

# THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Beth Ann Shepherd, president of the Los Angeles luxury home staging company Dressed to Close, grew up in St. Petersburg, where she recently attended her 20th reunion with the class of 1987, Northeast High School. She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Florida and has worked with the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. and Christie's International Auction House. Her mother, Ann Shepherd Miguel, still lives in St. Petersburg.

## WHAT IS STAGING?

The enhancement of a home through elements of interior design, including, but not limited to, fine furnishings, artwork, rugs, linens and towels, plants, vases, flowers, candles and oftentimes, outdoor furniture for pool and lanai areas.

## WHAT DOES STAGING DO FOR BUYERS?

Creates the perception of an impressive lifestyle... Staging may eliminate negatives, such as out-of-date fixtures, limited outdoor areas, smaller bedrooms and so forth. Home shoppers are drawn into the emotion of the design and feel a connection, one not possible in empty or ineffectively designed homes. When Ritz-Carlton designs a property it uses simple, sophisticated basics and brings eclecticism to each guest room. We do the same for home sellers: simple designs with fresh, luxury elements to tie in the local vibe.

## WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR CLIENTS?

Christina Ricci, Fergie, Keenan Ivory Wayans, Eva Longoria.

## YOU CELEBRATED YOUR MOTHER'S 80TH BIRTHDAY WITH HER?

Yes, we most fashionably celebrated my mom's 80th birthday with an afternoon-that-went-into-the-evening dinner party. It went very late for a group of 80-year-olds; they tired my friends and me out.

## ANYTHING YOU MISS ABOUT ST. PETERSBURG?

I had to have an El Cap cheeseburger and dry martini — a couple of each, actually. It was fabulous... I don't think El Cap has changed much in 15 years... The dirt-filled parking lot where we used to party in high school is now a formal playground... Most delightful, there is no traffic in this town. My favorite part of the week was experiencing two evening thunderstorms and the most vibrant and surreal lightning display I have ever seen. The power went off in the house for hours. We drank a fabulous Bordeaux, enjoyed some Portuguese cheese and just laughed hysterically about the old days. I'll never forget this night with my most special mother.

— Mary Jane Park



Photograph by Scott Keeler