

HOME/GARDEN

Fall 2021

Modern flair

Stacy and Chad Pearson designed their new home for living. Page 2A.



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

ANYTHING BUT ORANGE

Spice up your pumpkin decor with funky colors and textures. Page 1B.



VELVET TOUCH

This trendy fabric can be comfortable, durable and stunning. Page 3B.

MUM'S THE WORD

How to care for everybody's favorite fall flower. Page 5A.





Photos by Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

MODERN FLAIR

Stacy and Chad Pearson designed their new home for living

BY LISA DAVIS

ldavis@annistonstar.com

You could say the kitchen is the heart of Chad and Stacy Pearson's new home in White Plains — specifically, the kitchen lights.

The modern pendant lights hanging over the kitchen island are attention-grabbing, but they also lend a golden glow to the spacious rooms.

The lights were one of the first things Stacy bought, even before construction started on the house. In a way, the house was built around them.

For one thing, they dictated the size of the kitchen island. "I never thought we'd have an island this huge," Chad said.

More than that, though, the golden metal lampshades add light and warmth, making the large house feel cozy.

This is not your grandmother's gold.

It's not bright or gaudy; it's warming. These rich golden tones are echoed throughout the house, from table legs to chandeliers to bath fixtures.

Chad, the general manager for Cooper Chevrolet, and Stacy, who works for Rice, Rice & Yates attorneys, moved into their new home on Father's Day 2020. Stacy had found a house plan online, which the couple then tweaked to make it their own.

The downstairs features an open-floorplan living room and kitchen, plus a roomy master suite. Upstairs are rooms for Chad's two teen-aged sons and Stacy's 12-year-old granddaughter. The upstairs bonus room is also the only living area with a TV.

Stacy didn't intend for the main living room to be TV-free. It just happened, but then they liked not having a TV downstairs. "We talk more when the kids are here," Stacy said.

Construction on the house took about 14 months, delayed for a few months by rain but also by the early stages of the pandemic, as subcontractors had to figure out safety precautions and social distancing.

Furnishing the house took almost as long as construction, as that's when pandemic supply shortages hit. It was hard to get appliances. Patio furniture was on back-order for months.

The pandemic also meant more time at home. Stacy's favorite space in the house became the master suite, with its huge bathroom. "It's like my retreat," she said.

Chad loves to cook, and his favorite space is the outdoor kitchen. It features two refrigerator drawers, an ice maker, a gas grill, a gas oven and lots of storage. But the heart of the kitchen is a Traeger wood-fired grill. "That's my baby," Chad

said. (He's a brisket guy.)

There is also a wood-burning fireplace, a big-screen TV and spacious seating. The family has already thrown a couple of birthday parties there.

The outdoor room is lit by a massive, 54-bulb chandelier. (Chad discovered that it's hard to find a store with 54 of the same kind of lightbulb in stock.)

The home is surrounded by towering pine trees, visited by birds and the occasional deer. "It's quiet and peaceful," Stacy said.

"Last year, during the pandemic, we spent a lot more time at home," Chad said. "This is a good place to build memories with the kids." (And hopefully a good place for future grandkids to play.)

Lisa Davis is Features Editor of The Anniston Star. Contact her at ldavis@annistonstar.com.



The entryway features a striking gold-toned light fixture.



The upstairs bonus room is where the whole family can gather to watch TV.



A fantastical Harry Potter-themed bedroom for a 12-year-old granddaughter.



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Chad Pearson loves to cook, and the outdoor kitchen is his favorite room in the house.



The home is surrounded by quiet woods.



The striking pendant lights over the kitchen island are 'Shelby' by Savoy House.



There is no TV in the living room, which has meant the family spends more time talking.



In the master bedroom, a modern wood accent wall is painted a soothing gray.



The master bath features plenty of gold accents.



The dining room features a modern take on the crystal chandelier.

