

New Construction Home Buying Checklist

A practical, printable guide for buying a new build in the Las Vegas Valley

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Builders sell homes every day. Most buyers do this a few times in a lifetime. Work through this list in order, check items off as you go, and bring it to model homes, the design studio and your final walkthrough.

01 Before Your First Model Home Visit

The most expensive mistake happens before you ever sign anything.

- ☐ **Call George before you tour.** Many builders require your agent to register you, or come with you, on your first visit. Walk in alone and you may lose representation for that community.
- ☐ Do not sign a guest card or interest form until your agent is registered with the sales office.
- ☐ Set an all-in monthly budget: mortgage, property taxes, insurance, HOA dues and any special assessments.
- ☐ Get pre-approved with a lender of your choosing so you have a benchmark before you hear the builder lender's offer.
- ☐ List your must-haves: single-story or two-story, bedrooms, garage size, yard or no yard, gated or open, 55+ or all ages.
- ☐ Decide on your timeline: a quick move-in home this season, or a to-be-built home months from now.

02 Comparing Communities and Builders

Compare the whole cost of living there, not the model home.

- ☐ HOA dues for every association (master plan and sub-association) and what each one covers.
- ☐ Any special assessments or improvement district charges added to the property tax bill. Ask for the amount and payoff terms.
- ☐ CC&Rs; and rules: rentals, parking, RVs, exterior changes and, for 55+ communities, age and occupancy requirements.
- ☐ Builder warranty: what is covered, for how long, and how service requests are handled.
- ☐ Estimated completion date for to-be-built homes, and the builder's recent record on hitting dates.
- ☐ Lot premiums by homesite. Compare views, lot size, street traffic and backyard orientation.
- ☐ Backyard exposure. In Las Vegas summers, a yard facing west takes the hardest afternoon sun.
- ☐ Distance to work, schools, shopping, healthcare and the 215 Beltway or US 95.
- ☐ Resale prices of similar homes nearby, so you know what the market pays for this product.

03 Contract and Financing

Builder contracts are written by the builder's attorneys. Read every page.

- ☐ Earnest money deposit: amount, when it becomes non-refundable, and under what conditions you get it back.
- ☐ Delay language: what happens if the builder misses the completion date, and whether you have any remedy.
- ☐ Price change rules for homes not yet started, and whether options are priced at contract or at selection.
- ☐ Incentives in writing: dollar amount, what they apply to, and whether they require the builder's lender or title company.
- ☐ Two loan estimates side by side: builder's lender and an outside lender. Compare rate, points, fees and the incentive.
- ☐ Rate lock length versus the build timeline, plus the cost of extending a lock if construction runs long.
- ☐ Appraisal gap plan if the home appraises below contract price.
- ☐ Your right to independent inspections during construction and before closing, confirmed in the contract.

04 Design Studio Selections

Upgrades that are hard to add later come first.

- ☐ Set an upgrade budget before your appointment, and track it as you go. Ask for a running total.
- ☐ Prioritize structural items: room options, extended patios, garage depth, ceiling heights and window placement.
- ☐ Electrical and low-voltage: extra outlets, ceiling fan pre-wires, outdoor outlets, TV and data runs, EV charger circuit.
- ☐ Plumbing: gas line to the patio, water softener loop, utility sink and laundry location.
- ☐ Cooling and efficiency: AC system size, insulation, window coatings and any solar options. Summer bills matter here.
- ☐ Skip upgrades you can add for less after closing, such as many light fixtures, hardware and paint.
- ☐ Get every selection on a signed, itemized change order, and note the deadline for changes.

05 During Construction

Code inspections check minimums. Your inspector checks workmanship.

- ☐ Ask the builder how and when you may visit the site, and request regular schedule updates.
- ☐ Schedule an independent pre-drywall inspection while framing, plumbing and wiring are still visible.
- ☐ Photograph walls before drywall so you know where pipes, wires and blocking are.
- ☐ Send any concerns to the builder in writing, with your agent copied, and keep a dated log.

06 Final Walkthrough and Closing

Once you sign, the builder's urgency drops. Document everything first.

- ☐ Book an independent final inspection a few days before the builder walkthrough.
- ☐ Test every system: AC and heat, water heater, all appliances, garage door, faucets, drains, outlets and irrigation.
- ☐ Check finishes in daylight: paint, flooring, cabinets, counters, grout, doors and window screens.
- ☐ Get a written punch list with completion dates, signed by the builder's representative.
- ☐ Confirm final selections, incentives and credits match your contract on the closing statement.
- ☐ Set up electric, gas, water, trash and internet before closing day.
- ☐ Collect warranty documents, appliance manuals, garage remotes, gate access and HOA contact information.

07 After Move-In

Your first year is your best leverage with the builder.

- ☐ Keep a running list of warranty items with photos and dates.
- ☐ Schedule a review before the first-year warranty window closes, ideally around month 11.
- ☐ Ask about recording a Declaration of Homestead with the Clark County Recorder. Your title officer or attorney can explain it.
- ☐ Check your first property tax bill for any improvement district charges you were told about.
- ☐ Save your closing documents, warranty papers and change orders in one place.

Questions before you tour? Call George first.

George Durkin has 41 years in Las Vegas real estate, over \$600 million in residential sales, and holds the CRS, CREM and GRI designations. He represents you, not the builder.

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