

SPECIAL ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Home *Guide*



## Autumn Dwellings

Enjoy cozy fall months at home.

WRITTEN BY HEIDI BETHEL

**T**his time of year brings crisp weather and hues of burnt orange and yellow. With the housing market leveling out and folks making the most out of the homes they are in, area experts have a few tips this season.





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Entryway in a new home at The Cliffs at Somerset. Photo courtesy of Toll Brothers

### Personalized Perfection

Often the first impression guests have of a home, an entryway presents ample opportunity for creative presentations. Donna O'Connell, Reno division president of Toll Brothers, explains many design trends are sweeping through the Sierra.

"People are dressing up their entries or foyers with interesting wall details, creative artwork displays, and, if space allows, unique furniture pieces," she notes.

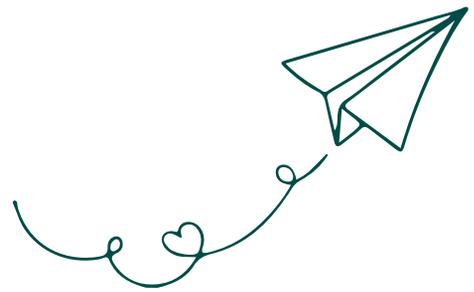
For new constructions or remodels, unique floor designs, light fixtures, specialty paints, and ceiling treatments are good options to consider.

Sam Olson, team lead/owner of The Olson Group of RE/MAX Realty Affiliates in Reno, encourages homeowners to take this time to make their spaces their own.



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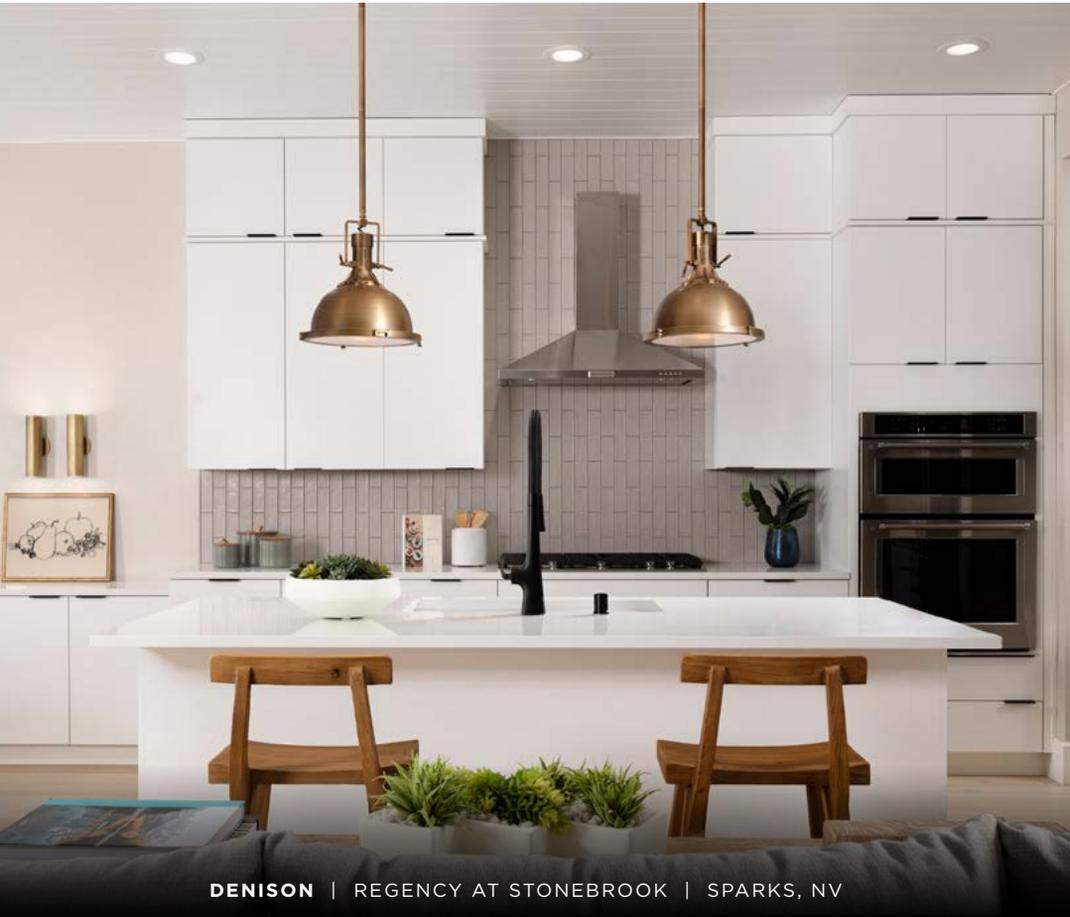
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"With the market having cooled, folks aren't going to be moving as much," he says. "Don't worry so much about resale. If you want to experiment, buy the color and explore new textures. Make it what you want. When it's time to think about going back on the market, your real estate agent can help you decide what to undo."

