



Over the Garden Gate

A Monthly Publication Prepared by Sandie Scherer

January

2009

De-cluttering — and having a pristine home from top to bottom — are the no-brainers that can make your real estate look better than the house down the block. Your home must be cleaner and less cluttered than it's ever been. You need to banish not just the day-to-day buildup (the mail, the shoes, last season's clothes, the dog hair), but also several years' accumulation. Steam clean the carpets, clean or repaint the walls — and store, sell, or give away anything you can. Then you'll have a bare canvas you can really spruce up.

Conquer the Clutter and Dirt



Most prospective buyers enter your home through the front door, so that's a prime spot to make some improvements. Apply a fresh coat of paint if it's looking dingy, eliminate or

hide all clutter (mail, shoes, keys, newspapers), and clean out the coat closet so that it looks more spacious. Then pick one thing that you could upgrade in this area. Add a new hanging light fixture or replace that Civil War painting with a large mirror. Maybe it's time to replace that old bowl of potpourri with a simple, fresh

floral arrangement or a stack of design books with an ornamental accessory on top. The look should be simple and sophisticated.

Staging Tricks

It can be a challenge to sell a house these days. That's why many home sellers are hiring professional stagers to help them hike the odds of attracting a buyer. Here are some of the tricks the pros use to help homes sell quickly and for more than the asking price.

"A cat is a puzzle for which there is no solution." ~

Hazel Nicholson



Do a Walk-Through

Our homes are so well-used that we rarely take a moment to really look at them. Stand in the doorway of each room and try to view the space as if you'd never seen it before. You'll not only see what needs a good cleaning, you'll be more likely to notice what could be removed to make the room look bigger, and what you might do to make the room appear more inviting or versatile. Could that solid door be replaced with a French door for more light? Would new hardware modernize your kitchen cabinets? Could a new vanity upgrade your bathroom? Would replacing your floral bedspread with something more neutral make the room more sophisticated? Some simple changes can make a huge difference. Also look at the room flow on the ground floor. There should be a pleasing connection between rooms — similar colors and styles in the living and dining rooms and kitchen.



contents courtesy of Better Homes & Gardens

Chicken Florentine Artichoke Bake

R e c i p e

- 1 1/4-oz. can artichoke hearts, drained & quartered
- 1 10-oz. pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed & well drained
- 1/2 c oil-packed dried tomatoes, drained & chopped
- 1/4 c grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 c soft bread crumbs
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 8 oz. dried bow tie pasta
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 2 eggs
- 1-1/4 cups milk
- 1 tsp. dried Italian seasoning
- 2 c chopped cooked chicken
- 2 c shredded Monterey Jack cheese (8 oz.)



1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Cook pasta according to package directions; drain. In medium skillet cook onion in 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat about 5 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; set aside.

2. In bowl whisk together eggs, milk, seasoning, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. black pepper, and crushed red pepper. Stir in chicken, Monterey Jack cheese, artichokes, spinach, tomatoes, half of the Parmesan, cooked pasta, and onion. Transfer to 3-quart rectangular baking dish.

3. Bake, covered, 20 minutes. In small bowl combine remaining Parmesan, bread crumbs, paprika, and melted butter. Sprinkle mixture over pasta. Bake, uncovered, 10 minutes more or until golden. Makes 6 to 8 servings.



Black-Eyed Susan

Here's another prairie wildflower that often gets a bad rap because of its overuse. Goldsturm, despite its Czech and German origins, is truly an American icon. And it's an endearing pass-along

plant. Plant three and soon you will have seven. Then it's time to share.

Bloom Time: Midsummer to late fall.
Hardiness: To 30 degrees F below zero.
Light: Sun. Height: 2 to 2-1/2 feet.

Handy Hints

For beautiful, shiny clean jewellery, use a soft toothbrush and toothpaste. Rub lightly, rinse and polish with a towel. Diamonds and gold will simply glow.

Candles burn twice as long if you sprinkle salt on them before lighting.

Clean discoloured shirt buttons by rubbing with an eraser.

I'M LISTENING.

It's a privilege to live and work in Maple Ridge.

Sandie Scherer
604.290.5181
sscherer@shaw.ca



Macdonald Realty Ltd., 22718 Lougheed Hwy, Maple Ridge, B.C. V2X 2V6
Ph: 604.467.3871 Fax: 604.467.2651