



***Designed to Sell:* Five home staging principles for attracting today's luxury buyers**

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By Ed O'Donnell

Top designer *Ed O'Donnell* reveals how art, furniture & colour can shape how a property is perceived, drawing on recent projects at The OWO, Centre Point, Lancer Square & River Park Tower.

You can't scrimp on interiors (*writes Ed O'Donnell*). Not when you're selling multi-million-pound properties. And not when those properties face stiff competition in a market agitated by the Autumn Budget and changes to the non-dom tax regime.

Instead, you must give buyers compelling reasons to part with their cash. This means creating homes so irresistible they tap into people's hearts and melt away their barriers to purchase. The question is, how?

Having worked with some truly visionary developers – crafting interiors that have culminated in hundreds of millions of pounds' worth of sales – we've evolved an instinct for what works. This instinct has been translated into 5 Home Staging Principles we live by to create interiors that make headlines, attract buyers, and sell. Follow these and you won't go far wrong.

1. Exceed all expectations

Beautiful, high-functioning architecture. Killer location. Pin-sharp marketing strategy. These things are vital. But if your interiors fail to thrill, it could cost you.

It's important to match the exacting standards of wealthy buyers – then exceed them. After all, your audience will likely have experience working with interior designers, and many more will be familiar with luxury resorts and restaurants – destinations known for their photo-worthy aesthetic, dreamy ambience, and seductively tactile, high-quality finishes. Stands to reason they'll expect the same from a property with a seven-to-eight-digit figure attached to it.



'If your interiors fail to thrill, it could cost you', warns Ed O'Donnell

2. Appeal to the right buyer. Not every buyer



A big no-no when home staging is trying to please everyone. As uncharitable as it may sound, people pleasers please no one. So think carefully about your development, what it stands for and who it's aimed at.

In the case of Lancer Square, Kensington, we paid homage to the area's antique shops, bohemian style and red-brick architecture with copper-hued cladding, vintage Murano-glass chandeliers and modernist masterpieces. This was a creatively inspired home made for international culture buffs. And it worked, for this property was snapped up by a wealthy Ukrainian – lock, stock and barrel – for £14.5M.

3. Be original



We love big-name brands. B&B Italia, Giorgetti, Minotti – we’ve incorporated these and similar into our designs. But we’ve never allowed them to take centre stage because we’re not in the business of recreating luxury showrooms. Anyone with money can do that. Instead, we strive to surprise and delight prospective buyers with originality. It’s the only way to create ownable looks for each of our clients.

So go for the small batch items that bear the mark of their maker – the wonky vase, the oil painting with the bravura brushwork, the hand carved console with the enhanced grain. Pepper your space with these story-rich gems. Then create several standout moments with larger bespoke design features – true one-offs that celebrate the very fabric of your development.



At Centre Point, we designed headboards with zigzag patterns and honeycomb-shaped pillars to echo the building’s brutalist façade. We painted a ceiling mural in the fiery hues of the sunrises and sunsets that pour in through the east- and west-facing windows. And we built a room divider, also inspired by the architecture, with open shelves, coloured glass, and a marble bioethanol fireplace. When the evening sun hits the lattice-like structure, chromatic shadows are cast across the room to great effect. These details are designed to wow buyers – and they did to the rousing tune of £75M in sales. Pays to be original, yes?

4. Love art



We have two rules of thumb when it comes to art:

1. Avoid anything a five-year-old could recreate with a pot of paint while throwing a tantrum
2. Avoid depictions of booze, nudes and certain foods depending on your target audience.

Besides that, anything goes. So long as it has meaning. Lazy, mass-produced 'art' lacks intention. It'll leave your buyers feeling indifferent. That's not the vibe you want. For art is crucial to captivating the hearts and minds of buyers. Even if it divides a room, the good stuff will always invite contemplation and exploration. It will elicit a response, forge a memory, and hook people into your product. What could be better?

For our first show residence at The OWO, we commissioned a Colombian-born Renaissance-loving artist to paint a scene of war horses in battle. Arguably, it's a controversial subject. But it was executed with such exuberance that it had buyers and journalists spellbound. The magic worked and the apartment sold for £14.25M with all FF&E in just two days.

5. Accessorise, accessorise, accessorise



More is more when it comes to accessories. At our second show residence at The OWO, we filled shelves, coffee tables and consoles with books, plants, games, lamps, glasses, vases, sculptures, candles, diffusers and cocktail-making paraphernalia. These meticulously curated elements reassure buyers that they're entering a world they recognise, that your brand complements theirs.

Once that connection is made, it becomes easier to drive loyalty, positive word of mouth, and those all-important sales.