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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2018 ♦ PACIFIC PALISADES, CALIFORNIA

\$1.50

## What to Do Before You Sell Your House

By JOSEPH MONTEMARANO  
*Special to the Palisadian-Post*

As a real estate agent for over 18 years, the one question people ask me most often is, “Joseph, what improvements should I do before I sell my home?”

There is a big misconception that most home remodeling projects will recoup the initial investment or more when you sell. According to the 2017 Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report, almost all remodeling projects do not recoup the initial costs. (Shocking, I know. It looks so easy on all those home improvement reality shows.)

For the past 30 years, the Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report has compared the average cost for 29 popular remodeling projects in nine different regions and 99 different geographical markets in the United States. We will focus on Los Angeles.

They ask local contractors what the cost would be and local real estate professionals what the specific remodeling project would return if they were to sell within a year.

On average, when combining all the projects in Los Angeles, the return is only 68.5 cents on the dollar in resale value. In general, what they found from the report is “curb appeal” projects have a higher return than most other projects. This makes sense as painting the outside of a home, replac-



**Joseph Montemarano**

Photo courtesy of Amalfi Estates

ing the front door or a garage door makes a big first impression.

For LA, exterior projects with the best returns were found to be, in order: manufactured stone veneer (112.8 percent return), garage door replacement (85-97.7 percent return) and window replacement (75.6-77.5 percent return).

So, what is really the biggest bang for your buck? Clean, declutter and paint.

You’re going to be moving right? Start packing now. You’ll have to do it sometime, and doing it now will make your home look its best. Purge and declutter all the closets. Clean out the garage. Box up all the things you’ll be donating to charity. Call Salvation Army for a charity pick up.

The city of Los Angeles also does big item trash removal for free. Don’t replace the carpet—have it professionally cleaned. And a fresh coat of paint can bring a tired room to life. If there are problems like a leaky window or a sticky door, then getting those handyman-type jobs done before you sell makes a lot of sense.

And if you are not selling for a few years, you can still enjoy that new bathroom or kitchen remodel, with the understanding that you may not get back every dollar that you spent, but can you really put a price on your happiness?

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*Montemarano has over 18 years experience selling real estate in Los Angeles. He is a sales partner with Amalfi Estates, the No. 1 sales and leasing broker in the Palisades. With over a billion dollars in sales, Amalfi Estates donates 10 percent of the commission to charity with the goal of giving away \$1 million. If you would like help getting your home ready for sale, contact Montemarano at 310-613-7777 or joseph@amalfiestates.com.*