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MUM'S THE WORD

How to care for everybody's favorite fall flower

BY SHERRY BLANTON
Special to The Anniston Star

Just as the gardener is ready to pitch the hand spade and the smelly gardening gloves, the chrysanthemums burst into bloom, causing us to smile. Mums are popping up everywhere, beckoning us with vibrant flowers. Time to remove weary summer annuals and replace them with fresh faces.

Mums are readily available at big box and grocery stores. There are several farms that grow their own mums and various organizations that sell mums for fundraisers. Wherever you shop, you will find an array of vivacious colors (the hallmark of fall mums).

When you shop, scout for healthy plants whose leaves are dark green; pass on those with yellowed leaves or broken branches. Be particular with any plant you bring into your garden, whether it be for a week or a lifetime.

Purchase your mums where they are fresh and well tended. If you shop in a store with shelves of mums, ask when the mums arrived and when the next shipment will be there. Shop wisely. Stressed

mums without ample moisture or good care are not happy mums and will not provide the show you desire.

Look for mums with lots of fat buds. Choose mums that are not in full bloom; the color will last longer in your garden. Mums completely bloomed out may be past their prime. Mums which have just "cracked" (meaning that the color of the blooms has just begun to show) are the best choice.

Mums can die in a heartbeat. They need regular water and, if they get really dried out, they may not recover.

Once you have your mums at home, they will need some tender loving care to keep them perky.

If the soil seems dry when I remove the mums from the car, I soak the plants in buckets of water.

By the time mums have enough flowers for the trade, they are apt to be rootbound (the roots have taken up the whole pot). Being pot bound may make it more difficult to get the water all the way through the root ball.

Repot your purchases immediately. Choose a larger container (perhaps just a size larger); fill the bottom with fresh

potting soil and add the mum. If the roots are really tight, gently separate them. Surround the root ball with more potting soil. Do not fill the pot up to the top as you do not want the water to run over the top and down the outside; the water should get through to the roots.

After the mum is safely in a new container, water thoroughly, making certain the water penetrates the root ball.

Mums need at least four hours of pure sun to remain vibrant. Shorter days require more ingenuity for that special place. Mums in full shade will not do well. Under a tree or a dark porch may not be the best places.

The most important thing to remember about mums is they do not like their soil to dry out.

If you wait until the leaves are drooping, you have waited too long to water and have stressed your plant. Use the finger check (stick a finger down into the soil) to decide whether your plant needs a drink. Many gardeners will lift the container; if it seems light, time to water.

Removing spent flower heads — called "deadheading" — will keep mums neater and encourage them to continue to bloom.

These guidelines apply to most any flowering plant, but for fall mums they are even more crucial.

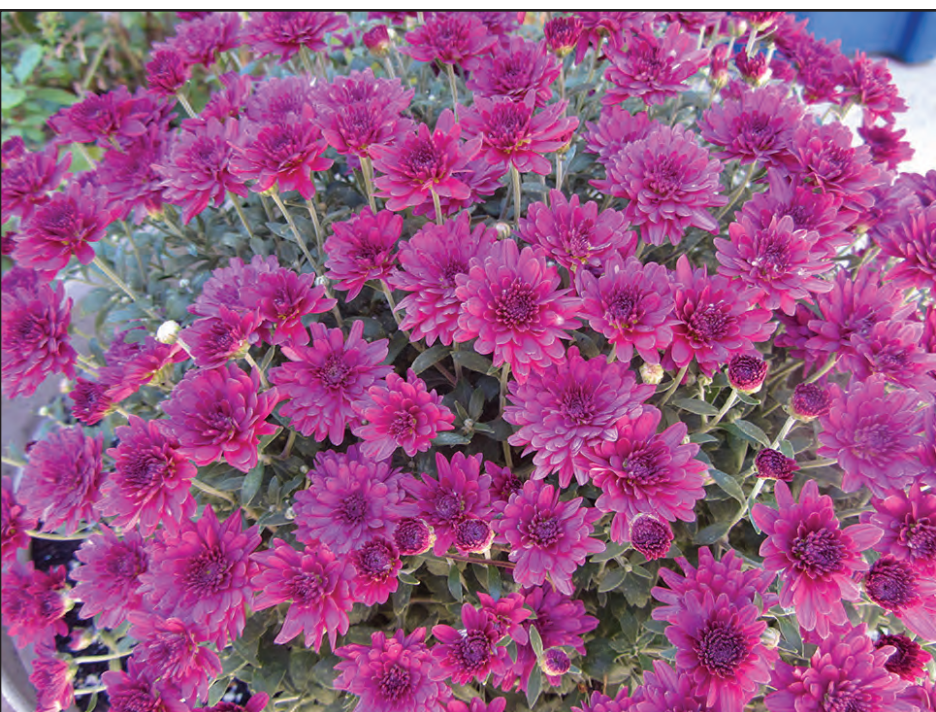
I prefer to grow these mums as annuals. When their season is finished, I let them go. I have tried saving them, and they never seem as vivacious the next fall.

