

# *Your Home... and More*



*Inside...*

*Adding Curb Appeal*

*Renovating on a Budget*

*Selling Your Home*

*...And much more*

**Supplement to  
The Moultrie Observer**

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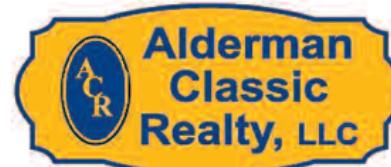


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# Best on the block

## Brand Point Content

**S**pring is in the air, so it's time to give your home an exterior makeover and add curb appeal. A few simple tricks can help boost your home's profile, and ensure visitors get a good first impression when they arrive on your doorstep.

### Make a statement with your front door

Your front door is one of the first things people notice about your home. Is your door drab, drafty or just plain past its prime? Make a bold statement and improve your home's energy efficiency with a new Energy Star-qualified front door. Consider options with decorative glass accents and stunning sidelights to add more natural light while maintaining a sense of style and privacy.

"When replacing your old front door, choose from one that accents your home's style, with high-performance features that help keep out air and water, and low-maintenance convenience like durable prefin-

ished options with coordinating trim," says Kathy Kafka Harkema of Pella Windows and Doors.

### Accessorize with new hardware

Replace your front door hardware for a quick, easy facelift. Choose hardware finishes consistent with those of your home's light fixtures, mailbox and house numbers to maintain a polished, cohesive look. You'll be surprised what a difference new hardware on your front door can make in creating a positive look and feel.

### Refresh exterior and trim colors

Now's also time to add a new storm door to help keep out the elements, or to add a refreshing coat of paint on your existing exterior doors for a fresh look.

For a dramatic change, repaint your home's exterior. You can also change trim color to refresh your home's exterior impact. When updating trim, choose color schemes that match your

home's primary exterior color, or complement it with a fresh twist.

### Accent with lighting

For night-time curb appeal and safety, add a row of exterior accent lighting to illuminate a walking path with ground-insert solar lights. Or consider solar spotlights to bring out landscaping or architectural focal points. Install new matching light fixtures outside your front door, garage door or patio door to create an inviting feel and provide well-lit doorways to greet you and visiting neighbors and guests.

### Create points of interest with plants

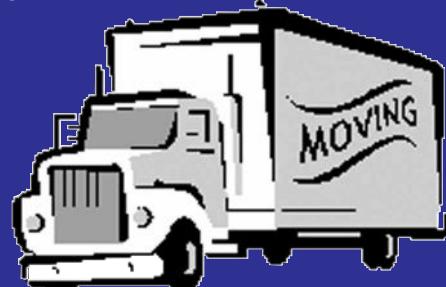
Add pops of color by arranging potted plants around your front door, or on a porch or deck. Incorporate planters or container gardens of varied sizes, shapes and colors to add visual interest. Also, planting flowerbeds along driveways and walkways gives your home a softer, more inviting feel.



A little effort can go a long way to creating the curb appeal you want for your home. Photo by Brand Point Content

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# Build a better bath on a budget

## Brand Point Content

**D**o you cringe every time you step into your bathroom? If so, it may be time to remodel.

Bathroom remodels are the most popular remodeling project, according to a recent survey by the National Association of Home Builders. But remodeling doesn't have to be a budget buster. You can simply improve what you already have to get the spa-like retreat you're seeking.

Here are a few tips to get you started on your redesign.

## Decorative details

Remodeling is a costly job on its own, but trying to add unique details and decor to your project makes

it that much more expensive. To get a custom look without the price tag, start bargain shopping online or at a local antique shop. Look for one-of-a-kind finds like a beautifully framed mirror. A mirror adds the illusion of space and changes the look of a bathroom — whether you're going for a traditional, transitional or modern feel. If you find a piece that doesn't perfectly fit, add a coat of paint to match the rest of your space.

Artwork adds a sophisticated touch and the best part is it doesn't have to cost a lot. There are several websites where you can print artwork in a variety of styles and then frame it yourself. Accessories can also make a big difference; a new shower curtain, towels

Please see BATH, Page 6



Bathrooms are the most popular room to make over, according to the National Association of Home Builders, but you can do wonderful things with the space by smart shopping and relatively minor changes, such as a new faucet with matching towel racks. Photo by Brand Point Content



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Continued from Page 5

# Bath

(in beautiful patterns), candles and window treatments go a long way.

Pull together the look of the space by adding knobs and pulls to your vanity matching the finish of the faucet. You can also include other accessories like towel bars and robe hooks for organization and an updated look.

