

"We're like a SWAT team," Osher said. Rather than a typical brokerage, CORE sees itself as a marketing agency first. "We're pioneers of marketing with respect to marketing and sales, and the industry itself."

Marketing a property is about making sure any property is shown in the best possible light, said broker Tom Postilio, a founding member of CORE.

"While we can't create the market and we don't know absolutely what a property is going to sell for, we can make sure it is perceived by the marketplace as well as it possibly can," Postilio said.

### Staging

Staging helps define a space, Postilio said. Simple as it sounds, oftentimes an occupied apartment is laid out in the way that suits the seller's needs, but not the buyer's.

CORE broker Tony Sargent said presenting a property is like telling a story.

Last year, Sargent had a listing centered between the Lower East Side, NoLita, and the East Village. "For me, that was like the cultural heartbeat

of New York," Sargent said.

The property, located close to the Bowery Wall, was in an art-filled neighborhood, and Sargent came up with the idea to collaborate with a gallery. Rather than a typical open house, people were able to walk through the staged property and see art on the walls they could actually buy.



**My approach to this is: you're hiring me to identify what a buyer is looking for.**

Tony Sargent, CORE

"It's promoting the environment, promoting the apartment, promoting the lifestyle," Sargent said. Sargent is currently promoting a property in West Chelsea with this same mindset.

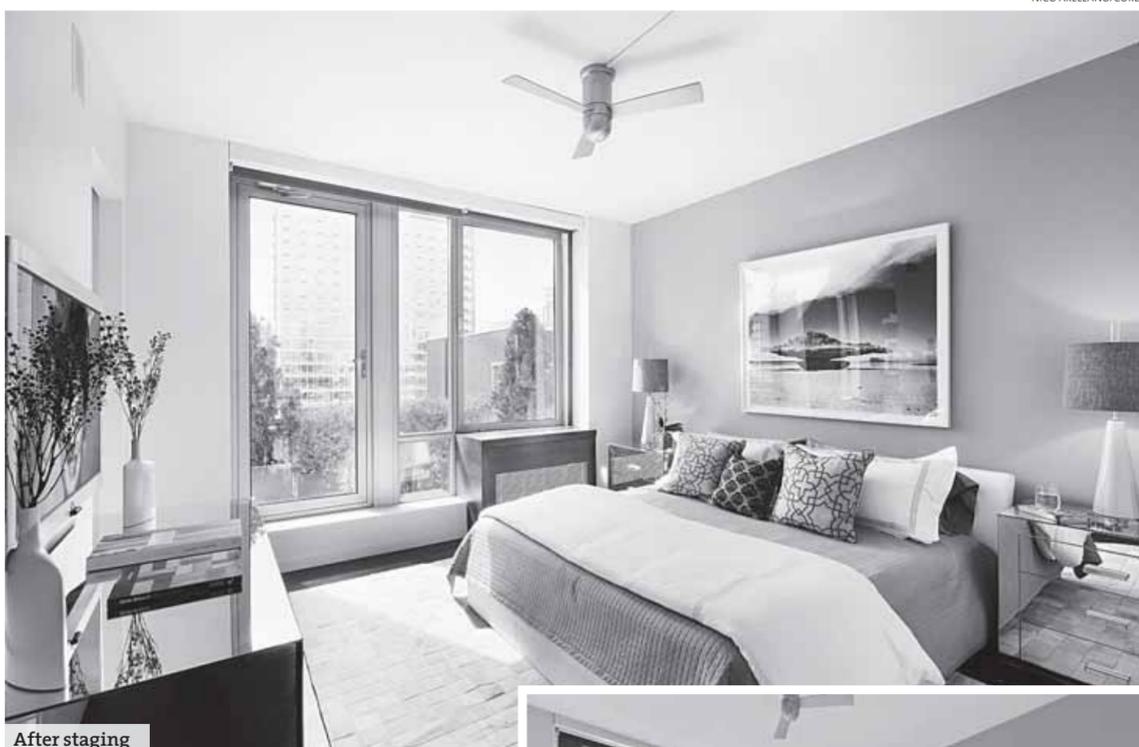
"It's in the gallery district, so I'm working with a gallery where they've loaned \$30,000 worth of photographs which we can stage the property with," Sargent said.

But staging a property means more than some redecorating and putting nice furniture in the space. A lot of people will do that, "but it doesn't look lived-in. You can tell it's staged," Sargent says. "So I try to add an extra sense that there is a person who lives here."

In one staging, Sargent hand-picked books for the coffee table, brought in photos and books from Africa, and worked with an artist he knew to give a sense of color, style, and background.

"The owner had owned it for many years and rented it out so there was no sense of that," Sargent said. That particular property had been listed twice before and never sold, and Sargent realized he had to reintroduce the property in a fresh way.

For buyers who want a home, it's a sensory experience. "Staging is to create a look and a feel that will appeal to the buyer



After staging

most likely to be at that price point."

### Sellers Reluctant

Sellers aren't always keen on staging their properties.

"When they're still in the process, they're unsure of how much money they're going to get, so you're asking them to spend money to make money," Sargent said. In some cases, it could be unnecessary. But more often than not, if a property has been lived in for years, clutter accumulates. For higher end properties, the option is highly recommended.

Another client of Sargent's had a one-bedroom on the Upper East Side, and she had been unsure of staging at first. However, she had large windows covered in layers of curtains, and bookshelves from floor to ceiling.

They ended up staging the apartment and listed it for \$649,000. It then sold for \$100,000 more than the nearest comparable in the same building. Three other apartments of the same size and price range had been on the market at the same time didn't find buyers.

### What Can Be Done?

"If people can't see past everyone else's stuff [in the unit]

A bedroom at 444 W. 19th St., Penthouse 2



Before staging

they're not going to be able to see themselves in it," Sargent said. "People have the desire to buy, but they don't necessarily have the vision to see."

"My approach to this is: you're hiring me to identify what a buyer is looking for," Sargent said.

In the most basic sense, the best part of the property should be highlighted. The furniture layout defines the use of each space, but can also accentuate certain aspects of a property.

A fresh coat of paint can go a long way, Sargent suggests, as it creates a sense of novelty and can turn a blank slate into something warm and inviting.

Carpet is also often lacking in units if the seller is a family with children. Adding carpets underneath staged furniture can help anchor the room.

### Benefits

"If staging is done well, it allows people to see the space in a beautiful way they may not have imagined, or the owner may not have managed it," Sargent said. "It maximizes the space by maximizing the entire area and identifying what works where."

The demographics of buyers haven't changed over the years, Osher said, but their needs have changed. Events, social media, and other creative ways of accessing potential buyers are things his agents repeatedly brainstorm. This could be either for individual listings or the new developments CORE often works exclusively with.

"We're a boutique company so we're able to make decisions and market moves very

quickly," Osher said. "So that sets us apart from everyone else who has the disadvantage of being large and weighed down by policy and bureaucracy."

"We're innovators and leaders because we believe the real estate industry is not being run the same way it was 20 years ago, or 10 years ago, or even 5 years ago," Osher said. "We believe business is always evolving and we like to be at the forefront of that."

Neighborhoods are changing rapidly as well. With many developments coming back to life and revitalization and rezoning projects throughout the city, the landscape is changing.

"Our asset is that we have a looking glass into the future," Osher said.