

Put all the homes on a stage

Homeowners in Seattle can increase the market value of their property by up to 30 per cent, without spending an extra cent! Meet the man who makes this possible...
Eduardo Mendoza-Nunez!

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PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY EDUARDO MENDOZA-NUNEZ



▲ Home stylist Eduardo Mendoza-Nunez

Do a job you love and you will never work in your life... This saying, in a nutshell, is Eduardo Mendoza-Nunez's philosophy. The basic idea behind this thought is reflected in his work. A home-stylist based in Seattle, Washington, Eduardo's specialty is redesigning. What's unique about his work is that he doesn't use any new elements in the process. Instead, he capitalizes on the existing furniture and accessories in a home, rearranging them in a way that makes the space look more appealing.

A native of Peru, he moved to the United States to find his calling about 11 years ago. Eduardo has always been fascinated by spaces and design. So while studying for a travel management degree at the Art Institute of Seattle, he took a couple of courses in graphic and interior design. He then went on to work at Expedia.com, where he was happy, but not as happy as he thought he could be. Something was amiss. At that point, he enrolled himself into a residential design program at the Art Institute, which pretty much sealed the deal! Post that, he quit his job and started working for one of the best home staging companies in Seattle. While engaged in doing up empty houses, Eduardo realized that occupied homes, too, need redesigning advice. This is especially important when houses are put on the market. It would also be

a challenge to work with the existing elements in order to maintain the essence of the home. A challenge that he took head on by starting his company The Enhanced Home, which specializes in 'staging' used homes that are up for resale.

Home staging is now quite common in the United States. More real estate agents believe that 'staging' a home appropriately increases its value and also makes it sell faster. "When your house is on the market, first impressions matter a lot. A lay eye could mistake a poorly configured house for one that is too small or for that matter, one that's filled with useless spaces. A home could also give off a cold and distant vibe because of this. My job is to ensure that this doesn't happen," explains Eduardo. Take, for instance, satisfied homeowners, the Guppys who testify that their home sold for \$10,000 over the asking price in less than 24 hours, after Eduardo had worked his magic. In the last three years, his work has helped add a good 10 per cent to 30 per cent increase in the asking price of their property. A



[1] With all the furniture pushed to one side, rather than around the fireplace, this space lacked a focal point. Also, the pattern of the rug conflicted with that of the armchairs. The presence of a desk in a space meant for relaxation was a disturbing sight

[2] A chair from one of the bedrooms was included in the living space as its colours integrated well with that of the ceiling moulding. A neutral piece (painting) helped clear up the busy mantel. A rug, placed at the back of the sofa, subtly separates the spaces





[3] Two chairs with their backs facing the entrance created an unwelcoming sight. Also, too many fabric elements and disconnected art pieces made the space look overly busy

[4] A trunk was placed in the centre to break the monotony and add different shades of wood. The sofa, trunk, armoire, vase, plant and railing, all help establish a balance of vertical and horizontal lines in the space

real estate agent from Windermere Real Estate, one of Seattle's leading real estate agencies, says, "Eduardo's brilliant staging skills have brought in multiple offers on listings that I truly thought were going to sit on the market or sell for less than asking. He does a brilliant job of turning a house into *Architectural Digest* material without losing the owner's personality or the home's warmth."

An artist with a creative process, Eduardo spends about one to three days redesigning a space, depending on its size. He starts his work by doing what he calls, 'getting naked!' "When I walk into a space, I like to strip it completely of all furniture and accessories. Seeing an unfilled space helps me fathom its potential and plan what needs to be done," he says. Following this, he brings in pieces of furniture and places them in accordance with its volume, shape and colour. Eduardo treats paintings, mirrors, plants and other art pieces, too, as pieces of furniture. "They do a lot more to a space than we think. A painting's dimensions, colours, depth... all affect the way the space looks. A painting or mirror does to a wall what a sofa does to a living room," he elucidates. Proper placing of existing furniture can make a small room look larger or make a large room look cosier. And this is where Eduardo's redesigning to resize service comes into play. That is, if a person moves into a smaller space or has an excess of furniture, he helps them decide on what should stay and must go in order to make the most out of the space. If it's the other way around, Eduardo will use your existing furniture in a way that doesn't make the area look bare and impersonal.

Plants and greens are integral to boosting the overall effect of a room. He explains how, in the case of self-contained houses, a visual connect needs to be drawn between the indoor and outdoor plants as well. A point often overlooked.

Another factor that goes into creating a well-balanced ambience, believes Eduardo, is to avoid placing too many hard/cold surfaces together. It disturbs the balance of the room. He offsets harsh surfaces with a warmer fabric element like drapes or something similar. Simple aspects like this could make or break the overall look of a home.



Eduardo also takes functionality of a space into consideration. The parameters of redesigning are altered by the nature of the space. That is, whether the space is a dining room, living room, kitchen, or bedroom. It is essential to know how people are going to use and move about in that space. The idea is to use the furniture to enhance the quality of the space, without it coming in the way of the owners' daily activities.

Redesigning homes to boost a property's value or help new owners settle in faster is not the only reason for this home stager. Sometimes, people are just looking for a change after living in the same house for too long. So, instead of spending a small fortune on re-doing the place, homeowners can avail of Eduardo's redesigning to refresh service.

Eduardo's work reiterates the fact that creating the right ambience for your home doesn't necessarily have to burn a hole in your pocket. Well, not too big a hole at least. There's still the home stager's fee that needs to be tended to. **BT**



[5] The sofa under the huge window took away from the view of the yard. The fireplace competed with the television for attention. Additionally, the rug was placed at an odd distance from the fireplace

[6] The space was opened up by placing a sofa facing the fireplace — the focal point. Different finishes and colours of wooden furniture were used to establish visual connections. Cream and white accents were used in the drapes, the picture over the mantel, and the flowers

