

DREAMS

REAL ESTATE MAGAZINE

MARCH 2024

**THE POWER
OF CURB
APPEAL**

**LEANNE
GILES**
FOR ALL THE
COMFORTS
OF *Home*

STYLING

**HOT TIPS FOR
BUYERS & SELLERS**



lg



LEANNE GILES *lg* REAL ESTATE

My Mission

To empower and guide you through the intricacies of your real estate transaction with unparalleled dedication, and a personalized touch.

My intention is to transform the buying and selling experience into a seamless process, where you feel supported, informed, and confident.

By leveraging cutting-edge market insights, meticulous attention to detail, and a keen eye for design, I aim to not only meet - but exceed expectations, ensuring your transaction is as smooth as it is successful.

At the heart of my mission is the commitment to building a lasting relationship and making a tangible difference in your life.

My Vision

To redefine the standards of excellence in the real estate industry, setting new benchmarks for client satisfaction, innovation, and success.

I am committed to being the go-to authority for clients on both ends of the real estate journey. Whether they are searching for the perfect home, looking for an investment to grow their wealth or selling a property.

I envision a future where my expertise and tailored approach pave the way for a transformative experience, dedicated to fostering a culture of trust and integrity.

Through my unwavering commitment to excellence, I aim to inspire change, contribute to our community's growth, and create enduring value for my clients, empowering them to make informed decisions and achieve their real estate aspirations.

DREAMS

REAL ESTATE MAGAZINE

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UNLOCKING DOORS TOGETHER

A Warm Welcome from Leanne

Welcome to the very first edition of DREAMS Magazine, a tangible reflection of my journey through the nuanced world of real estate. As the creator and curator of this publication, I'm excited to share not only my professional insights but also a personal glimpse into my world.

My name is Leanne Giles, and for those of you meeting me for the first time through these pages, I bring to the table 17 years of experience as a dedicated real estate agent. *I know, I know, there are a million real estate agents out there! The question is, what makes me different? Well, that's what I've set out to show you on the pages of this magazine.*

Let's go back in time for a moment.

At the tender age of 8, while most girls were playing with Barbie, I was standing behind the counter at our family butcher shop. It was there, among cuts of meat and the hum of daily business, that the foundations of my future were laid. My father, a man of unwavering work ethic, taught me more than just the trade; he instilled in me values and skills that would shape my career.

Interacting with customers, I discovered the joy of building relationships and the art of sales. The task of rearranging the counter display wasn't just a chore; it was a creative outlet and my first peek into design and merchandising—understanding intuitively that presentation was everything.

FOR ALL THE COMFORTS OF
#LEAVEITTOLEANNE

Home

Lg



Moreover, cleanliness wasn't just a necessity but a discipline, a meticulous attention to detail that now serves me well in ensuring properties are presented at their best.

These early experiences weren't just chores or responsibilities; they were the seeds of my passion.

Today, as a Realtor, I find myself leveraging these very traits. Sales, design, marketing, creativity, and an unyielding attention to detail - all facets of my current role that I love, all rooted in those formative years at the butcher shop.

It's here, in the realm of real estate, that I've found a career that not only challenges me but also allows me to employ every skill I've honed, from relation-

ship building to strategizing, all while helping others find a place they can call home.

This isn't just a job; it's the culmination of a lifetime of learning and loving what I do, every single day.

Buying a home or selling a property is all about new beginnings and the possibilities that come with them. This magazine is an extension of my commitment to supporting your aspirations and connecting with you on a more personal level.

On these pages I aim to simplify the complex process of selling a home or buying a home. Answering frequently asked questions in a straightforward, informative way that you can read at your leisure.

This edition's articles include:

Sparkle and Shine:

Leanne's Top Cleaning Products for a Flawless Home Presentation

Presentation is key when selling your home. In this section, I reveal my go-to cleaning products that help prepare your property for the market.

Stage to Sell:

The Art of Transforming Spaces

One of my core beliefs is that the presentation of a home can significantly impact its sale. In this article I share my tips on how staging can make your property stand out in the competitive market.

Appliance Appeal:

Powering Up Your Home Sale

Get your appliances 'home-sale' ready with a deep clean checklist.

The Power of Curb Appeal:

Making a Lasting First Impression

First impressions matter, especially when it comes to selling your home. In 'The Power of Curb Appeal,' I delve into the importance of creating an inviting exterior that captures the attention of buyers from the moment they set eyes on your property.

The Proof... is in the Reviews:

Clients Share Their Testimonials

Welcome to a cherished section of the magazine where I spotlight the heart of my success: the stories. These client testimonials offer a glimpse into the genuine relationships and positive outcomes born from our collaboration.

Investing in Your Home:

Renovations with High ROI

Understanding where to invest in your home can significantly affect its value. Here I focus on strategic improvements that offer the best return on investment. This guide provides practical advice on where to direct your efforts for maximum impact.

A Taste of Home With Leanne:

A Legendary Caesar Salad Recipe

I'm thrilled to share a part of my restaurant story with you, hoping this Caesar salad adds a special touch to your gatherings just as it did for mine.

24 Tips for Home Buyers:

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Navigating the real estate market as a first-time buyer can be daunting. This section is dedicated to empowering you with knowledge. Twenty four things you need to know and watch out for when buying a home.

