VISION
LUXURY
RESIDENTIAL

A VISION DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION GUIDE

The Vision Ultra Lux Guide to *Renovations*

An in-depth field guide to renovating an ultra-luxury home in the Southeast: room by room, trend by trend. What to do, what to avoid, and what it actually takes to reimagine the world you live in.

35 Years Building in the Southeast

IN THIS GUIDE

A complete field guide to the renovation.

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This guide is written from thirty-five years of commercial and residential construction across the Southeast. It draws on the patterns, trends, and mistakes we've seen repeat across hundreds of projects, from a single kitchen to a full estate.

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THE VISION STANDARD

Renovating at this level is a different discipline.

At the ultra lux level, a renovation isn't a punch list. It's a second act for a house you already chose once: a reimagined kitchen, a primary suite worth waking up for, an addition that doesn't look added on. None of it forgives a contractor who's learning as they go.

Vision has spent thirty-five years building the Southeast's residential masterpieces, on schedules and budgets that don't bend. This guide brings that same discipline to what an ultra-luxury renovation actually requires: the process, the trends worth chasing, the ones worth skipping, and the mistakes that cost homeowners real money.

Renovations

From a single kitchen to a whole-home reimagining, matched to your vision and budget.

Custom Homes

Architect-led or design-build, shaped around your site.

WHAT'S AHEAD IN THIS GUIDE

The Room Guide	Trends and pitfalls for the kitchen, primary suite, great room, wellness spaces, outdoors, and the systems behind the walls.
Ten Rules	What we've learned separates a renovation that finishes well from one that doesn't.
Financing	The lending categories that actually get an ultra-luxury renovation paid for.
Before You Hire	Ten questions worth asking any contractor bidding on your project, us included.

35	$250K–$1.5M	In-House	Southeast
Years Building in the Southeast	Typical Project Range	Licensed GC, Owned Crews	Where We Build

HOW IT WORKS

A clear path from first call to final walkthrough.

No mystery, no drift. Five stages, each with a decision you make before we move to the next.

01 **First Call** 30 MINUTES

We talk through the project, the site, the timeline, and the range you're working with, before anyone sets foot on the property.

02 **Site Walkthrough & Feasibility** WITHIN A WEEK

Boots on the property. We separate what's structural from what's cosmetic, and give you the honest number, not the one that gets us the job.

03 **Design, Proposal & Financing** 3–6 WEEKS

Your architect or ours, coordinated design and permitting, a fixed scope and price. If useful, we'll introduce you to the right lender before financing becomes the blocker.

04 **Construction** SCOPE-DEPENDENT

In-house crews, transparent draws, and clear communication from demolition through final punch.

05 **Final Walkthrough & Support** AT COMPLETION, AND AFTER

A walkthrough before we call it done, and a team that still answers the phone once the crews have moved on.

CRAFT IN THE DETAILS

4–8 Wks

Typical design & permitting window for a single-room renovation in close-in jurisdictions.

4–9 Mo

Typical construction window for a kitchen, primary suite, or single-wing renovation.

9–16 Mo

Typical timeline for a whole-home reimagining, start to final walkthrough.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Ten rules of an ultra-luxury renovation.

Patterns we've seen play out, for better or worse, across three decades of high-end renovations and custom homes. Read these before you read the room guide that follows.

DO

Arrange financing, if needed, before you fall in love with a scope.

Know your as-completed value and your number before design runs ahead of what the project can actually support.

DO

Budget real contingency for anything built before 1995.

Plumbing, electrical, and structural surprises are the rule at this vintage, not the exception. 15–20% is a realistic cushion.

DO

Invest in the bones before the finishes.

Layout, light, and flow age better than any surface material. A well-planned kitchen will always outlast a stunning one built on a poor layout.

DO

Think about resale, even if you're not selling.

Over-personalizing at this level can cap value for the next buyer. Bold is good; irreversible is a risk worth pricing in.

DO

Wire for what's next, even if you're not installing it yet.

Smart-home backbone, EV charging, generator transfer switches: running conduit now is inexpensive. Retrofitting it later rarely is.

DON'T

Assume "in-house crew" means in-house.

Ask whether the people on your site are employees or a different subcontractor every week. The answer changes everything about accountability.

DON'T

Chase every trend you see on a feed.

Some finishes read as dated in five years. Favor moves that are timeless in structure, trend-forward only in the details you can change later.

DON'T

Touch a load-bearing wall without an engineer.

Even "it's just a kitchen" projects can involve structural work. Skipping this step is the single most common cause of mid-project stop-work orders.

DON'T

Underestimate lead times on stone and custom cabinetry.

Some slabs and made-to-order cabinetry run four to six months. Order late and it becomes the critical path for the entire project.

