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# Home *Guide*



## Home for the Holidays

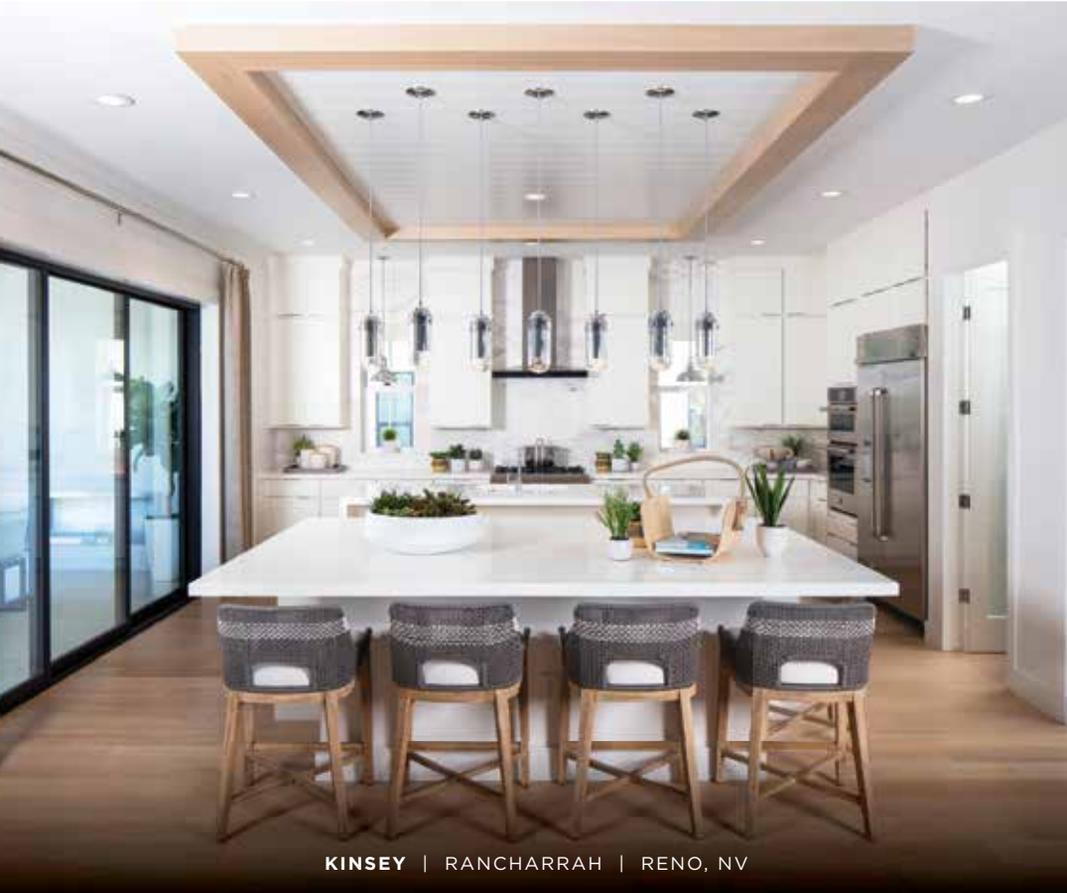
**Getting your home winter ready.**

WRITTEN BY HEIDI BETHEL

**D**espite the temperatures cooling, area experts agree that the Reno-Tahoe real estate market continues to heat up. We spoke to local professionals who have plenty of insights about buying or selling a home this time of year, as well as making your existing home comfortable during the season.



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Compass recently expanded its real estate operations, adding a Reno office to its existing locations in Incline Village, Tahoe City, Truckee, and South Lake Tahoe. This change was largely due to the continued growth in The Biggest Little City and beyond.

"Compass does research all around the country and sees continued potential with Californians coming to Nevada for tax benefits, cost of living, and affordability as far as housing pricing goes," explains Tracy Cohn, Reno sales manager for Compass. "Our agents are able to tap into both the Reno and Tahoe markets by expanding and continuing to foster relationships with clients as they consider both areas as great places to buy or sell."

Karen Walker Hill, residential specialist for Ferrari-Lund Real Estate in Reno, agrees, noting that she's seeing a lot of positive growth.

"People are getting used to the 7 percent interest rate and plowing forward with hope the rates will go down and they can refinance," Walker Hill says. "You can always refinance with an FHA loan, so you'll have more equity. And credit unions are still doing the ARM loans to get you qualified, and they are a great option to consider."



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Contrary to popular belief, higher interest rates can be advantageous in a real estate market, the experts say.