As we embark on this journey together through the pages of this magazine, my hope is that you find value in the insights shared.

This publication is more than just a collection of articles; it's a resource designed to guide, inform, and inspire you, whether you're buying or selling.

Thank you for joining me on this exciting new venture. Here's to many more editions. Together, let's make your real estate DREAMS™ a reality.



Sparkle & Shine

Leanne's Top Products for a Flawless Home Presentation

When preparing a home for the market, the devil is truly in the details. A clean, well-maintained space not only makes a property more inviting but can also significantly impact its perceived value. I'm sharing my go-to cleaning products that are essential for getting a client's home ready for sale. These are the champions of cleanliness that transform any space into a spotless showcase, ensuring every corner, crevice, and surface sparkles to its full potential.



Mohawk Finishing Fil-Stiks

For those little nicks and scratches that every home accumulates over time, I have a secret weapon: Mohawk Finishing Fil-Stiks. Imagine being able to colour over any imperfection in wood, making it virtually disappear. That's what these babies do. It's like an instant face lift for wood surfaces, ensuring buyers see perfection, not wear and tear.

Mr. Clean Magic Eraser

Let me share a little secret that's made a huge difference in homes I've sold: the Mr. Clean Magic Eraser. Those scuff marks on your baseboards, doors, light switches, and walls? This little sponge makes them disappear like magic. It's all about presenting your home in the best light, making sure buyers see the beauty, not the blemishes.



Weiman Stainless Steel Cleaner and Polish

Another must-have in your home-prep arsenal? Weiman Stainless Steel Cleaner and Polish—Make sure it's the POLISH! There's something about sparkling stainless steel that elevates the whole look of a kitchen. I always suggest using it with a microfiber cloth for that flawless finish. Get in there and make those suckers shine!

Murphy Oil Soap Clean & Shine, Wood Cleaner Spray

For those wooden cabinets that really tell the story of a well-loved kitchen, I swear by Murphy Oil Soap Clean & Shine. It's like a time machine for your wood surfaces, especially when you pair it with a microfiber cloth. This product brings out the beauty of the wood, making everything from cabinet doors to hardwood floors look brand new. It's not just cleaning; it's reviving the heart of your home to show buyers its true potential.



STAGE TO Sell



The Art of Transforming Spaces to Maximize Your Sale Price

Right from the start of my career in real estate, well before HGTV brought staging into the mainstream, I knew then the extensive impact home staging had on the sale price of a home.

I believed in it so strongly that I used to take pieces straight from my own home to stage a property. Fast forward to today, I've built up my own collection of staging materials, everything under the sun is housed in my dedicated storage facility.

Sofas, accent chairs, desks, tables, chairs, beds, accessories, artwork, lighting, linens, OH MY! I have built up an inventory for every possible configuration and many colour palettes. A full stage can cost anywhere from \$5,000-\$10,000 when hiring outside professionals. Yet, this invaluable service is something I proudly include in my premium package at no extra cost to my clients.

When it comes to home staging, every detail counts. Yes, furniture and accessories are important but so are the foundational things like crisp baseboards and casings; sparkling windows; fresh clean grout; and newly painted walls. In my experience there is no point putting nice furniture into a room when the baseboards are scuffed, the floors are dull and the windows are dirty. It's the entire picture that sets the tone

for a move-in-ready product for a buyer.

The instant I step into a seller's home, I switch into 'assessment mode,' immediately honing in on the details that could catch a buyer's attention. My focus is on identifying and eliminating any elements that could lead buyers to think about lowering their offer. It's all about ensuring your home is presented in its best light, leaving no room for negotiation due to overlooked details.

For instance, if your windows have dark dirt in the tracks, a buyer might mistake it for mold and assume all the windows need replacing. This misperception could lead them to lower their offer, factoring in an unnecessary \$20,000 for window replacements, when in reality, a thorough cleaning is all that it required.

The Process of Transformation

It's crucial to understand that not every home needs extensive staging and renovations to be camera-ready. As I make my recommendations, I consider various factors. Should I observe that a thorough cleaning, some decluttering, and a coat of fresh paint are sufficient, then that's exactly what I'll suggest. My goal isn't to have you empty your wallet or turn your daily life upside down for weeks on end just for a listing. I carefully weigh the

local market comparables, your available time, what tasks you're capable of handling on your own, and the overall flow of your home to craft the most effective and efficient strategy for you.

My approach to staging is dynamic, offering a sliding scale of packages tailored during my walk through. Sellers have the flexibility to select the commission level they're comfortable with, based on my assessment and the staging package recommendations.

This staging strategy is a comprehensive system where I invest upfront in the property's presentation, confident in the return it brings. It's a win-win situation — sellers enjoy a beautifully staged home that attracts more buyers and fetches a faster sale and higher selling price, while I ensure the property stands out in the market, reflecting the high standard of service I'm committed to providing.