## Fancy fixtures

Easily bring beauty to any bath by upgrading your fixtures. Start by swapping the sink faucet.

## Pretty with paint

Paint is your friend when you're on a budget — it makes the greatest impact for the least amount of money.

When updating a bath,

choose a satin finish for a washable surface and look for humidity-resistant paints to avoid streaks and mildew. The color you choose will set the tone — lighter colors are best for small spaces to give a spacious, bright feeling; while darker colors provide a more modern look. Do you have a small space but want to use darker tones? Paint one wall dark and make it the focal point behind the vanity or against the tub.

Don't be afraid of using color. Remember: paint can easily be changed if you don't like it down the road. You can also add splashes of color with wallpaper borders, bath rugs and soap dishes.

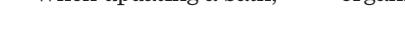
## Contain clutter

Getting rid of clutter and organizing will make your

bathroom a more relaxing area. Dedicate space for storage. Bath accessories, such as towel bars and robe hooks will keep items off the floor. Wall shelves are also an excellent solution and there are a variety of options — from smaller, decorative shelves that can hold perfume and toiletries to larger hotel shelves that provide the perfect storage location for towels.

To prevent under-the-sink clutter, a rolling cart can provide each family member with their own tray to store bathroom goods, and it can be moved out of the way when guests arrive.

Redecorating is all about shopping smart and finding space-changing details when you're on a budget. These easy, inexpensive tips will hopefully inspire you to get started.



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# 5 tips for a better lawn

## Brand Point Content

**W**ether you're an expert or just a beginner, it's important to know how to properly care for and maintain your lawn - especially before the summer season begins.

The overall appearance and health of your lawn is a result of the care you put into it, so consider these tips to help keep your lawn in tip-top shape all season long.

### 1. Remove debris —

Fallen leaves, branches and other debris can leave you with a matted lawn, keeping grass compacted and preventing it from growing properly. Pick up debris regularly and clean up after a major storm when fallen tree limbs and leaves are most likely to be found.

### 2. Mow at the right height —

Avoid cutting grass down by more than

one-third of its height. To ensure you're cutting grass at the desired and most appropriate length, it's best to use a mower with a height adjuster like any of the Yard Machines walk-behind mowers. Increasing the height of your mower will help prevent your lawn from burning out and creating brown spots. By keeping grass taller, you can also help protect the soil, allowing it to receive and retain nutrients needed for overall health and growth.

### 3. Add aesthetic appeal —

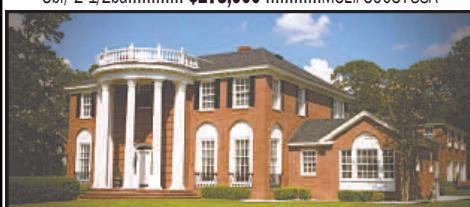
Maintain the appearance of your yard by using an edger to cut along sidewalks and driveways, giving your lawn an instant makeover. By adding finishing touches like edging and trimming shrubs and trees, you can achieve a clean, polished look that brings the entire yard together.

### 4. Repair bare spots —

If you have thin or bare patches of grass in your yard, it's best to do your homework first and determine the best solution. These types of problem areas are often caused by pests, droughts or disease. Common repair and grass replacement methods include patching bare spots, and dead or diseased areas with fresh soil and grass seed, or applying sod.

### 5. Water infrequently —

Although you may be accustomed to the routine of watering your yard every day, it is actually best to water your lawn thoroughly once a week. Deep watering less often is more effective than frequent, shallow watering because it encourages plants to establish a deeper root system. It is also recommended to water in the morning when it is cooler and shadier, so your lawn has more time to absorb the water.

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Your front door is one of the first things people notice about your home. There are lots of ways to make it shine. Photo by Brand Point Content

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# Make a grand entrance

## Simple ideas to refresh your entryway

### Brand Point Content

Most people enter their home through the garage or backdoor, forgetting how the front entrance looks to neighbors and guests. Your front door is often the first thing others notice about your home; it's key to make a positive first impression.

### How to create an inviting entrance

Transform your home's curb appeal with a new front door. With so many new entry door systems to choose from, ranging from single doors, to double-door

options, to those accented with decorative glass, or transoms and sidelights, it's easy to find one that fits your budget and your style. Pella offers stylish wood, fiberglass or steel options. Choose from ENERGY STAR-qualified design options to create a distinctive look, whether you're building a new home, remodeling, or simply replacing an old door.

