

Be a sport about removing college memorabilia

[North Sports Final , CN Edition]

Chicago Tribune - Chicago, Ill.

Author: Annemarie Mannion, Special to the Tribune

Date: Jan 31, 2003

Section: Your Place

Document Types: Feature

Text Word Count: 972

Document Text

Under the decorating influence of his wife, Theresa, the remnants of Steve Rasmussen's bachelor days have gradually disappeared from the two-bedroom, one-bath condominium the couple share on Chicago's North Side.

It appears the minibar and college sports memorabilia are going next.

Steve bought this walk-up unit, in an elegant, 1920s-era courtyard building, in 2000. The couple was married in September.

Recalling how the condo looked when her husband and two former roommates had occupied it, Theresa said: "It was totally different. There were two old couches that I think they found [in the Dumpster] because somebody was throwing them out."

Theresa has spent the first few months of her marriage repainting most of the rooms in earthy shades and installing new furnishings, such as an oversized chair and matching sofa in the living room.

Now, however, the Rasmussens are considering selling the condo because they want a larger space and other amenities that this unit does not have.

"We'd like a washer and dryer, a parking space and a little more room," said Theresa.

For advice on getting their home ready for market, the Rasmussens wrote to House Calls. We contacted Ed Jelinek, a Realtor for Coldwell Banker in Chicago who recently toured the unit.

Walking through the condominium, Jelinek said he liked the changes that Theresa has made, including the khaki and pale olive shades on some walls. These warm colors complement the dark wood trim and wooden floors in this vintage unit, he said.

Ironically, however, the decorating overhaul has made some of the unit's less-than-stellar elements stand out, such as the white metal doors that enclose a coat closet in the foyer. The doors were likely added long after this building was constructed and look out-of-place in this vintage unit, Jelinek explained.

"Those [white] doors do stand out to me," he said.

Jelinek suggested replacing them with doors that would be more in keeping with the old-fashioned appeal of this unit.

"I'd go with a wooden door: a solid core, paneled door with brushed, chrome knobs," he said.

Moving into a second bedroom, which the couple uses as a den, Jelinek suggested removing the memorabilia that Steve has kept from his college days, including a blue and gold Iowa Hawkeyes poster, baseball bat, baseballs and skis.

Prospective buyers are likely to be professionals who have left their college days behind and may not relate to a room decorated with college items, Jelinek said.

"This room feels too much like a college room to me," he said. "I think you want to get away from that."

The same philosophy should be applied to the living room, where the Rasmussens have a portable minibar tucked in front of a shallow niche built into one wall.

"Now is the time to remove the minibar because it reminds people of college," the Realtor said. Instead of the minibar, he suggested turning the niche into a cozy reading area. "With a chair and lamp it could be a reading niche," he said.

Jelinek also noted some scratches on the wooden floor beneath the minibar and beneath the sofa. The Rasmussens need to decide if the damage is great enough to warrant having the floors resanded.

"if it's really bad under there than I think you need to get someone in to buff the floors," he said.

The radiators in the living room and in other rooms are a cream color that is beginning to look a bit dingy. Jelinek suggested repainting them silver.

Surprisingly, he said silver will not make the radiators stand out.

"I think silver is a color that will blend into the background because it looks vintage-y," he explained.

The only room that Theresa did not paint when she moved into the unit was the kitchen, which has walls that are a bright royal blue.

"I call it electric blue," said Theresa with a laugh.

The blue matches a band of blue and pale yellow diamonds in a white tile backsplash behind the sink.

Although the blue matches the tile, Jelinek advised repainting the kitchen, preferably in a more subtle hue.

"I think you need to go somewhere between a very muted yellow and cream [for the walls]," he said.

Moving into the master bedroom, Theresa pointed out a window that is in bad condition.

Jelinek advised against going to the trouble and expense of replacing the window.

"I just don't see you taking on that project," he said. "It's a vintage window in disrepair. It's probably a situation where you would offer a credit."

Finally, opening a linen closet, Jelinek suggested painting the shelves.

"Right now they're just plain plywood. It looks unfinished," he said.

If you would like an expert to give you specific advice on what to do to your house to increase your chances for a quick sale, at the highest possible price, write to House Calls, and we might select your home to be part of this feature. Send us a note telling where you live, what kind of house or condominium you live in and why you are thinking of moving. (Please include your phone number.)

Write to House Calls, Your Place section, 4th Floor, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60611 or e-mail yourplace@tribune.com. No telephone calls will be accepted.

[Illustration]

PHOTOS 3; Caption: PHOTO (color): Theresa Rasmussen gives real estate agent Ed Jelinek a tour of her condo. Jelinek said the organization of this closet would appeal to prospective buyers. Photo for the Tribune by Stephen J. Serio. PHOTO: In the living room, Jelinek advised removing a portable minibar. He suggested turning the space into a reading area with a chair and lamp. Photos for the Tribune by Stephen J. Serio. PHOTO: Jelinek suggested that the Rasmussens remove the air-conditioning unit from the window and repaint the radiator.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Abstract (Document Summary)

Theresa Rasmussen gives real estate agent [Ed Jelinek] a tour of her condo. Jelinek said the organization of this closet would appeal to prospective buyers. In the living room, Jelinek advised removing a portable minibar. He suggested turning the space into a reading area with a chair and lamp. Jelinek suggested that the Rasmussens remove the air-conditioning unit from the window and repaint the radiator.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.