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# Home *Guide*



## Raise a Glass to Home

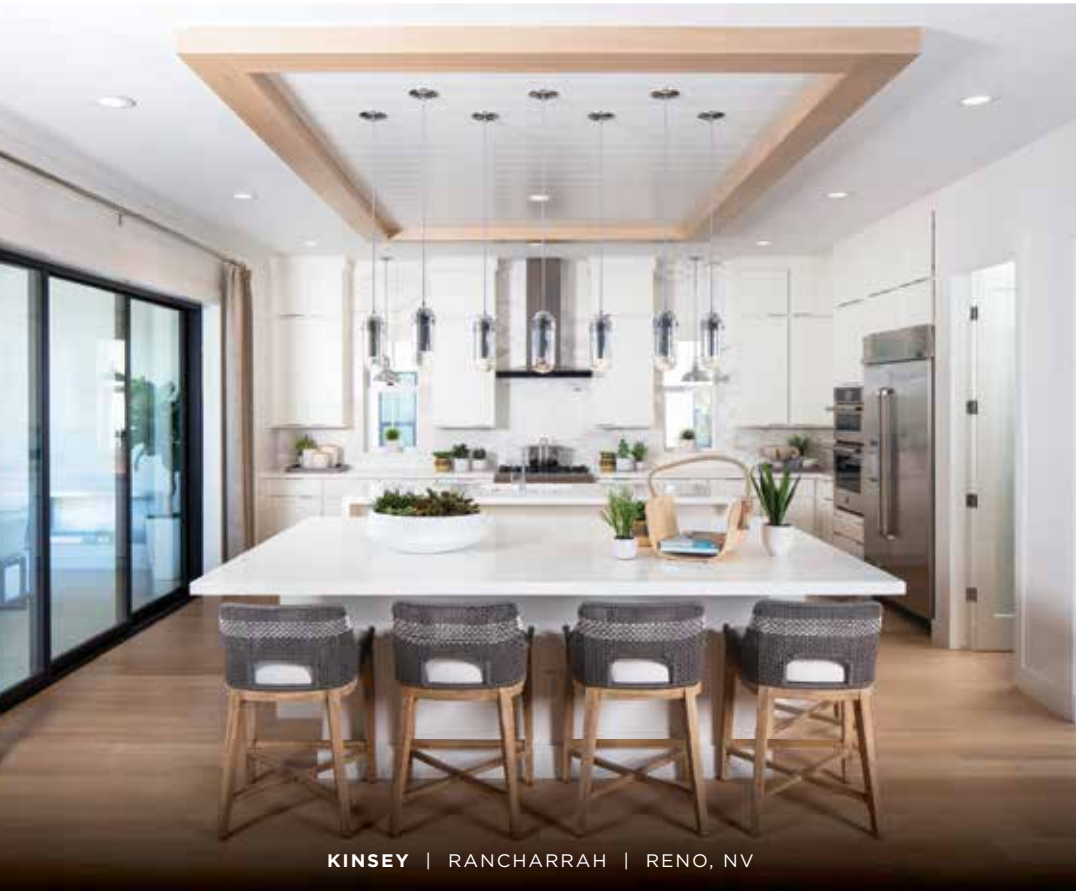
**Insights and advice from Reno-Tahoe  
home experts.**

WRITTEN BY HEIDI BETHEL

**T**here's nothing quite like sipping on a delicious drink in the comfort of home. Area experts have insights into drinking spaces, not to mention appliances, the housing market, and more. Here's what's top of mind with those who know in Reno-Tahoe.



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### Cheers to Beverages at Home

Whether grabbing that morning cup of java on the go or corking a select bottle of vino from the wine fridge, having a dedicated beverage nook has become a standard, especially for new homes.

“New construction and remodeling trends continue to include coffee nooks, wine storage, or full mixology bars,” says Jenny Johnson, president of Sierra Sotheby’s International Realty. “With a customized beverage station, you can showcase everything from draft beer to your organic tea collection. And environmental sustainability is easy with petite-sized compost and recycling bins and water-filtration systems.

“At Sierra Sotheby’s International Realty, we’re about more than just selling homes,” she adds. “From lakefront estates to valley ranches or your first condo, we take pride in listening to and supporting your real estate goals. With the new year upon us, we look forward to raising a glass (or mug) to celebrate your positive buying or selling experience.”

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Donna O'Connell, president of Toll Brothers' Reno division, has advice for those considering adding one or more bars to a living space.

"Home bars are popping up in all areas of the home, including outside living spaces," she says. "To help determine the best location, consider what the primary use of your bar will be and where those who use it gather most."

A living room is great for entertaining guests. It is an ideal spot to gather with friends over drinks or to sit down and converse after a long day. Incorporating a bar into the décor of a living room should feel seamless. Outdoor living spaces, which are growing in popularity, are ideal for entertaining, cooking, and dining, making full bars a welcome addition.

"The popularity of home bars is a trend that is likely to become a standard in home design," O'Connell notes. "The increased functionality of these areas for use beyond entertaining has made the home bar part of a family's daily life."

When it comes to the return on investment for home bar and kitchen renovations, Sam Olsen, team lead and owner of The Olson Group of RE/MAX Professionals in Reno, suggests considering the timeline for a potential move.