"They signify a strong and stable economy, which boosts consumer confidence and job growth," notes Blake Williams, real estate adviser at Sierra Sotheby's International Realty in Reno. "This, in turn, can increase demand for homes, balancing the market and preventing unsustainable price surges. Higher rates also deter speculative buyers, ensuring that those entering the market are genuinely committed, reducing the risk of a housing bubble. For sellers, it often translates to more profitable transactions. Overall, while higher interest rates may seem daunting, they often contribute to a healthier, more sustainable real estate landscape, offering both stability and long-term investment potential."

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Beth Tanhoff

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Representing three houses currently on the market (as of this writing), Betsy Caron, real estate agent with Chase International Real Estate in Sparks, echoes the sentiment that even with a higher interest rate, life happens and folks have to move.

“One of my clients has a new job in Georgia, and it’s the time to start a new chapter,” Caron says. “Even with the interest rate being high now, it doesn’t mean you should put off your real estate needs or dreams. The longer you wait, the harder it can be to sell your house or purchase a new home. A couple years ago, I did sell a house right around the holidays, listed before Thanksgiving and sold before Christmas. People are trying to get to where they need to be before the new year and satisfy those tax needs.”

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## Jean Merkelbach

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**Leslie Davidson**  
[leslie.davidson@compass.com](mailto:leslie.davidson@compass.com)  
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Leslie Davidson is a seasoned agent who began her real estate career in New York City and now serves the Reno and North Lake Tahoe regions. Her clients are drawn not only to her honesty, integrity, and discretion, but also her elevated and creative approach to marketing that consistently delivers results in all segments of the market.



**Kathy Williams**  
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Kathy Williams provides unparalleled service to all of her clients and consistently makes them feel as though they are her only, and most important, client. She is experienced, accessible, extremely detailed, with thorough up-front preparation, and is passionate about securing top dollar for her seller's homes.

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**COMPASS**

Sam Olson, team lead/owner of The Olson Group of RE/MAX Professionals in Reno, notes that people often believe winter is a bad time to sell a home, but, historically, the season holds many advantages.

“Both buyers and sellers have less competition, and we have found that winter contracts have a better chance of closing,” he says. “If a homeowner is thinking about selling over the holiday season, we typically recommend minimal holiday décor, if any, and to keep it very secular. Your listing photos with Christmas trees look homey in November and December, but dated and desperate in January.”



# ENGEL & VÖLKERS®

## Tom Reardon

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## Soli Ravens Team

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The crisp air and first snowfall of the Reno-Tahoe region usher in winter festivities. It's a season when friends and family gather around holiday tables to celebrate the closing of another year. It's a time when glowing fireplaces and hearty cuisine beckon us to slow down and reflect, and to remember what we're thankful for.

"We express our sincere gratitude to every client who entrusts our skilled agents and dedicated staff through the home purchase or sale process," says Jenny Johnson, president and corporate broker of Sierra Sotheby's International Realty. "Serving our local Reno-Tahoe communities is our joy and privilege."





### Step It Up with Warm Tile Floors

When it comes to tile floors, Shaun Klein, director of business development for Nova Tile & Stone, which has a new location in Sacramento, as well as stores in Reno, Minden, and Fernley, suggests adding a heating element.

“Traditional tile absorbs the ambient temperature and can keep a room very cool or warm depending on what that temperature is,” Klein explains. “There is a variety of systems that maintain heating below the floor and can be accessed through a dedicated thermostat manually or digitally or be Wi-Fi controlled. You can maintain heat in the winter in the bathroom, kitchen, and various zones of the house, allowing folks to walk barefoot in the winter without it being ice cold. For vacation homes or seasonal homes, at Tahoe especially, thermostats can be programmed during the winter so you’re not wasting energy if no one is there, and you can get them going before you get there so the tile welcomes you when you arrive.”



# ENGEL & VÖLKERS®

## Karen Lockard

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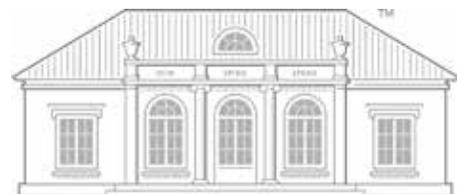


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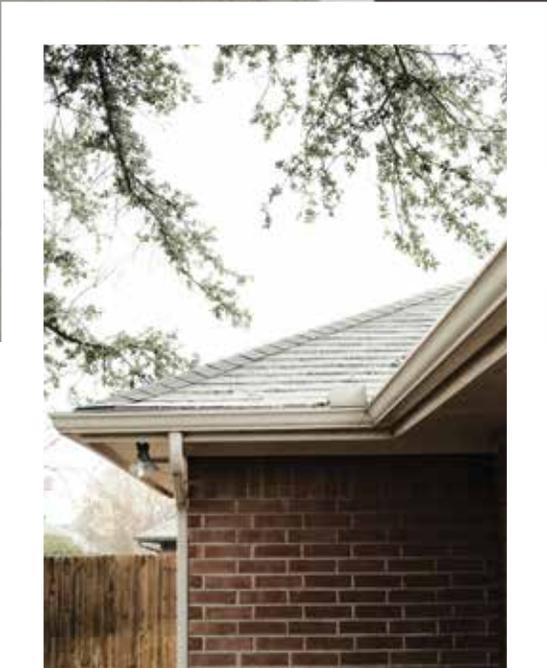
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### **Plug Into the Right Power Source**

