

Brought to you by
Jill C. Kline & Brenda K. Odenbaugh

Owners
Jill: 970-388-2926
jill@kandorealty.com
Brenda: 970-381-1169
brenda@kandorealty.com
www.kandorealty.com



K & O
REALTY, LLC

P.O. Box 1103
607 Main St
Platteville, CO 80651

HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Function-First Design for a More Livable Home

When it comes to home design and decor, it's easy to get caught up in appearances, but what if we shifted the focus? Imagine a space that supports your lifestyle, where elements are chosen for feel and function. Here are some ways you can embrace your home's unique character to create a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere.

Vertical Blinds

Surprisingly functional, vertical blinds are often used to cover large windows or sliding glass doors. Instead of replacing them, consider adding curtain panels on either side of your window or door. When the blinds are drawn to the side, they'll be hidden behind the decorative panels.

Mismatched Furniture

Filling your home with brand new furniture can be expensive, overwhelming or both. Breathe new life into mismatched furniture with coordinating pillows and throw blankets. An area rug that complements the color scheme pulls the room together.

Wall-to-Wall Carpet

While hardwood floors are a classic design element, wall-to-wall carpet also has its benefits. Carpeting adds warmth and softness that hard surfaces just don't offer. Consider having your carpets professionally cleaned, then use a carpet rake to fluff and refresh the fibers as needed.

Dated Cabinetry

Cabinets installed 20 years ago hold dishes just as well as brand-new ones. Bring them up to date with a fresh coat of paint or a new finish. For an even easier upgrade, simply swap out old handles and pulls for hardware with a modern look. Complete the makeover with an updated backsplash — an affordable way to make a big impact.

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Clean Home Habits

Maintaining a clean home isn't just about appearances — it's about living in a healthy, comfortable environment. By following a few simple tips, you can ensure your home is fresh and inviting every

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Hearty Beef Stew

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day.

Remove your shoes when entering the house. This helps reduce dust, pollen and dirt while keeping outdoor germs and bacteria at bay.

Clean one room per day. Breaking up your chores into smaller tasks makes the process more manageable.

Tackle messes while you cook. Rinsing or soaking cutting boards, pots and pans once you're done using them can prevent food from sticking. Maintaining a tidy kitchen as you cook allows you to enjoy your meal without the looming task of scrubbing later.

Perform a weekly pantry edit. Toss out expired foods and take note of what ingredients you have on hand before buying groceries.

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How To Maximize Space in a Small Guest Room

When space is at a premium, a little creativity can turn a small guest room into a welcoming retreat. Here are a few ways to maximize functionality without sacrificing comfort or style.

Focus on Height

Vertical stripes on a wall draw the eye upward, making the ceiling appear higher. Choose tall, narrow furniture, hang wall decor above eye level, and keep clutter off the floor to make the room feel clean and spacious.

Keep it Bright

Sheer curtains allow natural light to fill the room. Pops of color — strategically placed where natural light hits — can enhance brightness, making the area feel larger. Install wall sconces for ambient lighting that doesn't take up valuable floor or table space.

Style it Right

A daybed with a hidden trundle saves space while comfortably accommodating guests. A bed with built-in drawers also provides extra storage without using additional square footage. Mirrors create the illusion of a larger area while offering a place for your guests to freshen up. Add some fun decor for a welcoming, personal touch.

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Simple Swaps Make an Immediate Impact

Revamping the mantle is a quick way to change the mood of a room. With a few thoughtful updates, you can create a striking focal point that transforms your space.

Start with a neutral color palette. Woodsy hues mixed with beiges and whites create a soothing foundation.

Layer in natural materials. Woven baskets, dried wheat stalks or burlap garlands provide a stylish feel.

Add a bit of elegance. Metallic accents, such as copper vases or gold candle holders, bring a subtle pop.

Introduce personal touches. Family photos in warm-toned frames complete the look.

Incorporate seasonal items that evoke feelings of warmth. Candles, leaves or pumpkins in deep oranges, rustic reds and golden yellows are popular fall choices.

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Hearty Beef Stew

Ingredients

1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 lb. beef stew meat
4 large carrots, peeled and chopped
1 lb. potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ tsp. dried thyme
¼ tsp. dried rosemary
¼ tsp. dried parsley
2 cups beef broth
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
1 cup frozen peas
1 tsp. salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

Directions

In a large pot, heat olive oil on medium-high. Brown stew meat, then add carrots, potatoes, celery, onion, garlic, and herbs. Cook for 5 minutes. Stir in beef broth, then cover and simmer on medium-low for at least 2 hours.

Whisk together melted butter and flour to make a roux. Add roux, peas, salt, and pepper to stew. Increase heat to medium-high and continue to cook for 10 more minutes. Serve immediately with warm biscuits or bread.



SERVES 4



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The Personal Marketing Company
11541 W. 83rd Terrace
Lenexa, KS 66214