Speaking of personalizing your home, Michele Larson, owner of The Frame Shop in Reno and Sparks, suggests framing concert posters.

"We have poster framing specials as low as \$55," she says. "Concert posters can be a lot of fun, and they can go from simple to incredibly custom. For some people, they're almost like collector items. We have a couple of clients for whom we have framed a large number of concert posters. A lot of parents will frame the poster for the first concert they went to with their kids. Your first concert is an important memory that you want to preserve."

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### Rock On

As the temperatures dip and people begin to move inside, now is the time to consider a kitchen or bathroom refacing. Jennifer Dunbar, estimator and project coordinator for Majestic Marble & Tile in Reno, explains installing new manmade stone countertops and painting existing cabinets are great ways to change the look and feel of the room.

“We don’t use quartz material outside because it is a manmade material,” she adds. “Quartz is not quite as heat resistant [as natural materials], but it is bacteria resistant, and the upkeep is a lot less because it’s not porous like a natural stone. It’s ideal for showers, bathrooms, and vanities and really presents a beautiful finish.”



Photo from Majesticmarbletile.com



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### Power Precautions

American homes are using more power than ever before. Smart phones, smart devices, and all of the modern conveniences that have become a daily part of life increase the demand on the home's electrical system. Joseph Kruse, project manager with EVO Electric in Reno, encourages homeowners to be aware of the additional burden being placed on the home.

"Some things that homeowners can do that involve little to no danger are to check all of your electrical fixtures to make sure the correct wattages are being utilized in the devices," Kruse notes. "Having your systems tested and inspected once a year by a qualified professional can provide peace of mind."

### Toasty Tootsies

Electric heat under tile or laminate flooring can be comforting for your feet and your pocketbook. Jeff Mecca, showroom manager for Western Nevada Supply in Reno, explains the benefit of electric floors.

"It warms the tile or laminate and radiates heat throughout the room," Mecca says. "If you're doing a remodel in the bathroom with an electric floor heat mat under the tile, it's not overly expensive and it's pennies a day to run."

Wifi-compatible systems, such as the Warmup smart thermostat, allow users to control the system through an app.

"You can set the timer to come on when you get up and turn off when you leave for work or when you're home for the evening and go to bed," he says. "You're using very little electricity for the comfort of the heat."



# at the heart of the home



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**Whatever the Weather**

Fall is a good time to make sure the house is sealed properly before the winter storms come rolling in. Steve Gunderson, project manager with Curtis Bros. Construction Inc. in Reno, encourages homeowners to check the caulking around their windows, weather stripping, garage door seals, and screens to ensure everything is working properly.

“You want to keep that cold air outside,” he says. “Tighten up the house and make sure any damage from the hot sun is fixed before it becomes a problem.”



**Interested in Interest**

Most are aware that interest rates were raised earlier this year. Kevin Jepsen, loan officer with Omega Mortgage Group in Reno, says the financial landscape will remain the same for the foreseeable future. He does have another option for buyers who plan to stay in their new homes for a while.

