

LETTING TIMES

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A week which brought success

The life of a letting agent is never dull as Silvia Eldawi, lettings manager at Northfields in Ealing, reveals in the notes she made in her diary back in October. In retrospect it turned out to be a momentous week in the career of the west London branch boss

Monday

Back to normal after being one negotiator down for the past three weeks.

However, having wangled an extended holiday for her sister's wedding, our colleague surprised us by arriving back with two black eyes and a plaster on her face. She had managed to squeeze in a nose job.

All interest in her new nose vanished when we got a call to say we had been shortlisted for an Estate Agency of the Year award. We have 24 hours' notice of a visit from one of the judges. There was just enough time to tie up two offers on flats before I could start to think what I would wear. The navy or the pinstripe?

I was interrupted by a call from a land-

lord saying he had changed his mind about letting his £1,950 a month penthouse to an Italian student. I had to ring the student's mum who was financing the rental. She said she would fly over from Milan to view more flats.

Tuesday

Judgement day. I decided to go for a safe black skirt, white shirt and black tank top.

My supportive colleagues told me I looked like a policewoman. Luckily, the judge was charming so I had high hopes of success when I set off to value a flat in Darwin Road.

The bathrooms and kitchens were new. The only really bad points were the brown

and gold flowery carpets. I didn't know whether to laugh, cry or belt out a medley of 70s hits. I suggested to the landlord he could get £900 a month if he replaced them but he said he couldn't do anything strenuous for a month as he was fasting. So £850 a month it is then.

Wednesday

Our Italian matriarch arrived in a cloud of Versace perfume and swathed in Dolce & Gabbana. She always brings the office to an immediate standstill.

I had a two-bedroom garden flat for her to view in Ealing Broadway. She approved and we managed to negotiate a plasma TV into the rent.

Thursday

My colleague, Carla, came back from an inspection to announce that some tenants had rather enterprisingly divided their sit-



Silvia Eldawi

ting room with a stud wall to create another bedroom. It was actually quite well done but not in the agreement. It had to go and so did the extra lodger they had shoehorned in.

I returned from the coffee shop to find

I have secured a tenant for the flat with the 70s carpets. He's a Slade fan.

Friday

We've had a request to find a flat for three orchestra members. We had a suitable top floor apartment but the landlord lived below and was worried about the noise. There was nothing else for it. Our three guys set up their instruments in the flat and played The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba. Luckily, the landlord was a fan of the classics.

● Silvia's diary first appeared in the *Evening Standard* in October. In a glittering ceremony in London on November 24, Northfield's letting department was named best independent letting agents in the country at the Estate Agency of the Year Awards. The Sequence group picked up the overall title and Northfields won the silver.