DON'T

Let design outrun the permit.

Close-in jurisdictions across the Southeast can add real weeks if plans aren't code-ready. Build the permit timeline into your expectations from day one.

UP NEXT

The Room Guide: what these rules look like applied to every room of an ultra-luxury home, starting with the kitchen.

THE ROOM GUIDE · 01

The Kitchen: where resale value and daily life meet.

No room returns more on the investment, and none gets more daily use. It's also the room where trend-chasing goes to age badly. The goal is a kitchen that photographs beautifully today and still feels right in fifteen years.

MOODY & METALLIC: NAVY CABINETRY, BRASS HARDWARE, WATERFALL MARBLE

TRENDS WE'RE SEEING

Waterfall islands in bold natural stone

Quartzite and dramatic-veined marble carried down the sides of the island, often the single most photographed feature of the room.

Mixed metals & furniture-style cabinetry

Brass or unlacquered bronze hardware against saturated cabinet color (navy, forest, black) replacing the all-white kitchen.

Sculleries & prep kitchens

A hidden second kitchen behind the "show kitchen" handles mess and storage, keeping the main space guest-ready.

Panel-ready, disappearing appliances

Refrigeration and dishwashers clad to match cabinetry, so the room reads as furniture rather than equipment.

Built-in bar & beverage walls

Wine fridges, ice makers, and open shelving integrated at the kitchen's edge, purpose-built for how you actually entertain.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

×

A trendy backsplash chosen for a photo, not for the decade you'll live with it.

×

Undersized island seating for how many people actually gather in the kitchen.

×

Skipping a dedicated coffee or beverage zone, then wishing you had one.

MOST REQUESTED

Waterfall islands & panel-ready appliances

WORTH THE SPLURGE

The island stone anchors the whole room

OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Real ventilation for a scullery or prep kitchen

VISION TIP

Order stone and custom cabinetry the day your design is fixed, not the day construction starts. It's the most common cause of a delayed kitchen.

THE ROOM GUIDE · 02

The Primary Suite: your own private wing.

The primary suite has quietly become the most-renovated room in ultra-luxury homes, not just a bedroom and bath anymore, but a private wing with its own sitting area, spa, and dressing room.

PRIMARY SUITE WITH FIRESIDE SITTING AREA, OPENING TO A FREESTANDING-TUB BATH

TRENDS WE'RE SEEING

Curbless, glass-minimal wet rooms

Shower and tub share one continuous floor plane, tiled wall to wall: a European-influenced look that reads as spa, not bathroom.

The tub as a room's focal point

Freestanding tubs positioned to a view or a fireplace, not tucked in a corner: the centerpiece rather than an afterthought.

His-and-hers, fully separate

Independent vanities, water closets, and often independent closets: two full dressing experiences rather than one shared one.

Closets built like boutiques

Islands, lit glass shelving, and a seating area. The walk-in closet has become its own destination room.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

×

A closet sized for one person when the ask was really for two.

×

Underpowered ventilation in a wet room, inviting moisture problems within a year.

×

A statement tub with no view, no fireplace, no reason to linger in it.

MOST REQUESTED

Curbless, glass-minimal wet rooms

WORTH THE SPLURGE

Heated floors & a linear drain

OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Closet lighting and dedicated ventilation

VISION TIP

Heated floors and a linear drain add real cost late in a project but are nearly impossible to retrofit well. Decide on both before rough-in, not after.

THE ROOM GUIDE · 03

Great Rooms: built for how you actually gather.

The best living spaces are designed around real gatherings: family dinners, holiday crowds, a quiet Tuesday, not around a single hero photograph.

ARCHED GLASS DOORS OPEN THE LIVING ROOM TO A PRIVATE BALCONY

TRENDS WE'RE SEEING

Disappearing walls of glass

Folding or pocketing doors that fully open a great room to a terrace or pool, blurring indoor and outdoor into one space.

Statement ceilings

Wood-clad coffers, beams, or shiplap treatments that give a great room a focal point beyond the television.

Art-first wall planning

Picture lighting and hanging systems wired in before drywall, so major art has a permanent, considered home.

Hidden, integrated AV

Speakers and screens engineered into millwork and ceilings rather than mounted as visible equipment.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

×

Making the television the room's focal point instead of the fireplace or the view.

×

Hard surfaces everywhere with no acoustic treatment: a beautiful room that's loud to sit in.

×

Finalizing electrical before furniture layout is settled, leaving outlets in the wrong places.

MOST REQUESTED

Disappearing walls of glass

WORTH THE SPLURGE

Hidden, fully integrated AV

OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Acoustic treatment on hard-surface rooms

VISION TIP

If you're opening a wall to the outdoors, plan the outdoor space at the same time. A gorgeous room that opens onto an unfinished yard undercuts itself.