Should a home require my premium package, as I mentioned above, it could include everything from professional deep cleaning, professional window cleaning, grout cleaning, handyman services, to the placement of modern furniture and accessories where necessary. During my assessment I will know exactly what you need or don't need. This attention to detail ensures that the property stands out and captivates potential buyers

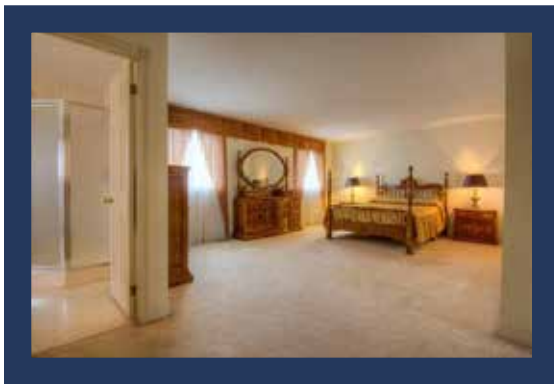
the moment they walk through the door.

I've been in this business for a long time and pride myself on the relationships I have formed with trusted skilled tradespeople. This team is 'Leanne Approved' and available to you whether you're listing your home or staying and renovating. My contacts are your contacts!

Re-imagining your space

You must now look at your space through the lens of a buyer and identify elements that might detract from its appeal. It's about more than just tidying up; it's about re-imagining the space. For instance, removing bulky furniture can open the room, making it appear larger and more inviting. Similarly, updating fixtures and hardware can instantly modernize an outdated space, making it more appealing to those with a contemporary style.

Personal touches, while cherished by the homeowner, can be distracting to potential buyers. Family photos, personal mementos, and even bold art choices can prevent buyers from visualizing themselves in the space. Part of my staging strategy involves neutralizing the decor to create a more universally appealing home.



Before

After





Homeowners can expect a return on investment of 5% to 15% when they stage their homes before listing them on the market

Key Elements of Staging

One of the first steps in the staging process is addressing the curb appeal. The exterior of your home is the first thing buyers see, and it sets the tone for their entire visit. Simple changes like painting the front door, updating landscaping, and ensuring walkways are clear and inviting can make a significant difference. See 'The Power of Curb Appeal: Making a Lasting First Impression' article on page 16 for all my outdoor tips.

Inside, the focus shifts to maximizing the flow and functionality of each room. This might involve rearranging furniture to improve movement through the space or adding lighting to brighten dark corners. Every detail, from the fluff of the pillows to the placement of art, is meticulously planned to enhance the home's features and showcase its potential.

The Impact of Staging

In 2024, we've seen clear evidence that home staging really makes a difference when selling properties. Here's a quick look at the key facts showing why it's great for sellers:

Return on Investment (ROI): Homeowners can expect a return on investment of 5% to 15% when they stage their homes before listing them on the market. This indicates that despite the upfront costs associated with staging, the financial benefits in terms of higher selling prices can make it a worthwhile investment.

2024 Update | House Grail](<https://housegrail.com/home-staging-statistics/>).

Sale Speed: Staging has been shown to significantly accelerate the sale process, with staged homes selling between 6% and 10% faster compared to unstaged homes.

2024 Update | House Grail](<https://housegrail.com/home-staging-statistics/>).

Buyer Perception: A key advantage of staging is its ability to help potential buyers visualize the property as their future home. This is supported by 77% of buyers' agents who agree that staging makes it easier for buyers to imagine the property as their own.

Additionally, a staged home is likely to receive up to 10% more online views, and since 99% of home searches begin online this highlights the importance of presentation in attracting interest from prospective buyers wanting to view your home.

2024 Update | House Grail](<https://housegrail.com/home-staging-statistics/>).
NAR Finds Home Staging Helps Buyers Visualize, Homes Sell Faster](<https://www.nar.realtor/newsroom/nar-finds-home-staging-helps-buyers-visualize-homes-sell-faster>).

Collaboration Is Key

Effective staging is a collaborative process between the agent and the homeowner. It requires openness to change and a willingness to invest in the home's presentation. Some homeowners may be hesitant to alter their space or remove personal items, but it's important to remember that the goal is to attract the widest range of potential buyers. As your agent, my expertise in what sells—and why—guides every recommendation I make.



Appliance appeal

Powering Up Your
Home For Sale



When it comes to selling your home, every detail counts, especially the condition and cleanliness of your appliances. As integral components of a home, appliances play a crucial role in the functionality of a living space. Potential buyers, with an eye for detail, often inspect these appliances closely, and their condition can significantly influence their buying perception. A dirty, unkempt appliance can reflect the buyers offer price, if they feel they need to purchase brand new appliances.

The Significance of Appliance Condition

Clean, well-maintained appliances speak volumes about the overall care of the home. They contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the space, ensuring that every aspect of the property is inviting and ready for new ownership. Moreover, functional, efficient appliances are seen as valuable additions that buyers won't have to replace or repair, making the property more attractive and potentially increasing its market value.

A dented dryer or a rusty washer can detract from the home's appeal, suggesting that maintenance and updates have been overlooked. Such issues can lead to doubts about the care of other, less visible parts of the home. In contrast, appliances in good condition reassure potential buyers of a well-maintained property, making it easier for them to envision themselves living there.

