

All the world's a potential home stage for Montrealer

TEACHING ABROAD

Technique for selling residences faster

THE GAZETTE

Sveta Melchuk learned the home-staging ropes from the Staging Diva herself and now is becoming a celebrity overseas with her own brand of the increasingly popular technique for selling a property a quicker and at a higher price.

The founder of 3-year-old **Home Staging Montreal** is affectionally referred to as the Martha Stewart of France by her daughters after taking that country by storm with training courses she began offering there in March.

"I have the appeal of being a North American who speaks French," said the 2005 graduate of the Staging Diva Home Staging Business Training Program created by internationally known home-staging expert Debra Gould of **Six Elements Inc.** in Toronto.

It was an email from a French real-estate agent last November that got everything going for Melchuk. He had visited her website and then asked her to coach him online in the art of staging because such training wasn't available there.



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Melchuk is seen with some of the props she uses to spice up homes.

She suggested instead that he put together a group and pay her way there to train them in person, and she ended up training 19 people in tours on March 28 and 29.

Prior to her first visit, Melchuk did a phone interview with Radio France about home staging that was rebroadcast across the country.

Melchuk returned to give two more courses in Paris at the end of June. Then, following a program on the TF1 television network about home staging, she received 600 emails in one week requesting her training in France.

That resulted in soldout classes of 25 people each in Paris on

June 24, 25, Aug. 28, 29, Sept. 2 and 3, in Lyon on Sept. 29 and 30 as well as in Marseille on Oct. 2 and 3. She is scheduled to return to Paris for classes Nov. 24 and 25, then will offer her first classes in Brussels Nov. 27 and 28.

(Melchuk gave training sessions – in French only – in Montreal last weekend and has scheduled more Jan. 24 through 26 followed by courses in Quebec City in February. Local English courses are planned for next year.)

A French partner now handles the legal aspects on how to create a staging business, and Melchuk provides the technical training.

"I have a big plan to expand in Europe," she said, noting bookings are being organized in Germany, Spain and Portugal next.

An online e-learning project with live webcasts in French and English is also in the works for the new year.

Closer to home, where Melchuk has her own training team of 12 to 15 stagers providing the service across Quebec, she has joined forces with leading Canadian for-sale-by-owner website **ByTheOwner.com** (better known here as **DuProprio.com**, where it began in 1997).

"Our philosophy clicks," said Melchuk, who has more than 15 years experience in business development and sales in information technology.

DuProprio president Nicolas Bouchard said they are launching "a very unique and innovative photo-staging" service that will initially cost customers \$50 for six room pictures.

"Our clients can use home staging via DuProprio, and Sveta will provide the service as an added value," he added from head office in Quebec City, noting Melchuk has already produced two explanatory videos with more to come.

Melchuk also blogs about the service on the DuProprio website.

She already works with about 20 local real-estate agents, many of whom "use me as a marketing tool" and refer customers to her.

Melchuk acknowledges the proliferation of TV shows on staging "has really helped business. Owners now force their (real estate) agents to use staging."

For more information, visit www.home-staging-montreal.com and to view the DuProprio videos go to www.home-staging-montreal.com/Video-home-staging.html

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In the NEWS

BOMBARDIER TESTING ALL-ELECTRIC BRAKES

Bombardier said yesterday it has completed an initial seven-hour flight test of an all-electric aircraft braking system – "the next evolution in aerospace braking." A Global 5000 business jet based in Wichita, Kan., had its hydraulic-actuated system replaced by a Meggitt electric brake on a Messier-Dowty landing gear. The Meggitt system is electro-mechanically actuated with electronic control units. The tests showed improved control in normal and emergency operations, elimination of hydraulic leaks, simpler manufacturing procedures and lower maintenance costs, Bombardier said. The system will remain on the aircraft for some time to validate the test results.

CAE INKS FIVE-YEAR DEAL WITH JETBLUE AIRWAYS

Montreal-based **CAE Inc.** said yesterday it has signed a five-year contract to supply **JetBlue Airways** with simulator services that ensure five visual airport databases it uses for pilot training are current with rapid changes and always up-to-date. The five databases are John F. Kennedy (New York), Logan International (Boston), Seattle-Tacoma International, McCarran International (Las Vegas) and Long Beach (California). JetBlue operates seven CAE flight simulators for A320 and Embraer 190 pilot training.

NORMERICA LOOKS TO SHIP2SAVE TECHNOLOGY

Toronto-based **Normerica Inc.**, one of the largest private-label cat-litter and pet-products companies in North America, has implemented Montreal's **Ship2Save** radio-frequency identification technology for its mobile cart system at its manufacturing plants in Brantford, Ont., and Lethbridge, Alta., for merchandise intended for **Wal-Mart Canada**.

ABITIBIBOWATER TO SELL TIMBERLAND ASSETS

AbitibiBowater Inc. announced last night that it intends to sell about 76,700 hectares of timberland assets in Quebec. The company intends to divest three forest units located in the Mauricie and Bas-Saint-Laurent regions, including the Seigneuries of Perthuis, Nicolas-Riou and Lac Métis. Scotia Capital Inc. has been retained as exclusive financial adviser for the sale process. Montreal-based newsprint giant AbitibiBowater owns or operates 27 pulp-and-paper facilities and 34 wood-products facilities in the U.S., Canada, Britain and South Korea.

THE GAZETTE

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Laval offers an economic development organization dedicated to the growth of the city's businesses. Discover the **Growth Challenge**, Laval's new economic development program from the team at LAVAL TECHNOPOLE.



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