Today's electric vehicles can typically plug into the standard 120-volt outlet, but it'll take about 24 hours to get a full charge. Sound inconvenient? This is where Reno's HLWT Lighting, Electrical and Signs, formerly Have Lights Will Travel, comes in. Owner Kyle McClelland encourages electric vehicle owners to upgrade their electrical systems.

"What is required for a car to charge is 60 amps of power at 220 volts, and that'll give you a 4- to 6-hour charge on your car," he says. "The cool thing is [manufacturers] standardize cars, so all cars use the same plug, except Teslas, but they also have an adapter option. Hire an electrician to come out and make sure there is enough room in your panel, that there are open spaces to put in the 60-amp breaker, and that you have enough power in order to do that. You don't want to plug in your car and trip your home power because you don't have enough."



### Be Winter Ready

Winterizing your home is crucial to avoiding seasonal damage.

Lauren Gaeding, marketing manager with Engel & Völkers in Incline Village and Lake Tahoe, suggests, "One way you can start is by inspecting your heating system; make sure it's in good working condition and don't forget to replace your filters. To help prevent heat loss, walk around your home and seal any drafts you feel around windows, doors, and outlets."

Gaeding also urges homeowners to clear gutters and downspouts of debris to prevent ice dams, and insulate water pipes to prevent freezing.

"Finally, stock up on supplies like salt or sand for icy walkways, and remember to have a safe, healthy holiday season," she adds.

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**Welcome Guests with Flow and Function**

With home decorating and holiday gatherings in full swing, Linda Demers, owner of LCDmodern in Reno, urges folks to consider the furniture layout and traffic flow.

“Focus on the fireplace,” she says. “Arrange your furniture to create an inviting gathering space. Move or rearrange furniture to accommodate your Christmas tree, making it visible from multiple angles in the room. And remove unnecessary pieces of furniture. Guests should be able to move around comfortably ... Experiment with different furniture layouts and decorations until you achieve the perfect Christmas ambience for your home.”

Whether you’re creating a picture-perfect gathering space, trying to charge that new electric vehicle, warming those cold floors, or jumping into the real estate market, this time of year can be stressful. Make it merry and bright with help from local experts. Be sure to reach out to them today! ♦





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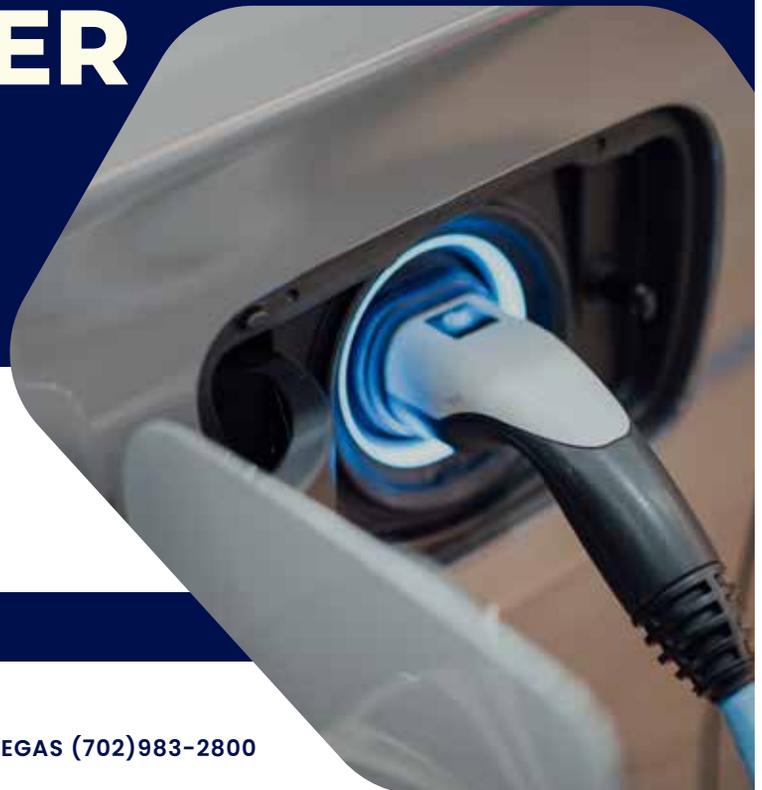
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