

THE REAL DEAL

July 2007

Home stager preps property to improve singles' love lives

By Vanessa Londono

In addition to helping hopeless sellers, home stager Ilaria Barion is also helping hopeless singles. Barion, who makes properties on the market more appealing to buyers, is using the same techniques to help the romantically challenged. Barion's new service "Staged to Date" aims to make properties more relationship-friendly.

"When you see a property to buy, you realize in the first 90 seconds whether you like it or not," Barion said. "The same thing happens when you see the apartment of someone you're dating. People can be turned off by the condition of the apartment."

According to Barion, who is based in Manhattan, there is a huge market for her romantic renovations.

"An apartment can tell more about who the person is than just where they live," she said.

"A neglected home won't impress anyone and makes the person look dirty or careless," Barion added. "I usually recommend hiring a cleaning lady. Other things are less obvious, like having photographs around."

Barion will also decorate the apartment and remove unsightly items for her lovesick clients. But it isn't cheap -- prices range from \$295 for a consultation to \$495 for a home visit.