APPLIANCE READINESS CHECKLIST

Fridge Checklist:

- Those ancient leftovers and their pungent pals...Time for their grand exit!
- Keep it fresh; place a box of baking soda inside to absorb smells.
- Pull out the fridge and clean around it, including the grill at the bottom.
- Remove all magnets, photos, and artwork from the exterior.
- If stainless steel... Make that sucker shine! (See page 9 for my preferred cleaner)

Stove Checklist:

- Remove grime and grease from the surface and control knobs.
- Check that all burners are functional.
- Use the self-cleaning function if available. Reminder: Do not leave the home during self-cleaning and avoid oven cleaners during this process.
- Clean between the glass of the oven door (consult YouTube for model-specific instructions).
- Pull out the stove and clean the floor all around it, as well as the sides of the stove
- Spaghetti sauce gets everywhere! Don't forget to Scrub the counter top edge and sides of cabinets.
- Again, if stainless steel... Make that sucker shine!

Microwave Checklist:

- Clean the interior, including the turntable.
- Use a lemon-water solution to steam and deodorize.
- Again, if stainless steel... Make that sucker shine! (Are you pickin' up what I'm layin' down with the shine factor?!)

Dishwasher Checklist:

- Clean the filter thoroughly.
- Run a cycle with vinegar to remove buildup and odors.
- Ensure the interior is free from visible grime and under the exterior is scrubbed clean (This is a hands & knees kinda job).
- If stainless steel... You know what I'm sayin'!
- Do not leave dirty dishes in the dishwasher during showings!

Washer and Dryer Checklist:

- Wipe the exterior with Windex and paper towel for a sparkle.
- Clean the lint trap in the dryer.
- For front-load washers, clean the rubber seal to prevent mold and smells.
- Ensure no forgotten clothes are left in the washer or dryer during showings.
- Vacuum under and around both appliances with a small nozzle to remove visible dust bunnies.
- If possible, pull out both appliances for a thorough clean of the floors around and behind them.



SIDE NOTE!

Operation Fresh Bins... Now that we've taken care of potential smell zones by cleaning the appliances, we don't want buyers to label your home 'the smelly house' because you forgot to empty the garbage. Swap in a fresh bag before EVERY showing! If you keep garbage in the garage, give that a quick sniff test before leaving. OH! Don't forget to empty all the washroom bins as well.

THE POWER OF Curb Appeal

Making a Lasting First Impression

In the dynamic world of real estate, the concept of curb appeal plays a pivotal role in shaping a property's marketability and value. As a seasoned real estate professional, I've seen time and again how a well-presented exterior can significantly impact a buyer's interest in even wanting to view the home. Remember, some buyers do drive-bys on a house they see online and if they like it they will contact their agent for a viewing. Contrastingly, if they have booked a viewing and see that the outside is a disaster they could potentially cancel the appointment or have a negative preconceived notion about the house before entering.

This comprehensive exploration of curb appeal aims to provide homeowners and sellers with practical insights into enhancing their property's attractiveness and, ultimately, its market potential. Without breaking the bank!

Curb appeal is a common term we use in real estate and I'd like to define it for you so we're all on the same page. Curb appeal refers to the overall attractiveness of a property as viewed from the street. It encompasses the visual impact of a home's exterior and landscaping, serving as a critical factor in creating a positive

first impression. In the competitive real estate market, where first impressions can make or break a sale, understanding and maximizing curb appeal becomes indispensable.

First Impressions Matter

With the advent of digital listings, a property's online presence is often the first point of contact with potential buyers. A captivating exterior photo can intrigue and draw purchasers to explore further, making curb appeal crucial in the digital age. This initial encounter sets the tone for the buyer's perception, emphasizing the need for a visually appealing and well-maintained facade.

Neighbourhood Influence

The charm and care invested in your home have the power to captivate buyers, even in a neighbourhood where not every property meets the same standard. While the aesthetic of the surrounding area does play a role in initial perceptions, a well-kept home shines as a beacon of potential and value. In essence, even if your neighborhood isn't perfect, making your home look amazing can really help it stand out.



Creating an atmosphere that begins at the curb and whispers a warm welcome is an art that combines aesthetics with meticulous attention to detail.

1. House Numbers:

Visible, stylish house numbers not only make your home easy to identify but also add a touch of elegance. Consider upgrading to modern or custom designs. If that is not possible, take them down and give them a fresh coat of matte black spray paint to freshen them up.

2. Garage Door:

The garage door significantly influences your home's curb appeal due to its large surface area. Ensure it's clean, free of dents, and functions properly. Consider repainting or replacing the door if it shows signs of wear or doesn't match the home's aesthetic.

3. Driveway:

A well-maintained driveway enhances the approach to your home. Sealant not only protects but also beautifies the driveway, offering a fresh, well-kept look. If the driveway is cracked or stained, professional repair and sealing are worth the investment.

4. Outdoor Lighting:

Properly chosen and placed outdoor lighting can transform your home's appearance at night, highlighting landscaping and architectural features while improving safety. Ensure fixtures are clean, functional, and consistent with the home's style.

5. Siding/Brick:

Inspect your home's siding or brickwork for any damage or discoloration. Power washing can restore their appearance, but be sure to repair any damaged areas. Fresh siding or clean brickwork significantly boosts curb appeal.

The allure of a property is pieced together by several critical elements, each playing a distinct role in drawing the eye, evoking emotion, and setting expectations.

