

What's Your Title?

By Andi Peterson Brown

Do you remember how you took title to your home? Are you a sole owner? Joint tenant? Is it community property? Is it in a trust? ...and are you sure?

A recent health scare with an extended member of my family brought this subject to the forefront for us. Once calm was restored and relief set in that all was going to be ok, we all started to mull over the dreaded "business of death" and "what would have happened" questions. Did this person have a will? Is there a Power of Attorney? Really, they picked who? Are there DNR instructions? What about the cat? What about the house? Would it have to be sold? Would there have been tax or financial repercussions for the surviving family? And on and on this went as we all realized that we were grossly underprepared.

As this family member later did their due diligence with an attorney and began their estate planning in earnest, it was discovered that their property was not vested the way they had thought. There would have been unintended legal and financial complications on surviving family. This family member was upset that their initial lack of planning could have caused such ramifications, but took comfort in knowing that they were able to make changes to best suit their personal and financial goals.

Do you know how your home is vested? See above for why it's a good reason to check.



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Stylish Solutions

How to Navigate Inspiration Photos vs Real Life in Decorating and Design

By Ann McDonald



To get this shot, Photographer Erik Nelder removed the fireplace cover and put the camera through the actual fireplace! We had people on ladders holding the pots back and had moved the basket cabinet over to align properly. See photo on page D10.

Photos courtesy Couture Chateau llc

Most of us would love lives that are picture perfect – happy families with kids nicely dressed enjoying family activities with mom and dad; good meaningful conversations happening in a beautiful room – but life is not a magazine shoot, even if we can orchestrate the things around us and want it to be. Life is, however, beautiful in all its process mess.

As summer comes to an end, stylish suburbanite, I wanted to share inside tips you can use today to navigate the process between inspiration photos and the creation of your ideal space that lives as beautifully as it looks. My hope is to equip you with tools, so design and decorating makes you smile, *and thrive*, each time you walk into a room.

First things first: Remember that photo shoots for decorator magazines often involve things like pushing the sofa up against the bookshelf, hanging off a ladder while the table is three feet away from the chairs or climbing a fence in a quarry. What that means is, we can't recreate the same room elements from a photo for real living.

So just how do we design so spaces and places look and live beautifully?

Before we get to the pretty, my team and I sit down and review what I affectionately call "The Life Envelope." This refers to the next seven years of your life relating to the current project.

What is it you want your life to be in seven years? What are your personal goals? Family goals?

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