THE ROOM GUIDE · 04

Wellness & Recreation: the house, recalibrated around you.

The fastest-growing category in ultra-luxury renovation isn't a bedroom or a kitchen. It's the rooms built purely for recovery, focus, and fun.

A DEDICATED HOME THEATER, STEPS FROM A FULLY STOCKED BAR

TRENDS WE'RE SEEING

Engineered home theaters

Purpose-built acoustics, tiered seating, and light control: a genuine screening room rather than a TV in a dark basement.

Sauna & cold plunge, side by side

Contrast therapy has moved from spa amenity to standard ask in whole-home renovations at this level.

Studio-grade home gyms

Rubber flooring, full mirror walls, and dedicated HVAC, built to function like a boutique studio, not a spare room with equipment.

Golf simulators & bourbon rooms

Flexible-use rooms that double as entertaining space, increasingly requested as a signature amenity in ultra lux homes.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

×

Retrofitting acoustics after drywall is up. It should be engineered during design, not after.

×

Underestimating humidity and ventilation loads for a sauna or plunge room.

×

A home gym with no dedicated HVAC zone, left uncomfortably warm within a season.

MOST REQUESTED

Engineered home theaters

WORTH THE SPLURGE

Dedicated HVAC zoning for wellness rooms

OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Humidity control for a sauna or plunge

VISION TIP

Wellness rooms have real mechanical needs: humidity, drainage, dedicated electrical. Loop in your GC before you fall in love with a specific plunge tub or sauna brand.

THE ROOM GUIDE · 05

The Outdoors: the newest room in the house.

Outdoor living and arrival experience now get the same design attention as any interior room, because at this level, they're where buyers and guests form their first and last impressions.

SPILLOVER SPA INTO A SPORT POOL, FRAMED BY A PRIVATE WOODED LOT

TRENDS WE'RE SEEING

Vanishing-edge pools with integrated spas

Spillover spas and sport-length pools designed as one continuous water feature rather than two separate structures.

Outdoor kitchens as true second kitchens

Full prep space, refrigeration, and pizza ovens, built to actually cook in, not just grill at.

Covered living rooms with fireplaces

Fully furnished outdoor rooms, weatherized and heated, extending the entertaining season by months.

Motor courts & collector garages

Arrival sequences and multi-bay garages designed as a statement, especially sought after among the region's car-collecting buyers.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

×

An outdoor kitchen with no real counter space: beautiful, but impossible to actually cook in.

×

A gorgeous pool with too little deck space to entertain around it.

×

Landscape lighting bolted on at the end instead of designed as a layer from the start.

MOST REQUESTED

Vanishing-edge pools with integrated spas

WORTH THE SPLURGE

Landscape lighting as a designed layer

OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Real deck space to entertain around the pool

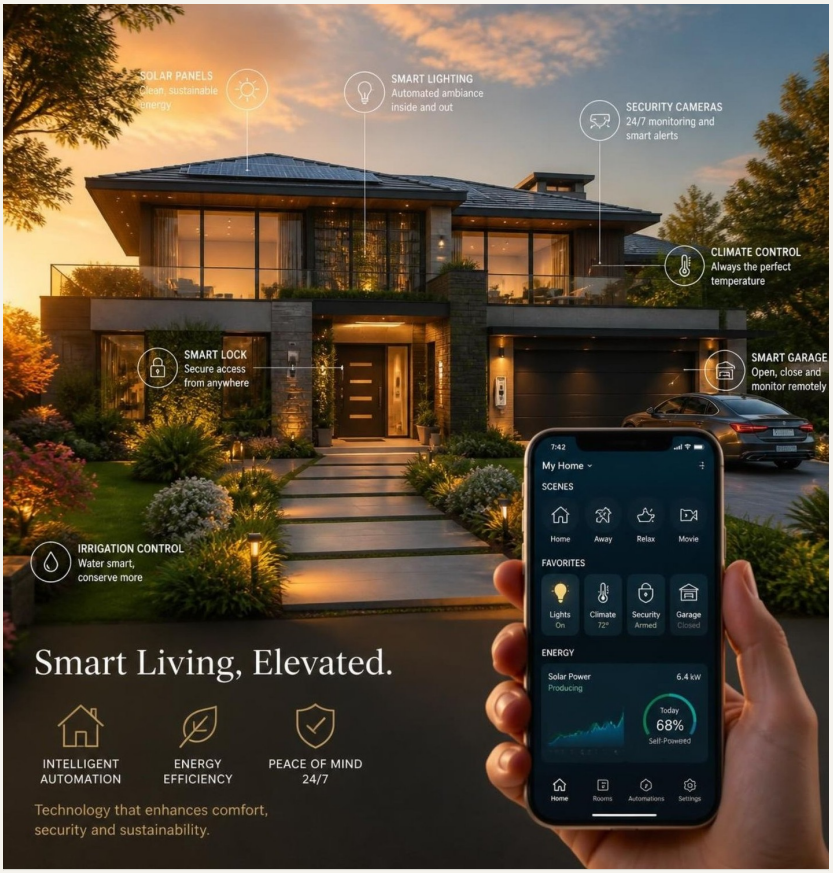
VISION TIP

Pool, outdoor kitchen, and landscape lighting share trenching and utility runs. Sequencing them together saves real money over doing each as a separate project.