If you decide to save your annual mums, they will require fertilization and continual pinching to make certain they will get bushier. Mine have always looked a bit skimpy — never like the freshly grown ones.

If you want mums that keep on coming in your garden, choose perennial mums such as 'Ryan's Pink'. Give this fall charmer full sun. Two caveats; it will spread and flop. Share the extras with friends in spring when they come up, or create a new bed. About July, I give them a hard haircut to prevent them from getting too lanky. My fall perennial mums are glorious.

Remember, mum's the word.

Sherry Blanton, "The Southern Gardener," writes about gardening for The Anniston Star. Contact her at sblanton@annistonstar.com. Follow her on Facebook at Southern Gardener-Anniston Star.



Photos by Sherry Blanton/Special to The Anniston Star

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Look no further than your local Walmart for these cushiony shepherd check pumpkins. They're so soft they could practically double as a pillow (careful of the stem though). These retail for about \$8 each.



ANYTHING BUT ORANGE

Spice up your pumpkin decor with funky colors and textures

BY DANIELLE STALLWORTH
dstallworth@annistonstar.com

Fall decor without pumpkins is like winter decor without a Christmas tree: It just seems like some-

thing is missing. While nothing can beat a classic orange pumpkin picked straight from the patch on a crisp autumn afternoon, you'd be surprised at the variety of colors,

patterns, fabrics and textures that decorative pumpkins come in nowadays. If you're not looking to break the bank this year, keep in mind that a lot of these pumpkins have plenty

of do-it-yourself potential. Feel free to pull up a YouTube tutorial and give it a shot. Whether you buy them or DIY them, they'll add the perfect touch of seasonal flair to your space!

FABRIC



Velvet is in! Hit up Rebel Lane Home Supply Co. on Etsy for some of these soft fall staples in deep rich hues. They come in five different sizes and range from \$10-\$20. P.S. — the stems are real!



These sherpa pumpkins from Kirkland's make for super cozy home accents. Pick one up for about \$9.



CreativeFabricCrafts on Etsy has patterned pumpkins galore! Whether you go for buffalo check, cream paisley or black and rust plaid, they make great fall accent. Prices range from \$9.95-\$11.95.

COLORFUL



Feel the 'Hocus Pocus' vibes with these iridescent pumpkins with lights on the inside. You'll spend a pretty penny on these pretty pumpkins from Grandin Road — they cost \$49.50.



Wait, is it Easter or Halloween? Visit TildaLovesTeddy on Etsy to purchase one of these fall staples in fun springtime pastels for \$29.

TEXTURED



Go for a rustic feel with this natural braided pumpkin statue from Kirkland's. The woven masterpiece comes in two sizes and retails for about \$14-\$20.



Hobby Lobby is a pumpkin mecca! This unusual piece combines burlap, chipwood and jute for a charming material contrast. Pick one up for \$10.

GLAM



Looking for the warm glow of a jack-o-lantern without the pumpkin guts? Try Bee & Willow's glass pumpkins with LED lights on the inside! They're available at Bed, Bath and Beyond for \$25.



