

Simple updates for a chic and cheerful laundry room

Laundry rooms are often cramped, busy spaces. Many times they are more practical than inspiring, but that doesn't have to be the case. Design expert Kimberley Seldon believes that surrounding yourself with beautiful colours, finishes and a calming but practical lighting scheme is one way to make the chore of laundry a little more enjoyable.

Seldon partners with the Electrical Safety Authority to provide tips to create an attractive, functional laundry room.

Amp it up. Installing kitchen cabinetry is a great way to add storage for cleaning products and other essentials. When it comes to colour, washers and dryers are now available in a variety of hues—but keep in mind you may need an electrical upgrade to accommodate new appliances. A washing machine needs to be on a 120-volt, 15 or 20-amp receptacle on its own circuit, with the outlet placed out of reach and directly behind the machine. Any

outlets within a child's reach (outlets two meters or less from the floor) need to be tamper-resistant.

Wash and go. Since a laundry sink is essential, try choosing an apron sink with sleek fixtures for added style. Any outlet located within 1.5 metres of any sink in the home must be protected by a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent shocks. Working with a Licensed Electrical Contractor will help ensure all your outlets meet the Ontario Electrical Safety Code.

Lighter lights, brighter whites. While bright lights might be needed to spot stains, consider creating some ambiance for when it's time to fold your laundry. LED strip lighting can be added to open shelving. Don't forget to include functional lighting for closets and storage areas. To prevent fire, pot lights need to be at least 15 centimetres from anything that could catch fire, while surface-mounted lights need to be 30 centimetres away.

Find more tips online at poweryourreno.ca (NC)

Tips for first time real estate investors

If you are planning on buying real estate as an investment to help build your nest egg, there are pros and cons to taking that leap. Here are some points to consider if you are going to take that step.

1. Visit with a mortgage broker to determine how much money you can afford to borrow as an investment.

2. Look for properties that generate a positive cash flow. This means that the rent that you receive from your tenants should be enough to pay your mortgage payment, property taxes, utilities and insurance bills. Build in a budget of an additional 10 per cent for the unexpected.

3. Use an experienced local real estate agent and one who also invests in real estate themselves to help you along the way.

4. Use a professional home inspector. In addition, find a contractor and handyman who you can trust to give you the right advice for any minor repairs or renovations, especially for older properties.

5. Consult with your accountant and lawyer as to the best way to take ownership of the property. Should you use a limited company and what would the costs be for incorporation?

6. Keep proper and separate records of income and expenses for your investment property.

7. If you are considering buying with a partner, make sure you have a proper partnership agreement to protect both your interests. Particularly covering what if one partner wants to sell and the other does not. Your lawyer will be able to cover all the bases.

8. Will you handle the property management or will you hire a professional company?

Contact Kate Vanderburgh, sales representative for Royal LePage Real Estate Services Ltd., Broker at 905-338-3737 or by email at katevanderburgh@sympatico.ca.

KATE'S KORNER



Royal LePage Real Estate Services Ltd.

KATE VANDERBURGH
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
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