The following are the foundational aspects of curb appeal that, when harmoniously blended, elevate your home from simply being seen to truly being noticed and remembered. How does your property measure up? Check this list of suggestions and look at your home with fresh eyes, the eyes of a potential purchaser:



6. Eaves and Gutters:

Clean, functional eaves and gutters are essential for preventing water damage and maintaining a tidy appearance. Ensure they're securely attached, free of debris. Seal up any leaks at the corners that might leave additional puddling after a rain drawing attention to the issue.

7. Lawn and Pathways:

A lush, green lawn and well-maintained pathways are inviting to prospective buyers. Regular mowing, edging, and weeding demonstrate care, while pathway repairs or upgrades can significantly enhance the property's accessibility and appeal.

Curb appeal doesn't end after the photos have been taken.

While your home is on the market you want to keep up the maintenance. You never know who might be passing by with interest in your property.

Tidy Up Regularly: Keep the lawn mowed, hedges trimmed, and sidewalks swept. During winter make sure you keep walkways safe with ice melter and shoveled regularly.



8. Gardens/Landscaping:

Take time to properly edge the garden beds for a clean look. Use BLACK mulch for a uniform look across all beds, remove weeds, and consider adding greenery rather than coloured seasonal flowers. Strategic landscaping can also highlight the property's best features.

9. Debris Removal:

Don't leave debris, such as building materials, old plant pots, 2x4's, wheel barrels, bikes etc. at the side of your property. Either completely get rid of them, hide them under a deck or behind the storage shed. GET DEBRIS OUT OF SITE.

10. Windows and Glass Patio Doors:

Sparkling windows and SCREENS enhance both the interior and exterior appeal of your home. Get in the grooves, clean out the muck and mildew. Many buyers view mildew build up as potential ventilation issues or poor quality windows that they would need to replace—which will effect their offer place. (I believe in clean windows and doors so much I put this service in my premium package!)

11. Front Door:

A fresh coat of paint can revive a tired door, while new hardware can add sophistication. If the door is outdated or damaged, replacing it can dramatically improve the home's entrance.

Front Porch: Decorate using a welcome mat or stylish plastic urns with cedar shrubs or ferns to make the entrance more inviting without spending much.

NOTE: Put rocks or bricks in the bottom of the plastic urns to stop them from blowing over. Refresh older iron urns with a can of matte BLACK paint.

12. Mailbox:

Though small, a mailbox in disrepair can detract from your home's overall appeal. Update, repaint, or replace your mailbox to ensure it contributes positively to the property's first impression. Again, matte black paint is your new BFF!

13. Fences and Gates:

Ensure fences are straight, stained uniformly, and in good repair.

NOTE: INVEST IN A POWER WASHER! Driveways, pathways, decks, fences, sheds, siding, front steps, garage floor... You name it... Power wash it!

By understanding and implementing strategies to improve your property's exterior presentation, you can significantly increase its appeal to potential buyers. I'm committed to helping you achieve the best possible outcome for your home sale, ensuring that together, we can make a lasting first impression that resonates with buyers and maximizes your investment.

Scan for
More
Google
Reviews



THE *Proof*
IS IN THE
Reviews



Lauren L.

Client

Leanne is absolutely amazing. We are first time home buyers and she made sure we saw a variety of houses, she educated us on things to consider and look out for, and kept on the hunt until we found the perfect first family home. She is very knowledgeable, always kept us in the loop and made sure we knew exactly what to do at each step. She is also a very kind and caring person, and we feel like we have gained a friend through this process. Don't hesitate to call Leanne, you couldn't pick a better realtor!



Lisa

Client

She sold our house in 8 days! "Leave it with Leanne" is definitely what a seller needs to do! She is knowledgeable, experienced & so personable - how could anyone not want to work with her?!

She applied her flair & flow to our home to add some chic style & was able to show how the decor could go in any direction to suit the buyer.



Andrew K.

Client

Leanne is an amazing real estate agent! She went above and beyond to ensure we were satisfied with everything. Her staging completely transformed our home and sold our home for much more than we were expecting.





REDEFINING THE STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE IN THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY.

In the bustling world of real estate, setting the bar for excellence isn't just about closing deals—it's about making sure every client feels valued, understood, and supremely confident in their decisions.

I'm passionate about bringing a new level of personalized service, unmatched expertise, and a keen eye for detail to every transaction.

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ LEAVE IT TO *Leanne*

LEANNE GILES *Lg* REAL ESTATE



CONTACT ME TODAY FOR A FREE MARKET EVALUATION!
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FOLLOW ME ON INSTAGRAM [@leannegilesrealestate](https://www.instagram.com/leannegilesrealestate)

INVESTING IN YOUR HOME: RENOVATIONS WITH HIGH ROI

Once you make the decision to sell, your home becomes a product on the market. Your focus should be to create mass appeal based on modern trends to maximize your sale price. We all remember the 'dusty rose' carpet trend of the 1980's. And those baby blue walls with the duck border! Not sure those were HGTV approved. Either way, access to syndicated design shows and online inspo like Pinterest have set a new bar for what home buyers expect (design and function wise) when searching.

Every brush stroke on a wall, every tile laid down, speaks to the narrative we desire to craft for a potential buyer. As your trusted guide in the real estate market, I've cultivated a unique perspective on renovations that not only rejuvenate your home but also promise a return on investment that makes financial sense.