### Pick a standout color for your door

Sticking with your door? A fresh coat of paint will do wonders. Try a bold color to brighten a neutral color

scheme. Pick a color that coordinates with your home's exterior, but dare to be bold with color contrast to add eye appeal.

### Update your hardware

Why stop with a fresh coat of paint? Refresh old doors with new hardware. Choose handles and door knockers that complement your home's exterior design. Pella offers hardware in a variety of finishes, to instantly upgrade exterior doors.

Replace broken or damaged items

Replace broken light fixtures, burned out bulbs and worn out weather-stripping on exterior doors. Pitch that faded wreath, worn out mat, and dead plants, and instead, add a bright new welcome mat and eye-catching seasonal decorations.

### Clean up, accent with contrast

Use a little elbow grease and ammonia-free, vinegar-based glass cleaner to wash

Please see DOOR, Page 9

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# Empty nesters want yards with fun, not fuss

## Brand Point Content

One of the first questions new empty nesters face is: what do we do with the nest? Some are eager to downsize and sell. Others like where they live and choose to stay put.

No matter the decision, the property, new or old, is likely in for a makeover aimed at making routine upkeep more manageable. One of the key areas to tackle is the yard and garden. The following are tips for transforming a yard's maintenance-hungry features, especially the lawn, into alternatives that offer fun and functionality without the fuss.

- Create no mow zones — The lawn is often a yard's highest maintenance feature. One simple way to reduce lawn maintenance is to

strategically stop mowing certain parts of the yard, while continuing to maintain more desirable areas. Un-mowed areas needn't look messy. Delineate the divide between mowed lawn and wilder spaces with a strategically placed stone wall or wooden fence.

Adding clusters of ornamental grasses or shrubs along the new lawn's edge also works to soften the border transition. For a bit of fun, sow some un-mown areas with wildflower seeds. Add green trails for impromptu strolls or heart-pumping walks by cutting a circular path through the no-mow zone. Post birdhouses or feeders along the route for bird watching.

- Swap some turf for landscape beds — Freestanding landscape islands of trees, shrubs, bulbs and perennials are appealing low-mainte-



**Creating landscape beds gives you less yard to mow and looks pretty too. Photo by Brand Point Content**

nance features that can reduce lawn area. Landscape beds are also a solution for difficult to maintain stretches like steep slopes, rough terrain and curbside strips. It's important to cover exposed soil with mulch to stop weeds from growing.

- Deck the yard for fun and folly. Converting open spaces to outdoor entertaining areas is another way to reduce yard maintenance.

Paved patios and decks make perfect places to sit, barbecue, dine or simply enjoy being outdoors. New composite decking, bricks and paving stones are definitely low upkeep installations. Other ideas include fire pits, outdoor fireplaces, gravel paths and terraces. Don't just look at spots close to the house: come up with reasons to hang out in different parts of the yard.

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Continued from Page 8

## Door

the windows. Wipe down window and door frames and sweep sills with a dry paint brush or vacuum to remove dirt. See [pella.com/news](http://pella.com/news) for tips on cleaning windows and doors.

Fill flower boxes or containers with boldly-colored plants to accent your front door. If you've painted your door red, plant red and white or red and purple flowers to create a designer look. Or if you're keen on green doors, try purple or orange flowers for contrast.

## Illuminate your walkway

Make it easy for others to see the way to your front door at night. Transform and illuminate walkways with easy-to-install solar lights. Stake them in the ground positioned so solar

cells get enough southern exposure for sunlight to recharge nightlights during the day.

## Trim bushes, create container gardens

Landscaping should accent your home, not dominate it. Keep bushes below the bottom sill of your windows to improve your view. Trim or replace overgrown shrubs and trees. Keep plant material trimmed several feet away from your home to minimize damage from wind or insects, and help eliminate a place for prowlers to lurk. Keep your porch and steps clear of clutter and create container gardens to accent your entry. Fill decorative containers with plants that accent your home's color scheme, front door and landscape design.



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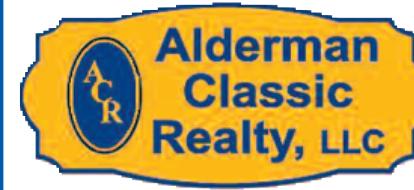
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# Create functional family living spaces



Creating a functional living space — where parents and children coexist harmoniously — doesn't have to be a daunting task. By choosing durable but stylish furniture, practical storage solutions, and allowing everyone the chance to express their style in defined places, your home can become a haven for all ages. Photo by Brand Point Content.

