

Home *Guide*



Kitchen Talk

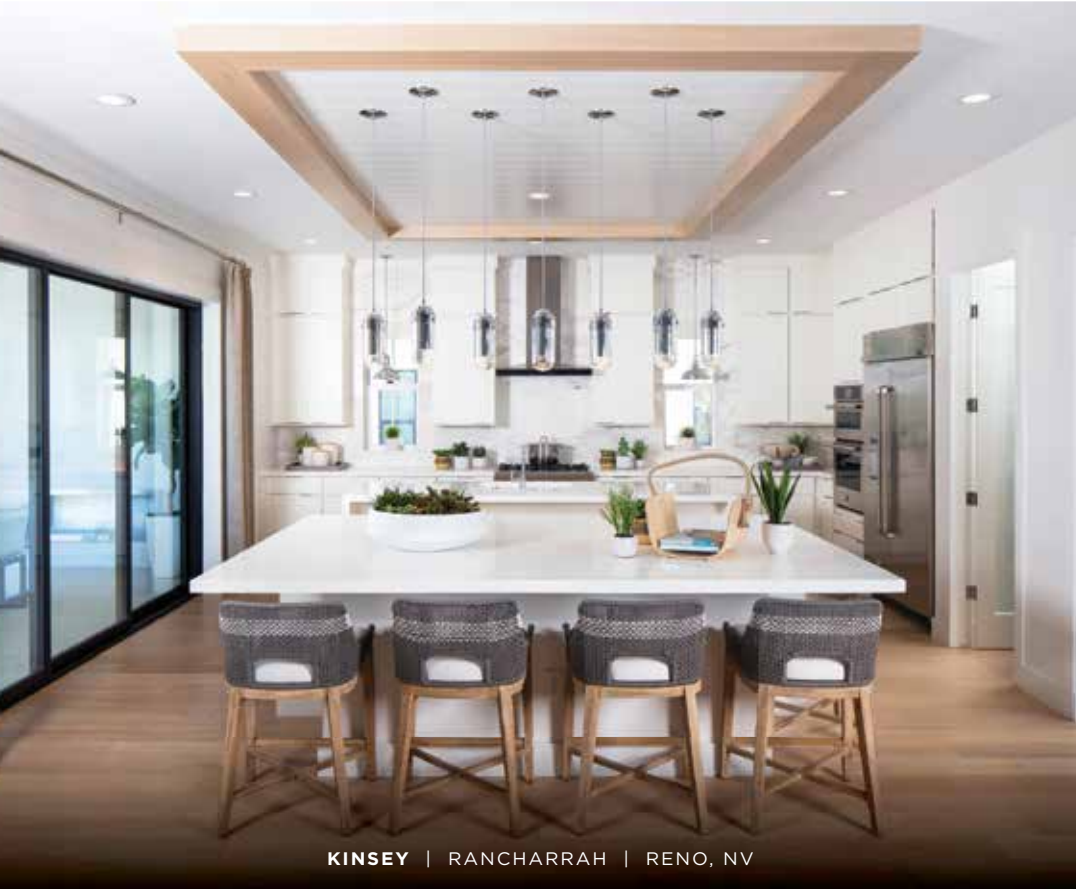
Discover what's new for the heart of your home.

WRITTEN BY HEIDI BETHEL

The sentiment that the kitchen is the heart of the home is a strong one. Homeowners, buyers, and sellers all know how important this space is — serving as the place for meals, gatherings, homework, projects, crafts, discussions, and more. Today's kitchen serves many roles, and our experts have tips to share when it comes to this beloved area, and beyond.



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Comfort in the Kitchen

Stepping into your dream kitchen as a homeowner would present endless possibilities. The gleaming countertops, state-of-the-art appliances, and ample space evoke a sense of excitement and anticipation. Here, culinary creativity knows no bounds.

"I envision whipping up gourmet meals for loved ones or simply indulging in a quiet moment with a cup of coffee, and my heart feels whole," says Lauren Gaeding, marketing manager of Engel & Völkers real estate in the Lake Tahoe area.

The kitchen is where family bonds are strengthened over shared meals, laughter resonates, and cherished memories are created. Its warmth not only promises delightful culinary experiences but also serves as a base for meaningful connections and daily nourishment, making it the soulful centerpiece of any household.

Donna O'Connell, Reno division president of Toll Brothers, agrees, noting cascading waterfall-edge countertops, elaborate statement fixtures, and natural-light-filled spaces tend to be on the top of luxury home buyers' wish lists.

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“As kitchens have grown in square footage over the years, families have more options than ever to create the perfect areas for preparing and sharing meals,” O’Connell says. “Kitchen layouts are constantly evolving. But if there’s one concept that stands the test of time, it’s that every kitchen floor plan needs to be a highly functional space and serve as the hub of the home. While open concepts are growing in popularity, today’s kitchen should also be designed for various workspace uses.”

O’Connell encourages readers to ponder the most efficient use of the kitchen islands in their homes.