If you're considering an extensive renovation, I offer a complementary consultation with my certified interior designer and/or contractor to ensure you make the right financial decision. Whether you decide to sell or stay, my contacts are 'Leanne Approved'!

Asking the right questions can help you align your renovation goals with the best potential return on investment (ROI). Here's a list of questions you might consider asking me:

Kitchens and Baths: The Heart and Soul of ROI

It's no industry secret that kitchens and bathrooms remain the crowning areas for high returns on renovation investments. These spaces are where functionality meets form, and potential buyers often make decisions with these rooms in mind. A modern, updated kitchen acts as the heart of the home, while a sleek, functional bathroom serves as a personal sanctuary. However, it's crucial to tread the fine line between trend-setting and timeless appeal.

The Pitfalls of Personal Taste

As homeowners, we're often tempted to tailor these renovations to our unique tastes. But it's important to remember that what delights us might not enchant the next owner. There's a certain frustration that comes with realizing the money you've poured into updating spaces might face the wrecking ball of new ownership. To navigate these waters, I advise a consultation with myself or my renovation experts who understand not just current trends but enduring value.

printer/fax
copier

1

How do specific home improvements tend to affect resale value in this neighbourhood?

2

What renovations are currently providing the best ROI in our local market?

3

Are there any particular trends buyers in this area are looking for right now?

4

Do you recommend any specific renovations for this home to maximize its appeal to buyers?

5

What's the average budget other homeowners in this area are spending on renovations before selling?

6

Can you provide examples of similar homes where renovations significantly impacted the sale price?

7

Which renovations can I skip without significantly affecting the home's market value?

How much value would updating the kitchen and bathrooms add to my home?

8

If I can only focus on one renovation project, which should it be and why?

9

Are there any low-cost updates that you believe would make a big impact on this home's appeal?

10

What colour palettes and finishes are most appealing to buyers right now?

11

Do you have any contacts or resources for reliable contractors, designers, or architects?

12

Is it worth making energy-efficient upgrades, and do they increase home value in our area?

13

Should I consider staging my home post-renovation, and how does that factor into the overall cost and ROI?

14

By asking these questions, you can gain insights into how best to allocate your renovation budget and which improvements could offer the highest return when it's time to sell your home.

Renovating your home should be a balanced dance between what you can afford and what adds tangible value. It's about crafting spaces that speak to the heart of potential buyers, sparking their imagination, and ultimately, their desire to own. In my years of experience, I've seen how the right renovations can transform spaces.

As we venture into the transformative power of renovations, it's paramount to remember that significant overhauls aren't always necessary or feasible for every homeowner. There comes a point where we must shift gears and consider the impact of more modest updates. When substantial renovations are not within reach, I suggest turning to the simplest yet most effective tool in our arsenal: fresh paint.

A professionally executed paint job can dramatically alter the perception of your home. If painting isn't within your wheelhouse, it's worth investing in a skilled professional. A sloppy paint job can signal to potential buyers that there's more work to be done, potentially decreasing the perceived value of your property. On the contrary, neatly painted walls in neutral tones provide a blank canvas that allows buyers to envision their future in the space. In addition, we can't forget about the appeal of crisp immaculately painted baseboards, trim, casings and interior doors.

PRO TIP: If you have the time, (I have done this myself) remove any outdated brass hinges and door handles, give them a light sand and spray paint them in matte black for a super sleek modern look. It looks like brand new hardware for under \$30!

Neutral colours, in particular, have the unique ability to freshen up a home, making spaces appear bright-

er, larger, and more inviting. They offer a subtle backdrop that complements various tastes and furnishings, enabling potential buyers to project their own dreams onto the home. It's an affordable update that can yield a significant return on investment, often propelling homes faster through the market and garnering favorable offers.

In essence, the goal is to present your home as a well-cared-for gem, ready to welcome its new owners without burdening them with the need for immediate changes. Whether through comprehensive renovations or a simple yet strategic paint refresh, my focus is on maximizing your home's potential and ensuring it resonates with those who walk through its doors. After all, the truest value in real estate lies not just in bricks and mortar but in the ability of a space to adapt and appeal to those who will call it home.

As your guide through the intricacies of home renovation and real estate, my commitment is to provide you with the insights and expertise that transform your property into the best version of itself. It's not just about the immediate satisfaction of a beautiful space; it's about crafting an environment and atmosphere that stands the test of time and market trends. Together, we can make choices that resonate with buyers and echo with the sound of a successful sale.

“

When substantial renovations are not within reach, you'd be surprised the ROI you get on a freshly painted home.

A Taste OF HOME



LEANNE GILES REAL ESTATE

In 2002, my journey took an exciting turn when I moved to Cambridge to embark on a new adventure: opening my very own restaurant and catering business.

This chapter of my life was transformative, igniting a deep-seated passion for cooking and connecting with people through food.

My experience in the restaurant world taught me the power of a meal to bring people together and the joy of serving others.

One dish that always seemed to capture hearts was my Caesar salad. It became something of a legend, a recipe that everyone would ask for again and again (and still do!).

Sharing this beloved recipe with you feels like revisiting my kitchen days, where every dish served was an opportunity to create a moment of happiness.

I'm thrilled to share a part of my restaurant story with you, hoping this Caesar salad adds a special touch to your gatherings.