Add a touch of razzle dazzle to your home with these glittery pumpkins in assorted colors made by RainbowManes on Etsy. A small one costs \$6.95, while a large one is \$12.95.



Grandin Road's high shine metallic pumpkins make oh-so-chic additions to your fall decor, and that's reflected in the price. One of these will set you back anywhere from \$49-\$59.



Does your style border on preppy? Then a monogrammed pumpkin is perfect for you! Scoop up one of these personalized beauties from Mother Bliss Co. on Etsy for \$32.

Welcome Home.



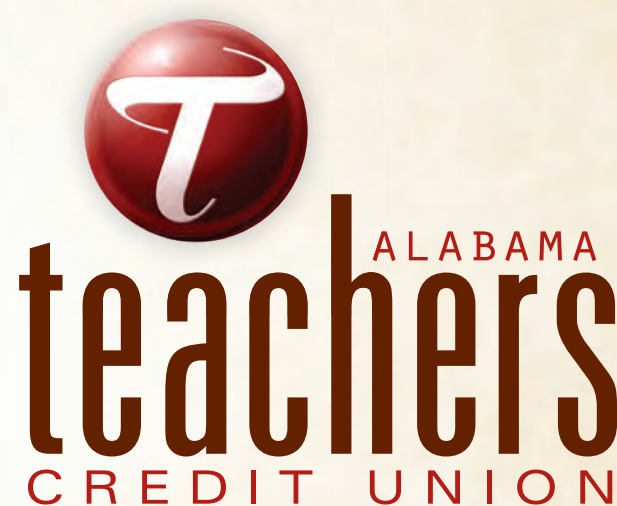
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VELVET TOUCH

This trendy fabric can be comfortable, durable and stunning

BY FAITH DORN

Special to The Anniston Star

"Velvet is a very misunderstood fabric. It is soft, breathable and very comfortable," said Scott Skinner, owner and interior designer at STS Decorating & Design.

According to Skinner, velvet is so versatile it can be used in almost every type of design style.

"There are even some performance velvets that can be used indoors and for outside furniture seatings," Skinner said.

Skinner cautions against making the common mistake of confusing velvet and velour.

"Velour is made from cotton and polyester and is not a true velvet. Some people think 'velour' as soon as you recommend a velvet piece," Skinner said. "There are many kinds of velvets, so when looking, make sure you look for the nap of the fabric and thickness. Some velvets even have a pattern. Velvet is not a 'one stop shop.'"

Skinner enjoys using velvets because the soft look and feel can show off the shape of a furniture frame. He recommends accenting one or two pieces.

"Some people think velvets are old-fashioned, but when used correctly,

they can really be stunning. Velvet is also a great way to bring in texture to a design look. A velvet sofa can really show off a room," Skinner said.

Velvets come in rich hues and tones, including stunning dark golds and pale golds.

"There are a lot of dark green velvet pieces I've seen in the shops and magazines. I just used a chartreuse for a bench cushion with a deep navy velvet pillow. It's being used in a formal foyer setting with a twist of transitional touches," Skinner said.

If you have children or pets, Skinner recommends using a synthetic velvet because stains will not soak in as deeply, and the material will not fade as much in sunlight.

When selecting velvets with kids and pets in mind, note the rub count of the fabric. The higher the rub count, the better it is for heavy traffic.

"Cotton velvets tend to fade a little more, but don't let that deter you from using them. Plan carefully so your piece isn't in direct sunlight," Skinner advised.

Faith Dorn is a freelance writer in Anniston. Contact her at faith.h.dorn@gmail.com.



Photos by Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Lauren Allred checks out different rolls of velvet at Downing and Sons in downtown Anniston.

WALLS THAT TALK

Today's wallpaper can bring a pop of color to a room

BY FAITH DORN

Special to The Anniston Star

To the joy of some and horror of others, wallpaper is back in style!

Scott Skinner, owner and interior designer of STS Decorating & Design, acknowledges the stigma surrounding the use of wallpaper but says that in the right situation, wallpaper can be the most joyful element in a design project.