Harris Ranch photos courtesy of Toll Brothers



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"Kitchens are one of those renovations that provide the highest return on value," he explains. "If your renovation was done 10 years ago and you're trying to sell, the trends may be long gone, which could affect the price point. Kitchens are the heart of the home and usually where parties take place. To invest in a nice kitchen is well worth the investment, and if your family gets to make memories there, that is valuable, too!"

**Smart Upgrades**

When choosing the right material for your kitchen counters or wet bar, knowing your options for countertops and how to care for them is important. Natural stone comes in a wide variety of looks and finishes, but also a variety of porosities and requirements for sealing and maintenance.

"Ensuring you are using the correct sealer for quartzite, granite, dolomite, or marble, to name a few, is critical in ensuring you won't have permanent mottling in your stone," says Shaun Klein, director of business development for Nova Tile & Stone, with stores in Reno, Sacramento, Minden, and Fernley. "Unless, of course, you prefer the traditional Italian method, and mottling of your stone is a sign of you being a good host!"

For those who do not want to manage sealing and maintaining natural stone, there are numerous engineered-slab options, including quartz, porcelain, and sintered stone. As these materials do not require sealing, they may be nice solutions for low-maintenance countertops for gathering and events.



When it comes to appliances, manufacturers are catering to beverage preferences. Samantha McGlaughlin, co-owner and general manager of Sargent's Appliance Sales and Service Center in Sparks, has seen it all, from refrigerators with single-serve coffee functions to nugget ice. One of her favorites is Kitchenaid's Counter-Depth Four-Door Refrigerator, which features a sleek PrintShield™ Finish that resists fingerprints. Its counter-depth design offers a built-in look, while the four-door configuration includes a dedicated wine fridge for optimal wine storage. Advanced cooling, LED lighting, and efficient design keep food and beverages fresh.

"Everything in the appliances is starting to move toward presentation, catering, and gathering in the kitchen," she says. "Appliances like refrigerators are becoming showpieces that can function with your dinner party, with fancier presentation and a lot of features that will wow guests."

### Renewable Energy

Opportunities abound for eco-friendly options as well. Sol-Up, a leading company in Nevada's solar industry, opened the only solar store in Northern Nevada last year, which is conveniently located in Midtown Reno. This space provides an accessible and relaxed environment for the community to learn about solar technology and its benefits.

"Our state-of-the-art showroom aims to empower consumers with knowledge about solar systems, tax incentives, warranties, and the long-term advantages of renewable energy," says Steve Hamile, the chief operating officer of Sol-Up.

Sol-Up also champions consumer protection in Nevada's solar market. Its support for SB-293 — a state law requiring solar sellers to hold valid contractor licenses or work for licensed contractors — helps protect homeowners from misleading sales practices.

"Additionally, we have donated over \$1.7 million in solar rooftop systems to support statewide nonprofits, reducing energy bills for low-income families," he says. "This commitment to ethical business, education, and community support reflects our forward-thinking approach in Nevada's renewable energy landscape."



Photo courtesy of Sol-Up



Kitchenaid 36" Counter-Depth 19.4 Cu Ft 4-Door Refrigerator with Flexible Temperature Zone in PrintShield™ Finish. Available at Sargent's Appliance Sales and Service Center in Sparks

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### Looking Forward to Spring

Selling your home in the spring offers key benefits. It's a time when people are looking ahead, whether moving for a new job, a school transition, or a fresh start.

"Homes in spring are particularly appealing as the exterior looks its best with fresh landscaping, blooming flowers, and well-maintained lawns," says Betsy Caron, Realtor with Chase International Real Estate in Sparks. "While landscaping doesn't directly add value, a clean, tidy yard allows potential buyers to visualize the home's beauty. Spring cleaning, both inside and out, is essential. Ensure your yard is freshly cut, weeds are pulled, and the home looks inviting. You want to really make it the most attractive to buyers ready for their next chapter."

Karen Walker Hill, residential specialist for Ferrari-Lund Real Estate in Reno, believes April is the month to get top dollar for a house. "If you are considering selling at this time, you need to start preparing to get it on the market. Contact your agent, get the yard cleaned up and the windows washed, and all the things you need to do to prep. April gets the top nets, and, now that the election is over, many people are excited to get started. I'm seeing a lot more people out there ready to buy."

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**Compass (Meredith Fischer)**  
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**Compass (Valerie Forte)**  
Valerie.forte@compass.com

**Czyz's Appliance**  
Czyzsbrandsource.com

**Ferrari-Lund Real Estate  
(Karen Walker Hill)**  
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Valerie Forte, Realtor with Compass, which has offices across Nevada, California, and nationwide, recommends readers consider their desired lifestyles when choosing where to live.

"If you're a buyer, what's your outdoor sport?" she asks. "Whether it's skiing in the winter or hiking and boating in the summer, the Reno-Tahoe area offers something for every season. As a licensed agent in California and Nevada, we specialize in helping people find their place, whether it's a ski area, the lake, or community amenities. Our area has culture, music, art, theater, and a vibrant foodie scene. We'll help you find your place."

Should it be time to buy, sell, or renovate, be sure to consult with the folks who can help and give these experts a call today! ❖