“The 10/1 adjustable-rate mortgage is becoming more popular; you get a lot better rate,” he explains. “You’re locked in for 10 years, which buys you time to wait for interest rates to come back down in the future. It’s an advantageous option for people to afford a home that they otherwise wouldn’t be able to with the high interest rates we’re seeing today.”

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**Moving Market**

The housing market is shifting nationwide, and locally it's becoming a better market for buyers. Inventories are growing, presenting new opportunities.

"Interest rates are higher than they were earlier this year, but it's created a spot to make it more balanced between buyer and seller," says Karen Walker Hill, residential specialist for Ferrari-Lund Real Estate in Reno. "We are not seeing the appreciation, so hopefully homes by September will be more affordable. This will give some buyers the relief they are looking for in the market."



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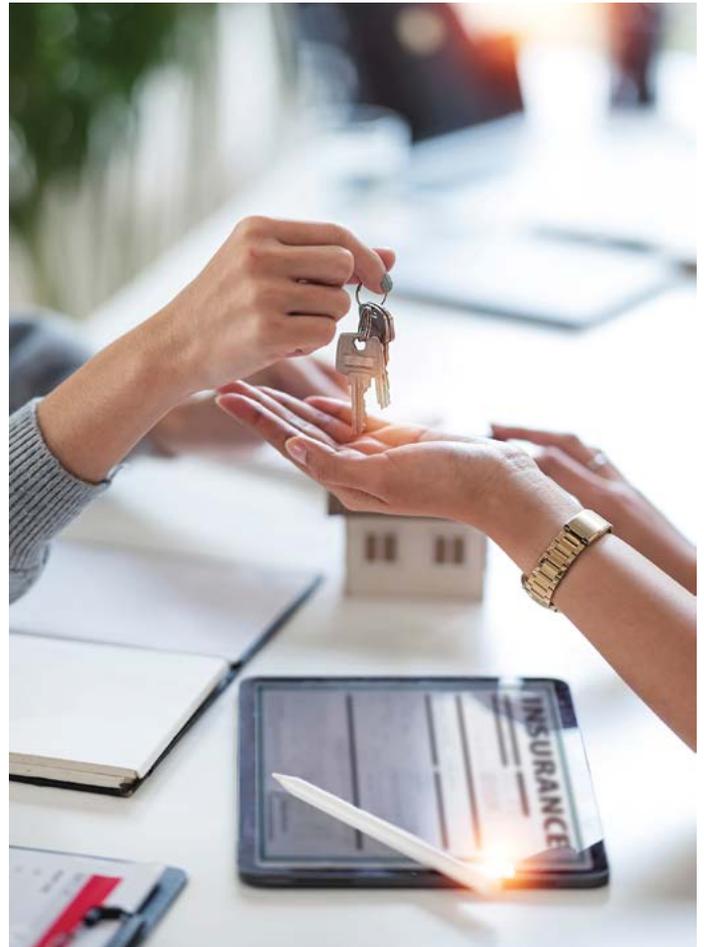
Betsy Caron, Realtor with Chase International Real Estate in Sparks, explains there still is a shortage of inventory, but the rising interest rates have adjusted the market.

"If you're looking to buy or sell a home, now is still a good time because that's what you need in your life," Caron says. "As a seller's agent, our goal is to sell a home for the best price, and as a buyer's agent, we want to get them the best house at the lowest price. It's about making the connections and building a personal relationship to understand the individual needs of each person. Real estate is very, very personal, and we need to be there for our clients."

Tayona Tate, global real estate adviser with Compass in Reno, adds there are advantages for sellers this time of year.

"A lot of investors tend to look at the tax season coming up; sometimes if they're in an advantageous tax bracket, their adviser may suggest that they purchase an investment property," Tate says. "This happens a lot in the fourth quarter. It's also still a great time to buy; don't be afraid because home buying shouldn't be spooky. The real estate market has some great things that take place in the fall for home sellers and buyers."

Whether it's styling your current house the way you'd like it, installing new electric-heated flooring or manmade stone countertops, or dabbling in the housing market, make the most of the season. Autumn is an excellent time to chat with area experts about anything that might be on your mind when it comes to your home. ❖



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