



DRU NADLER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

House staging partners Birgit Anich and Gary Sefferman pose in a room they staged in Anich's Norwalk home on Monday.

Home stager attracting notice

National award winner: Norwalk's Anich using HGTV star's strategy

By Richard Lee
Staff Writer

It hasn't taken long for Birgit Anich to make a splash in the home staging business.

The Norwalk resident captured a "Rookie Stager of the Year" award at the Real Estate Staging Association convention in Las Vegas, and recently completed a training course led by Matthew Finlason of "The Stagers" on Home and Garden Television.

Anich, who made the switch from corporate market research to operating her own business less than two years ago, has already incorporated the strategies learned from Finlason.

"It's very specifically targeting certain buyers. The typical staging process is basically neutralizing everything. It doesn't appeal to most likely target buyers," said Anich, who runs the business with partner Gary Sefferman. Anich, 40, doesn't

design her staging projects until she becomes familiar with a neighborhood and discusses prospective categories of buyers with the real estate agent.

"I do research on who are the most likely buyers," said Anich, a native of Austria. "I have a team that works with me."

A recent project where Birgit Anich Staging & Interiors used the new strategy was at a 1955 ranch in West Norwalk, which had been on the market for 155 days. After the staging, the house sold in two days, she said.

"Staging is another marketing tool to sell a house. It's not a cost. It's an investment. Staging is becoming more of a standard now, and Connecticut is catching up to it. I'm definitely busier than the previous year," said Anich, who has staged 17 houses so far this year.

Anich and her team worked with Piper Garner, a Realtor with

the Darien office of Raveis Realty, on the West Norwalk house.

"The house was packed with eclectic things that didn't make a statement. I knew it needed a wow," said Garner, with Raveis in southwestern Connecticut since 1999. "She popped it with color and texture. In a difficult market, we have to be creative. I believe in what stagers do. I've referred her to colleagues in the office."

Typically, the cost of staging is .05 percent to 3.1 percent of a listing price, according to the Real Estate Staging Association, but the average sold price is typically 6 to 10 percent higher than an unstaged price.

"Staged homes sell 78 percent faster than non-staged homes," Anich said. "With our new approach we give these buyers their dream so they want to move in right away. We are telling a story buyers connect with and fall in love with."