“

**Leanne's
Caesar Salad:
The Recipe
Legends Are
Made Of.**

I recommend using a food processor for the dressing. This recipe makes a large batch that will last 3-5 days refrigerated.

Ingredients

For the dressing:

- 12 Garlic Cloves
- 3 Eggs
- 1 tbsp Dijon Mustard (heaping)
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 tbsp Red Wine Vinegar
- 1/2 Squeezed Fresh Lemon
- 1/4 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Pepper (fine)
- 1/4 cup Real Grated Parmesan Cheese
- 2 cups Vegetable Oil (approx.)

Directions

Peel 12 cloves of garlic and put into food processor. Pulse until minced. Add 3 eggs, Dijon, Worcester-

shire sauce, red wine vinegar, salt, pepper, squeezed lemon, and parmesan cheese. Pulse until blended. Gradually add the oil, while on low, from the top spout of the processor until you get a thicker consistency like mayonnaise. Done!

For the Salad:

- Chopped Romaine (washed and dried)
- Baked pancetta (thinly sliced)
- Homemade Croutons (see below)
- Fresh Squeezed Lemon Juice

For the Croutons:

Cut bread (day old bread works best) into 1" cubes and place in a large bowl. Drizzle with olive oil, salt, pepper and paprika. Bake on cookie sheet on 300 degrees for about 30 mins. until a nice golden brown. They are so good, my guests eat them like a chip!

Toss dressing, romaine, lemon juice, pancetta and croutons together and serve.

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Tips for First-Time Home Buyers:

Common Pitfalls to Avoid



Stepping into the world of buying your first home is super exciting – it’s like setting off on a big adventure where the prize is your very own place. Think of me as your trusty guide. I’ve been around the block a few times, and I’m here to share the map so you can dodge the potholes and get to where you want to be without too much stress.

Watch Out for Traps!

Even though buying a house is thrilling, there are some tricky bits that can trip you up if you’re not careful. I’ve seen plenty of new buyers get tangled up in mistakes that could’ve been dodged. These aren’t big, scary things – just little traps that are easy to step into if no one tells you they are there.

Below is a list of 24 checkpoints that should be considered before and during your home purchasing journey. The sooner you nail these down, the better the experience will be.

1. Pre-Approval Letter Secured

Getting pre-approved is your first big win in the home-buying process. It clarifies your price range,

showing sellers you mean business. But life’s curveballs could change your financial picture, affecting your approval. So, spend wisely — your pre-approval amount isn’t a shopping spree budget. Instead, think about your everyday life costs to decide how much you’re comfortable spending on a new home. Ask me, I know people who can help you through this process.

2. Down Payment Saved

A down payment is more than just the key to your new front door — it’s the foundation of your purchase. The larger it is, the sweeter the mortgage terms you’ll snag. But don’t drain your savings; you’ll want a safety net for the surprises homeownership might throw your way. It’s a balancing act between your immediate home goals and long-term financial health.

3. Closing Costs Accounted For

When it’s time to seal the deal on your home, closing costs can take a big bite out of your budget. They’re the final hurdle in the purchasing process, covering everything from legal fees to land transfer taxes.



First Time

HOME BUYER BINGO

Pre-Approval Letter Secured	Down Payment Saved	Closing Costs Accounted For	Credit Score Checked	Must-Haves vs. Nice-Haves List Made
Online listings Saved	School Districts Researched	Mortgage Options Secured	Neighbourhoods Researched	Property Tax Budgeted
Home Insurance Researched	Local Amenities Researched		Commute Options Considered	Utility Costs Reviewed
Energy Efficiency Evaluated	Property Upkeep Budgeted	Future Renos Planned	Contingency Fund for Unexpected Expenses Created	Lawyer Found
Lifestyle Considered	Storage Space Works	Outdoor Space Available	Parking Considered	Passive Income Opportunity Options



These aren't pocket-change expenses, so plan ahead. Getting blindsided by closing costs can put a damper on what should be your happiest home-buying moment.

4. Credit Score Checked

Your credit score is like your financial fingerprint — lenders use it to size you up. A stellar score can unlock favorable mortgage rates, saving you a bundle over time. Start buffing up that score well before house hunting; pay down debts and keep your bills tidy. A neglected credit score can shrink your buying options, so give yours some love early on.

5. Must-Haves vs. Nice-Haves

Creating your must-haves versus nice-to-haves list is all about knowing your non-negotiables. It's your blueprint for finding the right home. Must-haves are your deal breakers, while nice-to-haves are your bonuses. Be wary of getting swayed by the frills — focus on what truly counts for your daily comfort and long-term happiness. Flexibility is key, though; sometimes a little compromise can land you the perfect place.

6. Online Listings Saved

Like a personal catalogue of possibilities, saving online listings can help you track and compare homes that catch your eye. It's a tool for efficient house hunting, but don't get tunnel vision. New listings pop up all the time — refresh yours often to ensure you're seeing the best and latest on the market. It's about staying informed and ready to pounce on the right opportunity.

7. School Districts Researched

Researching school districts is a critical step if education is on your radar. The right district can boost your property's value and, more importantly, shape your children's future. But don't let school ratings box you in; consider the whole picture of what each neighborhood offers. Balance your educational desires with practical housing needs to find the sweet spot for your family's new home.