"Even though paint is still the most popular wall covering, when you have a lot of running walls in a home or building, it is good to break it up sometimes," Skinner said. "Wallpaper can be a diversity element in design and a great contrast with paint."

One of Skinner's favorite places to use wallpaper is in a powder room.

"A powder room is generally a small space, but wallpaper can create a huge impact," he said.

Not just for walls

Skinner has also been ahead of the trend of using wallpaper on the ceiling.

"It has always been a classic style, and while I have used it in this way a few times in the past, it seems to be a hot new trend in the decorating world," said Skinner.

He also suggests using wallpaper in the backs of bookcases or the flat part of a shaker panel door, which he has done in a nursery to bring in some color and pattern.

Skinner says a little wallpaper can go a long way to make a statement, but advises considering the furniture scale of a room. Another thing to consider when using very colorful wallpaper is the amount of natural light as opposed to bulb lighting.

New patterns, colors

Wallpaper styles vary from classic damask or stripe to the boldest in abstract and whimsical. Current wallpaper style trends are geometrics, large-scale abstracts and vintage floral. Color tones include corals,

terra cotta, sage green, red and gold tones. The most classic wallpaper is grasscloth, which never goes out of style and comes in a variety of colors.

"I've used a classic brown to a navy color. It all depends where you might need a 'wow' moment. Wallpaper also makes for a great accent wall and can reflect the homeowner's personality," Skinner said.

Removable wallpaper

One of the current trends in wallpaper is removable wallpaper. Removable wallpaper is great for children and others whose styles change frequently.

"Removable wallpapers come in many fun and urban prints and are very cost efficient. You will still need to trim removable papers, and some are even washable. They tend to be less durable and not as strong as a classic pasted paper back," Skinner said.

Once you have selected the wallpaper you want to use, Skinner emphasizes the importance of correct preparation.

"Back in the day when it seemed to be going up every hour or so, prep wasn't necessarily at the top of the list. This is why removing wallpaper can become hard and tedious," Skinner explained. "If installed correctly and with a great backing, it will last many years and, when it's time to retire, be easier to take down."

Skinner encourages people to embrace using wallpaper to complement certain rooms.

"Don't let wallpaper be your enemy. There are many sources online, and most of the time, for a small fee you can order a sample. Think of wallpaper like art; there is something for everyone's taste, from the most traditional to fun and creative. A classic wallpaper never goes out of style."

Faith Dorn has not had wallpaper in her house in over 20 years but is beginning to reconsider. Contact her at faith.h.dorn@gmail.com.

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OPEN AND SHUT CASE

Gate Buildings of Wellington offers security with style

BY FAITH DORN

Special to The Anniston Star

Gate Builders is a gate manufacturer located in Wellington on Highway 431.

"Gates are pretty and add curb appeal, property value and a sense of security. In today's world, more and more people are looking for that. Some people like them for the 'wow' factor, and others like them for the security," said Alyson Orth, manager for Gate Builders.

"Our slogan is, 'We protect the things you love,'" Orth said.

Gate Builders' ability to personalize their gates for your style needs can make the gates look like artwork, Orth said. Personalization options include finials, a circle detail, custom oval insert, initials,

property name, animals and more.

Customers can also decide if they prefer to manually open their gates or use a gate-opening system.

Orth said the Southern Bell Curve style gate or a version of it is the company's most popular gate with regard to the gates they sell through Tractor Supply Company.

Gate Builders recently built a gate 31 feet long for a marina and a gate 29 feet long for a location in Atlanta.

"A standard driveway gate is 16 feet long with two eight-foot leaves that open in the center," Orth said, "The smallest we do is a 12-foot single swing-through."

Gate Builders typically uses 11 gauge steel with zinc priming and power coating for weather resistance.

"For larger gates, starting around 24-28 feet, you will want aluminum," Orth said.

All materials used by Gate Builders are made in America.

