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Home's art should reflect individuality

By KELLY ROHE

Special to the Record-Eagle

Some homeowners display art pieces as a focal point in a room. Others decorate their homes using art work as an accent. Some invest in high value art pieces and others start with putting together magazine collages to represent their personal tastes.

Either way, whether expensive or inexpensive, hand-crafted by an artisan or a home-crafted by the homeowner, art is an important part of every home.

According to interior designer Kirk Day, of Kirk M. Day Design in Traverse City, art is anything that sparks an interest.

"Art could be a wall hanging, a sculpture, a statue or even an area rug. As long as it creates a spark or sparks an interest, it is art. I've even seen some sofas on display as if they are art-work," said Day, "The bottom line is that art should catch people's eye when they walk into a room."

Most people might consider art to be a wall hanging or a picture. Art can be much more than two-dimensional, framed prints placed on a wall.

Steve Loveless, owner of State of the Art framing shop and



Record-Eagle/Elizabeth Conley

Above, a large painting creates a focal point in Shelby Martin's Interlochen home. An unusual art object (right) creates an interesting aspect to the side of her entertainment center. All was part of a major redecorating project.

gallery in Traverse City, feels that art should reflect a homeowner's personal tastes. He believes that art does not have to be expensive to be considered art, it just needs to be one thing — liked by the owner.

"Many people come into my gallery and feel as if they don't know or trust their own tastes

when it comes to choosing art pieces," explained Loveless. "In actuality, all people have and know their own tastes. And through a series of questions it is easy to point them in the right direction and find pieces that they like, which is the most important quality of art, whether or not it is liked."

Considering a condominium?

Conveniences and costs currently draw professionals, retirees

By DANA GEORGE

Special to the Record-Eagle

Judy Loveless has lived in Traverse City for 52 years, but started a brand new life in a luxury condominium this May. Mary Bain resided in California for 51 years, but wanted to enjoy retirement in her hometown. Both women purchased condominiums in the new Lake Ridge development, nestled along Traverse City's Boardman Lake.

More than 100 condos have been sold in the Traverse City area in the past 12 months, and more are being built. According to Marsha Minervini, president of the Traverse Area Association of Realtors, there's a condo in every price range. Current MLS listings include condos priced from \$65,000 for a one-bedroom, one-bath unit, to \$865,000 for a three-bedroom, three-bath condominium. The average cost of condos between October 2001 and today is \$171,940.

"I think people are just looking for quality of life," said Barb Cooper, an associate broker with Lake Ridge Realty, the group who's marketing Lake Ridge Condominiums.

Cooper says that prospective buyers are often looking for a way to cut down on the time and effort spent caring for their traditional homes.

"They don't have to paint the exterior or shovel snow, so they have more time to do the things they want to do. Some of our residents live here during the summer, but somewhere else during the winter months. They can leave, knowing that they don't have to worry about the maintenance while they're gone," Cooper explained.

Brian Stevens, developer of Chestnut Hills Condominiums and the new Chestnut Mead neighborhood, knows precisely who his market is.

"We're not an age-restricted neighborhood, but in all the condominiums I've sold in the

past few years, there hasn't been one young family. We're mostly seeing empty nesters and retirees. These people normally get to know their neighbors and look after one another's houses when they're away," Stevens said.

Cooper believes part of the reason young families aren't opting for condo life is the cost. While Lake Ridge — at \$230,000 to \$260,000 — and Chestnut Mead — at \$219,000 and up — are considered mid-priced in the condo market, they're often out of reach for young families dealing with an economic slowdown and job insecurity.

The market for condominium buying seems to be better established, financially secure adults.

"Before my husband died he used to tell me to move closer to town after he was gone," said Loveless, an active 75-year-old widow.

Loveless and her husband, Gage, lived in a home on West Bay. And while Loveless always enjoyed gardening, a knee replacement operation nine years ago made working in the yard more difficult.

"It was getting expensive, hiring someone to do the weeding," she said. "Now my garden consists of three planters of geraniums. I don't miss it as much as people think I should."

Another thing Loveless doesn't miss is the drive into town. She plays the violin as a charter member of the symphony and sings in her church choir.

"I didn't mind the drive from our house," she said. "But since I'm living in town, I'm glad I don't have it."

Loveless is getting to know her new neighbors, including 74-year-old retired nurse Mary Bain. The two women like to get together to play duets — Loveless on the violin, Bain on the flute.

"The security features of the condo surprised me," Bain said. "After living in California for so long, where you couldn't even go in the backyard without lock-

ing the front door, I was surprised to find such adequate security here."

In addition to speaker phones that require visitors to call residents before being buzzed into the building, residents parking in the underground garage are required to use key cards to gain admittance to the elevators.

Bain grew up in the house her father built on Washington Street and liked the idea of living so close to that family home.

"Nothing could be better," Bain said. "Having a fine place to live with family and friends nearby."

And buying a condominium helped Bain achieve her goal of simplifying life. After years of living in a house, she liked the idea of having less demanded of her physically. Now someone else can worry about exterior painting and planting.

All those services — from planting bushes around the building to mowing and snow removal — are paid for by monthly association fees. Depending on the devel-

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Loveless also said that art should invoke an emotion in its owner. He feels that some art buyers are very passionate about their pieces while others simply want to match the colors in the room.

"Either way, most people have a good eye for what they like and want in their home," said

Loveless.

When purchasing a piece of art for a new home, an existing space or a remodel project, here's a slightly different take to consider.

"Art is a tangible reflection of personality," said Day, "but it should tie the room together. Art buyers should be looking to

incorporate the colors of the room, the budget they are working with and the quality of the artwork."

"When I chose the pieces for my newly remodeled home I factored in multiple things including the theme I was trying to tie the room together."

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