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Toning down a vivid, busy kitchen

By Jim Buchta
Star Tribune Staff Writer

The kitchen in this Eden Prairie house suffered from a case of too much color and too much clutter, two common offenses that can quickly sour buyers on a room that has good proportions, plenty of light and a good layout.



The challenge for home stager Sharon Mitchell of Simply Staged in North St. Paul

was to find a way to downplay the bright red walls, which the homeowner didn't want to paint. So here's what she did:

1 Picked a color theme that complemented the red walls and tile border. That meant getting rid of all the colorful dishes that had been stacked on the open shelves. She replaced them with neutral and earth-toned glassware, along with accents such as the red blender and utensil holder that coordinate with the walls. "Because the red is such a focal point in that room we had to play it up and make it feel like an attribute rather than a negative, which it could have been for some," Mitchell said.

2 You never want prospective buyers to walk in and think there might be a space shortage if they see things out of place, so Mitchell removed the waste bucket next to the counter and boxed up items that were stashed above the wall oven. "It just creates visual clutter and is distracting," she said. "That makes buyers think there's not enough cabinet space."

3 You don't want buyers to walk into your kitchen and see too

many reminders of the drudgery of housework, so Mitchell cleared the counters of some of the objects that you might associate with work. That includes the mixer, knife block and toaster. "You want them to focus on extravagant cooking and entertainment," she said.

4 This house has high-end soffit lighting, but those lights need to be turned on during showings. "That makes it feel bigger, lighter and brighter, and it attracts buyers into dark corners they can't see."

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STAGING IT

Before



After