“While people naturally gravitate to a kitchen island, make it even more inviting by personalizing it with design touches that are part of the well-planned space,” she says. “Open shelving provides storage space for mixing bowls, wooden cutting boards, and cookbooks; it also adds more character than your standard cabinetry. Decorative legs are another way to bring personality to your kitchen island while also helping the space look and feel more open. Make room below for bar stools that will blend in with your design theme and withstand plenty of use. Carefully map out every detail in your kitchen layout to not only maximize your space for efficiency, but also to ensure that it will be a welcoming space for your family’s everyday living.”

Linda Demers, owner of LCDmodern in Reno, suggests that even a simple, easy refresh can make you feel good about your kitchen, too.



Aero Counter Stool - ash natural and sage.
Photo provided by LCDmodern

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“Consider upgrading your bar stools, place a small light on the counter in a dark corner, add beautiful trays and vessels, upgrade your dinnerware, or simply bring in some color with fresh flowers,” Demers adds. “A kitchen that makes you feel good can inspire you to spend more time with loved ones and enjoy preparing meals, which will lead to better eating habits and overall well-being.”

Mastering Renovations and Remodels

The kitchen is one of the main selling points for potential buyers and also one of the most expensive rooms to redo. Sam Olson, team lead/owner of The Olson Group of RE/MAX Professionals in Reno, notices trends tend to change quickly.

“Subway tile and open shelving are having a moment, but, like everything, tastes will change,” he says.

There also are some features in a kitchen Olson says will never go out of style.

“Quality appliances last a long time and can have an enduring value,” he adds. “Convenience items like pot filler faucets, appliance garages, and corner cabinets can maximize space, reduce clutter, and increase the utility of one of the most used rooms of your home. Many high-end homes are incorporating hidden pantries, dog-washing stations, and smooth cabinets as a way to keep kitchens sleek and clean.”



Karen Walker Hill, residential specialist for Ferrari-Lund Real Estate in Reno, says that kitchen renovations and remodels are among her favorite areas in homes on the market to explore, and they are smart investments.

“There are a few things that, when you invest in them, you usually get 100 percent of your investment back,” she explains. “A bright kitchen really makes the house smile. People are doing more cooking at home, and a smart kitchen that has the flow some of the old layouts didn’t have will have multiple benefits.”

Olson and Hill both recommend connecting with experts when considering a kitchen overhaul. Hill adds, “Designers know what they’re doing, and those in our area are phenomenal. They get discounts when they order materials, appliances, you name it, so [designers] practically pay for themselves.”

Countertop Considerations

Whether it’s a sparkling new island counter or a decorative backsplash, Shaun Klein, director of business development for Nova Tile & Stone, with stores in Reno, Sacramento, Minden, and Fernley, says selecting the right type of material is key.

“Going with natural stone slab as a backsplash gives you a smooth surface that’s easy to clean,” he says “Marble is intended to effectively absorb stains and etch. In Italy, a well-modeled countertop is a sign of a good host, and they are looking for those imperfections we create throughout use. In the U.S., we tend to prefer the clean look, which is where quartzite comes in. Folks always want to use the right sealers for their stone type to avoid grease stains or etching.”

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Outdoor Havens

With the amount of sunshine and beautiful days in Northern Nevada and Northern California in spring and summer, Betsy Caron, Realtor with Chase International Real Estate in Sparks, encourages focusing attention on outside areas.

“Whether it’s a built-in fireplace, patio, or nice table you can all sit around, there’s so much to enjoy when we’re outside,” Caron notes. “Outside of the boost in resale value, we have to remember that we’re creating a home for ourselves and our family. If you like being outside with your children and pets, make sure to include some elements you all will enjoy. Play outside, garden, plant flowers, anything you add will add to the beauty of your space and foster memories.”

When it comes to trees, shrubs, and other outdoor fauna, Noah Silverman, certified arborist and owner of Noah’s Park Tree Care in Reno, recommends monitoring the health of your plants.

“We are a full-service residential and commercial tree-care company specializing in tree pruning, removal, fertilizing, and plant health care,” Silverman says. “Trees provide a lot of benefits, from shade and natural beauty to erosion control and increased value to a property. The biggest thing people should be aware of is to make sure their trees are getting water. And making sure the drip system is set up properly.”

Silverman recommends checking the drip lines every one or two years to ensure the emitters are working correctly and are not clogged.

“Our arid climate is the biggest threat to tree health that we have,” he adds. “We don’t have a lot of pests or diseases here, so making sure they’re getting water is going to do more for your trees than anything else.”

Appliances Understood

When John Tosti and Dan Cafarelli got together to open Ace of Spades, an appliance repair business in Reno, they knew they wanted to offer top-notch customer service above everything else.



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"Our No. 1 priority is leaving a great impression with people," Tosti says. "With our clean, white-glove service, we wipe down the product, polish it with conditioner, and leave the area cleaner than when we got there."

