

# NORTHWEST PASSAGES **Lifestyles**

## HOME & GARDEN

# Setting the stage to sell: Local business prepares homes for market

By **HOMA MOJTABAI**  
Current Correspondent

Over the past few years, weary veterans of the District's frenzied housing market have seen it all: very big prices for very small spaces, waived inspections and a host of creative mortgages designed to help desperate buyers prevail in bidding wars with sky's-the-limit escalation clauses.

Even as the market settles into what some may fear — and others hope — is a slowdown, there is a new trend in the local real-estate scene: home staging. In Northwest Washington, at least one person is making a living from it.

"Home staging is the process of designing a home to sell quickly for top dollar," explained Caroline Carter, president and chief executive officer of Done in a Day, a D.C. firm specializing in home staging and interior redesign.

Before moving into the home-staging world, Carter specialized in interior redesign. In early 2005, a happy client suggested she check out the industry. Done in a Day was born shortly thereafter, and since that time, Carter has staged more than 20 properties.



Bill Petros/The Current

**Caroline Carter's staging efforts helped draw more than 50 potential buyers to this Reno Road house last weekend. "Staging" homes may help fight the effects of a slowing real estate market.**

"We know that buyers shop with a list of criteria in their heads, but they actually buy on emotion," Carter said. "It is my job as a home stager to create that 'emotional buzz' for each home, that feeling of 'This is it!' When I do my job correctly,

that feeling starts when the buyer pulls up to the curb and continues very subtly, but deliberately, until the buyer walks out the door."

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## FAVORITE PLACES

# Warm Latin flavor makes Bossa comfortable

By **ALFREDO FLORES**  
Current Correspondent

It was a typical Saturday night at Bossa Bistro and Lounge. The candlelights flickered.

Droves of people of all nationalities walked through the gigantic carpetlike drape covering the front door. Couples cuddled on the couches, sipping their tasty Brazilian specialty drinks — mainly mojitos and caipirinhas. Downstairs, Alfredo Mojica and his Cubano Groove salsa band were jamming while a small group of dancers did their thing.

And upstairs, Nayas, my favorite local Latin rock band, was playing cover songs from my all-time favorite indie-rock/reggae/global musician, Manu Chao.

You're probably wondering about the location of this cool, bohemian spot. You might be surprised if I told you it was right in the heart of the city, in a location that has gone largely astray from its Latin, African and other minority roots to become a yuppieville of sorts, full of pricey condos and swank martini bars. Bossa is an abnormality in the recently gentrified Adams Morgan, seeking to bring back some of the Latin flavor and music lost over the years, according to general manager Wagner Depinho.

Because of the area's changes, I was surprised to "discover" Bossa while walking through the famed



Bill Petros/The Current

**Alfredo Flores finds Brazilian drinks, Latin rock and international crowds at the Adams Morgan lounge Bossa.**

18th Street strip of bars and nightclubs on a cold January night in 2004, a few months into the lounge's existence. At 2463 18th St., Bossa is sandwiched between two other live-music venues with wooden patios out in front — Ghana Café and Madam's Organ. While the exteriors are similar, what brought me into Bossa was the lively music you can see and hear through the lounge's large, glass-windowed front.

Once I entered, it felt like I was walking into someone's comfortable living room, with warm, dimly lit candles the size of a desk lamp, and couches and small tables comfortably spread out on the floor. A large wooden bar is filled with Brazilian and American beers and liquors, and the main music stage is just to the right of the entrance.

There is an art gallery of portrait photographs lined up on the

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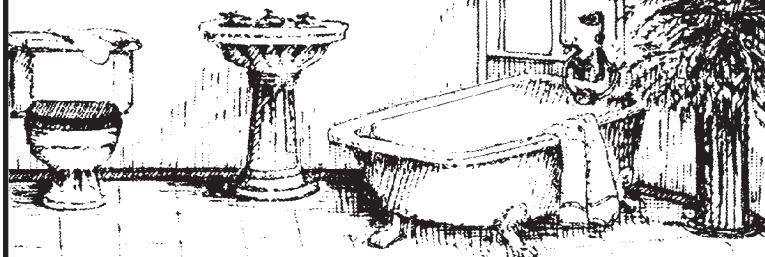
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