## Brand Point Content

**L**et's face it — life is busy. And one of the byproducts of a busy life is a cluttered house. With piles of paper coming home from school and toys creating obstacle courses in the family room, parents may wonder how they'll ever take back control of the house. A few experts share their ideas for doing just that.

### Making the most of small spaces

Lisa Godsey, a registered interior designer for nearly 20 years and an instructor at The Illinois Institute of Art — Chicago, recommends that people start looking at interior spaces in a new way — up. Utilizing a room's vertical space along the walls takes the heavy lifting off floor space as a catch-all for clutter.

"Consolidating objects in some kind of containment, whether with shelves, cubes, wall-hung baskets or other organizational options cleans up visual clutter," she says.

This technique is especially beneficial in small living areas. In these situations, adding vertical modular storage units opens up space for tables and couches, while adding utility and keeping potentially harmful items away from small hands.

Please see FAMILY, Page 10

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Continued from Page 9

# Family

## Family-friendly furniture

Marissa Alexander, academic director at The Art Institutes International Minnesota advises families to think toward the future when choosing furniture items.

"Durability, easy maintenance and flexibility of the fabric are essential," she says. Children will grow up quickly so choosing materials that meet the family's needs now and in the future is highly advisable.

Both Alexander and Godsey suggest nylon upholstery and durable, low-sheen furniture finishes, fiber seal textiles and individual lounge chairs sharing an ottoman instead of a loveseat. These combi-

nations offer form, function, and style, as well as the opportunity to fit in alongside new furniture purchases.

"Selecting furniture with clean lines, in subdued patterns in a medium value range — not too light or dark — can work in a variety of settings," Godsey adds.

To add pops of color, change the wall paint.

Adam B. Nash, LEED certified designer and interior design instructor at The Art Institute of San Antonio, a branch of The Art Institute of Houston, suggests choosing Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) free products — because they are very eco- and child-friendly. These paints don't emit any toxic fumes and are completely odorless making it possible to literally paint a bedroom and have the kids sleep in it that same evening.

"It also allows for flexibility of changing things around without huge costs,

especially when transitioning from a nursery to a preschooler to a preteen, etc," shares Nash.

### Keeping peace in shared spaces

It's hard enough to convince siblings to share a tablet; what happens when they have to share closet space?

"Sharing a closet is best accomplished when it is clear who controls which space," asserts Godsey.

She recommends defining areas based on age — for example, placing an older child's clothing on the top level of a double-hung closet. The area can be accessed via a stepstool — out of a younger sibling's reach.

Another option is to hang two bars extending into the depth of the closet, rather than one utilizing the width of the closet.

"Two bars on each side, in double-hung fashion,

gives each child four feet of hanging space," she says. And it may help to keep the peace when it's time to choose an outfit.

### A time and place for individual style

While parents show off

their acquired style through furniture choices, artwork and decor, children's style can be a bit more ... changeable.

Alexander suggests that parents provide children with flexible display systems that show off their creativity in a simple, neat and contained package.

"Magnetic paint gives children direct control over what they display, allowing them to change displays whenever they want," she says. "A large frame with a plexi shield is a lightweight way to display a variety of flat work like children's custom artwork."

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Flooring can help make a sale — and it's not that expensive to replace or to spruce up. Photo by Brand Point Content

# Selling this summer?

## 6 upgrades to help secure a speedy sale

### Brand Point Content

**W**hen the weather warms up, so does the real estate market. Spring and summer are traditionally the seasons when both home buyers and sellers are most active across the country. If you'll be putting your home on the market this year, simple, cost-effective upgrades can help ensure a speedy sale at a good price.

"In the world of real estate, it's often necessary for sellers to spend a little on upgrades in order to achieve a satisfying home sale," says Bethany

Richmond, communications director for the Carpet & Rug Institute. "Fortunately, some of the most impressive upgrades, such as new carpeting, are also affordable. Such upgrades ensure that you don't have to spend a lot to achieve a better selling price."

Here are six easy-to-do upgrades that are both cost-effective and high-impact:

### 1. Replace carpet

It's easy to see the impact of worn or dated carpeting. "If you don't like looking at it, buyers won't either," Richmond says. "Replacing

old or damaged carpet delivers impressive appeal for a modest investment."

New carpet is one upgrade that has a high ratio of value to cost. It substantially increases perceived value for homebuyers without requiring home sellers to spend a bundle.

