

Prepping Your Home for Sale

A room-by-room plan for getting your Alabama Gulf Coast home photographed, priced, and shown in the best possible light — without over-spending.

The order that works

Declutter first, repair second, paint third, landscape last. Homeowners usually do this backwards — spending money on décor while the garage is full and the roof is questionable. Buyers forgive a dated color long before they forgive a cluttered floor plan.

Six weeks out: the honest audit

- ☐ Walk every room with a camera and look at the photos, not the room. Photographs reveal clutter that your eye has learned to ignore.
- ☐ Remove roughly a third of your furniture and half of your décor. Rooms photograph larger and feel larger in person.
- ☐ Test every fixture, outlet, switch, and appliance. Fix what is broken — a dripping faucet reads as neglect.
- ☐ Get the roof, HVAC, and pest status documented. Buyers on the coast ask, and a written answer builds confidence.
- ☐ Pull permits and warranty papers for anything replaced in the last ten years.

Four weeks out: the money that returns

- ☐ Paint: scuffed walls in a neutral warm white. Highest return per dollar of any item on this list.
- ☐ Lighting: swap yellowed fixtures and put matching warm bulbs in every socket for the photo day.
- ☐ Curb: edge the beds, mow the stripes, trim shrubs clear of walkways and the house line.
- ☐ Deep clean, including windows inside and out, grout, oven, and the dishwasher interior.
- ☐ Repair the small things: sticky doors, loose handles, cracked caulk, missing switch plates.

Skip these

Full kitchen and bath remodels, swimming-pool installation, and highly personal décor choices. On the Gulf Coast they rarely return their cost in sixty days, and they delay your listing into a slower season.

Two weeks out: de-personalize

- ☐ Family photos, religious items, collections, and medicines leave the counters and the refrigerator.

- ☐ Closets: hang clothes by color, space them out, and leave the top shelf visibly empty.
- ☐ Remove pet beds, crates, bowls, and litter boxes from every photo angle.
- ☐ Clear all surfaces to one styled item each — kitchen counters especially.
- ☐ Store vehicles out of sight for the photo shoot.

Coast-specific checks

- ☐ Power-wash the dock, driveway, and patio; hose down screen doors and shutters.
- ☐ Service the pool and balance the water before photos — a green pool stops a showing.
- ☐ Replace torn window and door screens; salt air ages them quickly.
- ☐ Clear the seawall, riprap, and shoreline of debris if your home has water frontage.
- ☐ Confirm the flood-elevation certificate is current and easy to hand to a buyer's agent.

Photo day

- ☐ All lights on, all ceiling fans off, all blinds fully open, all toilet lids down.
- ☐ Fresh flowers and a bowl of fruit at the entry; nothing else new.
- ☐ Open the house before the crew arrives so it is aired out and at room temperature.
- ☐ Be somewhere else. Buyers speak more freely when the owner is not in the room.

Pricing reality

The first three weeks carry the most attention, and the most buyers. An optimistic price does not test the market — it hides the home from it, and a listing that has sat longer than thirty days starts attracting lower offers, not higher ones. Price to the comparable sales that actually closed, then negotiate from strength.

What Jennifer's team handles

- ☐ Architectural photography, drone and cinematic video, and a full listing media package.
- ☐ Hyper-targeted social and international exposure to qualified buyers.
- ☐ Broker-only previews and an open-house strategy that protects your privacy.
- ☐ A written preparation schedule with the trades and vendors already lined up.

Work with Jennifer

Jennifer Lynn Sage is a Broker with Call It Closed International Realty serving Fairhope, Point Clear, Daphne, Spanish Fort, Orange Beach, Gulf Shores, Ono Island and the wider Alabama Gulf Coast. Call or text 251.751.3839, or email jennifer.sage@callitclosed.com, for a no-pressure conversation about buying, selling or investing on the coast.