8. Mortgage Options Secured

Securing the right mortgage is like finding the perfect pair of shoes; it should fit just right. Whether it's a conventional bank loan, a private lender, or even a second mortgage, each has its pros and cons. Be thorough — a mortgage is a long-term commitment, and you want terms that fit your financial journey. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and consider consulting a mortgage advisor to nail down the best option. Ask me, I know people who can help you through this process.

9. Neighbourhoods Researched

The neighbourhood you choose is as crucial as the house itself. It's the setting for your life's next act. Dive into local schools, amenities, and safety — these will be part of your everyday. But stay flexible. Being too rigid in your criteria could mean missing out on an otherwise perfect home. Striking the right balance is key.



10. Property Tax Budgeted For

Property tax is the annual fee you pay for the joys of homeownership. It varies by location and can be a hefty add-on to your monthly expenses. Not planning for it is like forgetting an umbrella on a cloudy day — eventually, you'll get soaked. Get a handle on these costs from the start to avoid a financial downpour later.

11. Home Insurance Researched

Locking down home insurance is like strapping on a safety belt before hitting the road. It protects your home, your belongings, and your peace of mind. Check with a broker early to ensure your dream home won't be a nightmare to insure. Different homes and locations mean different rates and coverage — find out what you're in for before you're too far down the path to turn back.

12. Local Amenities Researched

Local amenities are the everyday conveniences that can turn a house into a haven. Before you commit, make sure your new neighbourhood ticks all the boxes: shops, parks, gyms, and more. Overlooking these can lead to daily hassles, so think about what you'll want within reach. It's all about matching your lifestyle to your location for that perfect fit.

13. Commute Options Considered

Think about your daily trek to work or school. Will you drive, take the bus, or maybe cycle? Weigh up the commute time against your work-life balance. If public transport or a smooth drive is important to you, make sure your new home offers that. A long or difficult commute can take the shine off your dream home, so plan your route before you move.

14. Utility Costs Reviewed

Utility bills are part of life, so get a feel for them before you buy. Ask the seller for recent bills to see what you'll be paying. This can help you budget better and avoid any nasty surprises. Remember, energy-efficient homes can save you money, so it's worth checking out insulation, heating, and other green features.

15. Energy Efficiency Evaluated

An energy-efficient home is kind to your wallet and the planet. Check out the insulation, windows, and heating system. If they're outdated, you might spend more on bills or face big upgrade costs. Sometimes, you can negotiate the price down if major energy-saving updates are needed.

16. Property Upkeep Budgeted

Homes need upkeep, and that costs money. Whether it's fixing the roof, painting, or just mowing the lawn, make sure you've got a budget for maintenance. Condos might have fees that cover some of this, but always know what you're getting into. A little planning now can prevent big repair bills later.

17. Future Renos Planned

Dreaming of knocking down walls or upgrading the kitchen? Plan and budget for it now. Sometimes you can fold the cost into your mortgage, but always



check first. Knowing what renovations you want can help you see past a home's current flaws to what it could be. Just be clear on what's possible and what you can afford.

18. Contingency Fund for Unexpected Expenses Created

Life's full of surprises, and some of them can hit your bank account hard. Set up a contingency fund for those unexpected home repairs or costs. It's your financial safety net for when the water heater quits or the fridge stops cooling. You'll sleep better knowing you're ready for whatever your home throws at you.

19. Lawyer Found

Buying a home involves lots of legal stuff, so you'll want a good lawyer. Ask your Realtor for recommendations, and compare fees and services. Understand what they'll do for you, from checking the title to handling the closing paperwork. The right lawyer will keep things running smoothly and keep you in the loop.

20. Lifestyle Considered

Your home should fit how you live, from entertaining friends to where you kick back with a book. Think about your hobbies, work, and what you like to do on weekends. Make sure the home you choose lets you live your life the way you want, without compromise. It's not just about the space but how you'll use it.

21. Storage Space Works

Storage matters. Closets, basements, sheds—you'll need space for your stuff. Make sure there's enough, and it's in the right places. No one wants to live in clutter, so check that your new home can handle everything from holiday decorations to your bike. Good storage solutions mean a tidier home and a happier you.

22. Outdoor Space Available

A garden. A balcony. A place to get some fresh air. Think about what outdoor space means to you. Do you want a big yard for kids or pets, or just a little spot for plants? Your outdoor space can be a retreat, a play area, or a simple spot to relax. Make sure your new home has the right kind of outdoor space for your needs.

23. Parking Considered

If you've got a car, you'll need somewhere to park it. Condo parking can be extra, so check if it's included or available. Street parking can have restrictions, and juggling cars every morning can be a hassle. Consider guest parking too. Good parking can make life easier and is definitely something to think about when choosing your new home.

24. Passive Income Opportunity

A little extra income can help with the mortgage. Think about renting out a room or basement, or even starting a small business from home. Check local rules first, and think about how it fits with your lifestyle. It's a way to make your home work for you, but it takes planning and commitment.



**HOME SELLERS GUIDE?
NO NEED FOR ONE! JUST
LEAVE IT TO *Leanne***

Contact me today to discuss
a strategy to get top dollar
for your property.
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