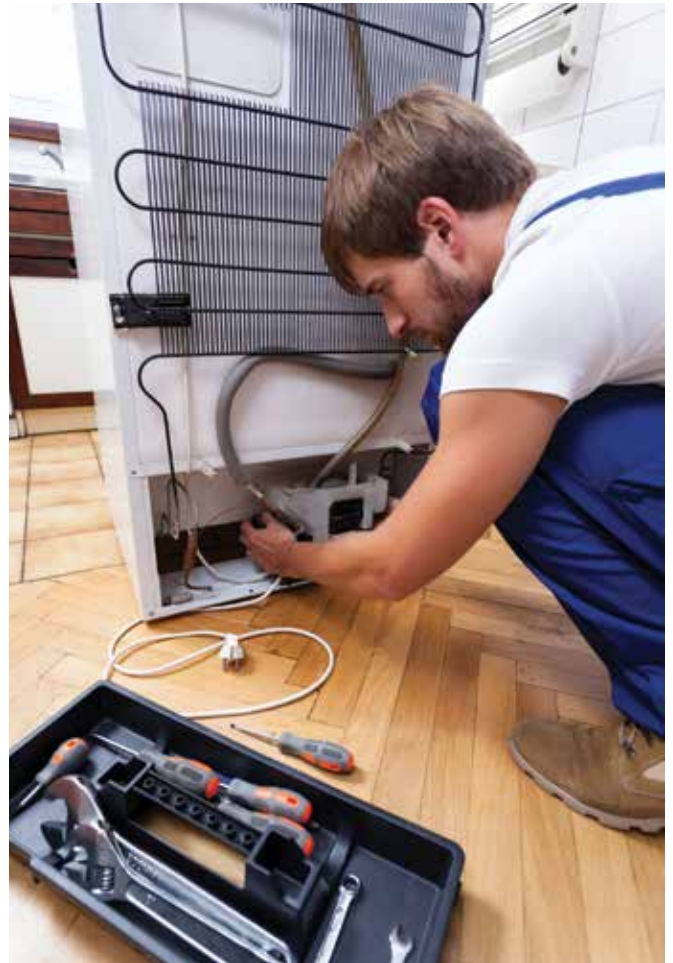
Should an appliance be on the fritz, Cafarelli suggests calling to try to pre-diagnose the problem over the phone.

"If we can eliminate charging a service call to determine the issue, we will," he adds. "We can walk folks through unplugging the unit or restoring it to factory resets. If that doesn't work, you want to get food out of the fridge or freezer. If something is leaking, we let them know where the water valve is to turn it off. We can diagnose the unit and let people know if it's worth fixing."

Meredith Martin Fischer, broker associate for Compass, with offices in Reno, Incline, and Truckee, recognizes the debate taking place over banning gas stoves in new construction. She recommends readers consider induction stoves as an option in new homes and kitchen upgrades.

"Chefs are the most hesitant to change," she observes. "Long before this controversy surfaced, because I was selling condominiums you couldn't pull gas lines into, I was advocating for induction. They work magnetically and require compliant cookware, but they heat faster than gas and are safer as there's no fire risk if you forget and leave the stove on. Owners who have elders or children in their households stand to benefit the most."

"People don't realize gas appliances are the primary source of indoor air pollution," she continues. "Gas is romantic and easy to use, but from an efficiency and safety standpoint, induction stoves are superior once you pass the initial learning curve."



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Meredith Martin Fischer
Broker Associate

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COMPASS

A Nod to the Season

Summer is upon us! It's time to fire up the grill and inspire that inner chef with seasonal ingredients. Many love to push the Scoville scale limit, become weekend confectioners, or hold the title of neighborhood pitmaster, and today's architects and interior designers are crafting unique, flex-space kitchens to meet the demands of those most seasoned cooks.

"At Sierra Sotheby's International Realty, we don't just sell homes; we sell community. Our skilled advisers represent the finest properties while providing buyers and sellers with luxury representation," says Monise McCabe, Reno broker. "We want your home to be a sanctuary for creating memories around the kitchen table or outside under our legendary sunsets."

Using the best ingredients is vital to culinary success. Sierra Sotheby's complimentary Farmers' Market Resource Guide (found at Sierrasothebysrealty.com/blog) provides the when and where of shopping local outdoor markets.

So this summer, expand your culinary creativity, fire up your taste buds, and cook up some memories with friends and family. Be sure to consider contacting these experts, who are eager to share their knowledge when it comes to the kitchen. ❖

RESOURCES

Ace of Spades

Aceofspadesrepair.com

Chase International (Betsy Caron)

Chaseinternational.com

Compass

Compass.com

Czyz's Appliance

Czyzsbrandsource.com

Engel & Völkers

Evrealstate.com

Ferrari-Lund Real Estate

(Karen Walker Hill)

Ferrari-lund.com

LCDmodern

Lcdmodern.com

Noah's Park Tree Care

Noahsparktreecare.com

Nova Tile & Stone

Novatileandstone.com

Sierra Sotheby's International Realty

Sothebysrealty.com

The Olson Group of RE/MAX Professionals

Olsonrealestategroup.com

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