THE ROOM GUIDE · 06

What's Behind the Walls: the systems nobody sees, until they don't work.

The most expensive mistakes in ultra-luxury renovation are usually invisible ones: infrastructure decided too late, or not decided at all.



EVERY SYSTEM, CONNECTED AND CONTROLLED FROM ONE APP

WHAT SERIOUS RENOVATIONS INCLUDE

Whole-home standby generators

Sized for the full house, not a partial circuit, increasingly treated as standard rather than optional at this level.

Zoned HVAC, by room

Comfort controlled at the room level, not the floor level, especially critical once wellness rooms and wine storage enter the mix.

Structured wiring & smart-home backbone

Conduit and low-voltage infrastructure run during construction, even if every device isn't installed on day one.

Whole-home water filtration & leak detection

Automatic shutoff sensors protect the stone, hardwood, and cabinetry a renovation just invested in.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

×

Retrofitting smart-home wiring after walls close: costly, disruptive, and often incomplete.

×

Undersized electrical service that can't support a future pool, generator, or EV charger.

×

Skipping leak detection in a home with significant stone and hardwood investment at risk.

MOST REQUESTED

Whole-home standby generators

WORTH THE SPLURGE

Structured wiring run early, even unused

OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Whole-home leak detection & auto shutoff

VISION TIP

Electrical service upgrades are far cheaper during a renovation than as a standalone project later. Size for the house you might build toward, not just the one you have today.

THE PART MOST BUILDERS LEAVE TO YOU

“We love it. *But can we afford to build it?*” That’s where most projects stall. It’s where ours start.

We’ve built a panel of construction and renovation lenders who work alongside the builder, not around them. When the money question comes up, we don’t hand you a phone book. We make an introduction.

01 Renovation Lending

Borrow against the home’s as-completed value: the lever that lets a major renovation actually happen.

02 Construction-to-Permanent

One closing that funds land, build, and converts to your mortgage at completion. Interest-only while we build.

03 Jumbo & Portfolio Builds

Luxury-comfortable portfolio banks for homes above conforming limits, with underwriting that flexes for a proven builder.

04 Private-Bank Options

Already working with a wealth advisor? Often the cleanest path is your own portfolio line. We’re happy to make the introduction.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST LENDER CONVERSATION

01
A rough scope and budget range, even if it’s not finalized

02
Your current mortgage balance and most recent appraisal, if any

03
A sense of timeline: when you’d want to break ground

04
Whether you’re relying on this home’s equity or outside capital

BEFORE YOU HIRE

Ten questions worth asking any renovation contractor.

Not a sales pitch, a checklist. Ask these of anyone bidding on your project, us included. The answers tell you more than the portfolio does.

01

Is my crew actually yours?

Or does it change with every subcontractor's availability that month?

02

Who owns this project, start to finish?

A single owner from start to finish, or a rotating cast as it moves through phases?

03

How are change orders priced?

Before they happen and in writing, or as a surprise on the next draw?

04

Can you handle all design and construction?

One team for the full scope, or separate hires to coordinate yourself?

05

What happens if a permit stalls?

Whose timeline slips, and who tells you first.

06

Is there a lender relationship?

Or are you sourcing your own financing with no introduction?

07

What does the draw schedule look like?

Transparent and tied to milestones, or opaque until you ask?

08

Who signs off at final walkthrough?

And what's the process if something's missed on punch list?

09

How invasive will this be for my family?

What living through the project actually looks like, day to day.

10

How do you protect finished work?

What's the plan for the rooms already done while work continues elsewhere?

A note on this list: every question here is one we expect to answer ourselves, on the record, before you sign anything. Vision is built to be a turnkey solution for the homeowner: design, permitting, construction, interior design, technology and smart systems, and experiential amenities, all under one roof. If a contractor bristles at any of these questions, that's an answer too.

START THE CONVERSATION

Tell us about your vision.

A great renovation starts as a vision: the house you already love, made into the one you never want to leave.

CALL

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A division of Vision Development & Construction. 35 years building in the Southeast.

CRAFT · DISCRETION · ONE TEAM, START TO FINISH