"We do not purchase anything from overseas. We want people to know that. That has been a culprit that went against so many businesses — cutting down on the workforce and product quality — not to mention what you save on shipping," Orth said.

Orth came to Gate Builders as a career shift following retirement from a career in education. She was a special education teacher for 14 years, then worked as a school counselor for 12 years.

As manager, Orth works with customers, contractors, installations and vendors. Orth said education and business

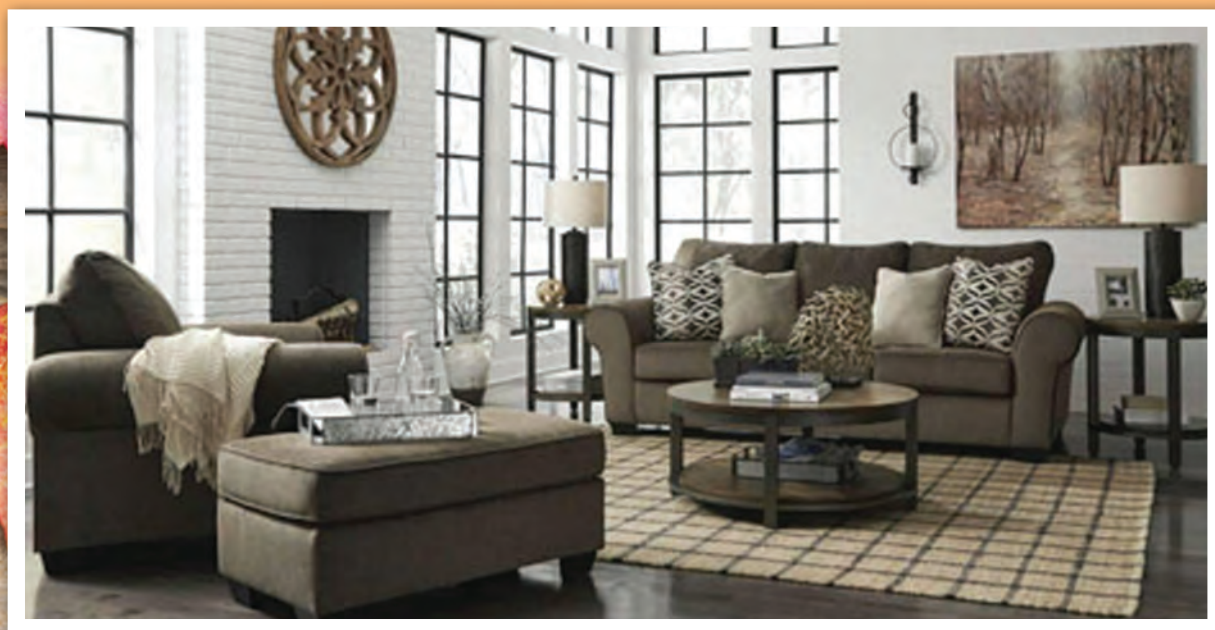
are two very different fields and she had to learn a lot, but she has found some aspects from both that cross over.

"What I did all day in education is work with people; I work with people all day, every day now. That is a very special skill," Orth said. "You have to be able to relate to all different walks of life and learn to deal with whatever resources are available. You have to be organized and be able to prioritize."

Gates listed on gate-builders.com start at \$2,799, but there is an option to build a custom gate package. To learn more about Gate Builders' products, visit their website.

Faith Dorn is a freelance writer in Anniston. Contact her at faith.h.dorn@gmail.com.

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BOWL GAMES

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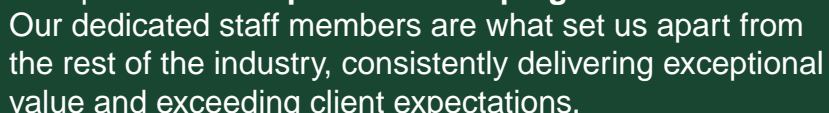
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If you have a rug in front of your toilet, make sure to wash the rug regularly, especially if you have men living in your home.



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