"Even less expensive carpet styles will freshen the look of a room and prepare it for sale," Richmond notes. "You can get a lot more quality for just a little more money," she says, "and if you take advantage of spring carpet sales, installing new carpeting can cost even less."

### 2. Clean flooring

If your carpet is still in great shape, then simply having it professionally cleaned can make it look

Please see SELLING, Page 14

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# Save money now and increase resale value

## Brand Point Content

While it may be tempting to make cosmetic home improvements including decorating touches or fresh coats of paint, upgrading vital home systems such as heating and cooling can really pay off. In fact, making smart improvements can help you save money on your utility bills now, while increasing your home's value to potential buyers later on down the road.

Heating and cooling is one of a home's biggest costs, accounting for more than half the average home's utility costs, according to energy.gov, which means it makes good sense to make efficiency improvements that positively impact your budget every month. And for the long term, potential buyers want assurance that basic home systems, including heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical, are in working order before they buy, RealEstate.com reports.

• Heating and cooling: On average, you should consider replacing your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system every 10 years in order to take advantage of the latest energy-saving technologies and cost efficiencies. Replacing your old system with a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) of up to 20.00 can save you up to 60 percent on your annual cooling costs.

• A programmable control: Another way to reduce energy consumption is to install a programmable HVAC control, which can save up to 15 percent compared to traditional non-programmable thermostats.

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Continued from Page 12

## Selling

even better. A deep professional cleaning helps lift tough soils and provides a cleaner, fresher look to rooms. You can find an expert in your area by visiting [www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org). CRI experts can even provide insight into how to remove difficult stains.

Not only is carpet a good value, it's healthy, too. People with allergies or other sensitivities are installing carpet to improve indoor air quality. Recent studies support previous findings that carpet, when effectively cleaned, traps allergens and other particles, resulting in less dust, dander and airborne contaminants escaping into the air.

Don't forget to clean all other flooring, including hardwood, laminates and tile. Buyers will appreciate

a sparkling clean appearance throughout the house.

### 3. Repaint in neutral shades

Fresh paint is another smart and cost-effective upgrade for sellers.

Buyers expect it, yet many sellers hesitate to repaint. Perhaps they like the existing colors or balk at the cost of professional painting services. Yet repainting in neutral colors makes a room look fresher and brighter, and gives buyers a visual "blank slate" against which to imagine their own decor.

Do the work yourself and you can reduce the cost of repainting even further.

### 4. Update or upgrade lighting

You may find that disco-ball style globe light charm-

ing in your kitchen, but the average buyer doesn't want dated or unusual lighting.

Replacing dated or worn fixtures, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, is a cost-effective way to give a room a more up-to-date, contemporary look.

If you already have newer fixtures, consider replacing incandescent bulbs with high-efficiency options such as CFLs or LEDs. Although they're a bit more expensive to purchase, these bulbs last years longer — a selling point for buyers who will reap the value of not having to replace bulbs any time in the near future.

### 5. Install new faucets

A high-end faucet can completely change the look and usability of a kitchen or bathroom. In terms of cost versus value, an upgraded faucet, such as

pull-out or even touch-free styles, can dramatically increase perceived value for a relatively modest investment. An upgraded faucet is a thoughtful touch that will set your home apart in buyers' minds.

### 6. Replace hardware throughout

You may have already thought of upgrading kitchen cabinet knobs and drawer pulls, but have you also upgraded hardware in your bathroom or on the front door? These seemingly small items have a major impact on the overall visual effect of a home.

In desirable rooms such as kitchens and baths, designer hardware can elevate the entire look of the room. And upgraded door hardware will ensure buyers have a positive first impression from the moment they enter your home.

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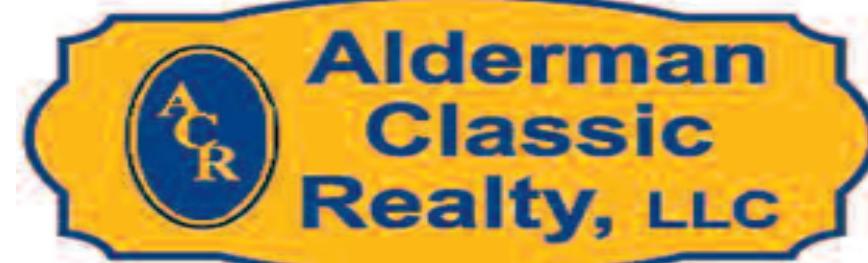
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