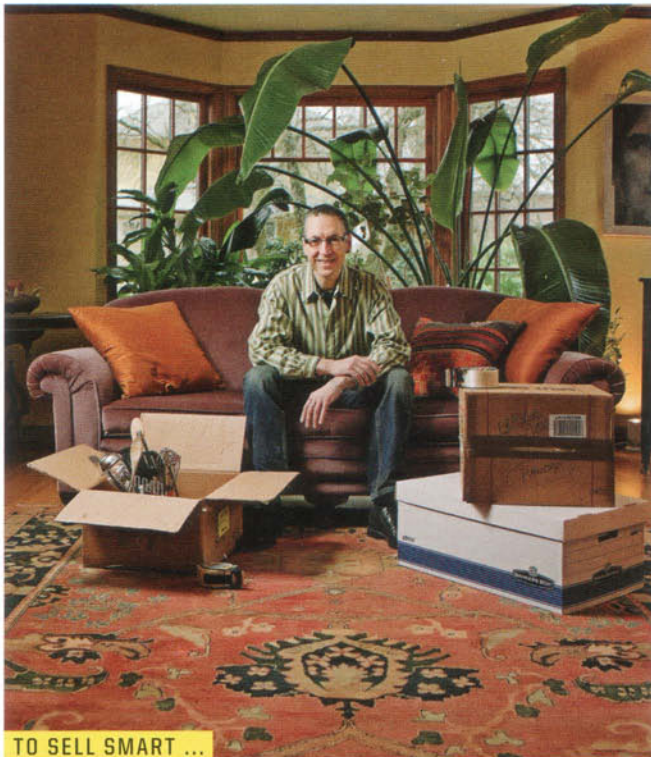


Expert tip

"If you're in a family neighborhood where everyone has school-age children and all the homes are ranch-style houses in the \$300,000 range, don't stage the place for the ultratrendy person who wants to live in the Pearl," says Maureen Bray of Room Solutions.



TO SELL SMART ...

Buck the Trend

SELLER Dan Huckestein OCCUPATION Artist LOCATION Overlook, North Portland THE PROPERTY 3,205 square feet, three bedrooms, one and a half baths; built in 1941 DATE PURCHASED May 2005 PRICE \$379,000 SOLD January 2009, for \$580,000 DAYS ON MARKET 37

The neighborhood Overlook is eleven minutes by car from downtown and a short walk from the Overlook Park MAX light-rail stop. Huckestein's home is steps away from Madrona Park.

Market watch In 2008, median home prices grew to \$315,000, up more than half a percentage point from 2007.

Seller's tip "I really bucked the trend," Huckestein says of the old home-selling adage dictating that sellers should strip homes of personal flair in order to appeal to a wide variety of potential buyers. "I just said, 'No, that's not the way this is supposed to be. I'm an artist; I have lots of expressive things. I'm not neutralizing it. This house is about charac-

ter, and whoever buys it is going to have an emotional reaction to the house."

Expert eye "No home is going to appeal to everyone," says Maureen Bray of Room Solutions, a Portland-based business that teaches homeowners how to maximize a home's visual appearance during showings. "You have to target what the neighborhood demographics tell you. If you're in a family neighborhood where everyone has school-age children and all the homes are ranch-style houses in the \$300,000 range, don't stage the place for the ultratrendy person who wants to live in the Pearl."

Staging services, which even provide furniture rentals, can cost up to \$1,500, but sellers can

deduct the expense from their taxes.

Expert eye "Buyers continue to be willing to pay top dollar for a home that is in **tip-top shape**," says Sue Coon, the agent who listed Huckestein's home. "But buyers in today's market are still very cautious not to overpay. Most offers come the first week [the home is listed], and are 5 to 10 percent below asking price. Savvy sellers understand they may not get another offer." People who view a home in the first week of listing are most likely to make an offer, Coon adds. "Those buyers tend to be well educated, preapproved, and in a position to make a quick decision." —BB

NEIGHBORHOODS Selling Fast



Grant Park

2008 average days on market: 34

2008 median price: \$547,250

You'll find: Your dream neighborhood. Kids amble to stately Grant High School and Hollyrood Elementary, both sought-after public schools. Tasteful infills mimic magnificently restored Old Portland-style bungalows and 1920s Tudors. Grant Park is a soccer ball's kick away and home to the Beverly Cleary Sculpture Garden, dedicated to the children's book author, who grew up here.

Reed

2008 average days on market: 37

2008 median price: \$335,450

You'll find: Cute cottages, low-slung 1960s ranches, and 1970s split-levels on hilly, winding streets, a few within view of the sprawling lawns of Reed College. Nearby, the greens of the Eastmoreland Golf Course and the dribbling waterfalls and abundant blooming flowers inside the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden add to the quaint, slow-paced vibe.

Woodstock

2008 average days on market: 39

2008 median price: \$278,000

You'll find: The occasional charming cottage with spiffy hardwoods, an antique fireplace, and exposed brick for \$220,000. The catch? The exterior is sea-green siding and there's a chain-link fence out front. Also prevalent: Craftsman-style homes with long front porches and sloped yards, along with pointy 1950s Tudors for under \$500,000. Locals, including students from neighboring Reed College, gather at Otto's Sausage Kitchen, a German deli with a perpetual line. —BB