

Demographic Shifts in Charleston's Luxury Home Market (2025–2030)

Demographic Evolution (2025–2030)

Charleston's high-end island communities – **Kiawah Island, Seabrook Island, Daniel Island, and Sullivan's Island** – have long attracted affluent home buyers, traditionally older individuals (often retirees or second-home owners). As of the early 2020s, many property owners in these enclaves are baby boomers or members of wealthy established families (often termed “old money”). For example, on Kiawah Island the average age of full-time residents has trended upward – rising from about 63 in 2010 to 68 by 2020 () – reflecting a predominantly older homeowner base. Sullivan's Island and Daniel Island, while also affluent, tend to include more middle-aged professionals and families, but still skew well into mid-life ages (median age ~50s) with very high household incomes ([Sullivan's Island, South Carolina Population 2024](#)). In all of these communities, current high-net-worth buyers often have backgrounds as retired executives, heirs to family wealth, or seasoned investors, and their sources of wealth have typically accumulated over decades (finance, real estate, industry leadership). This “**old guard**” profile of luxury buyers is beginning to shift as we look toward 2025–2030.

Forecasted Generational Shift: A wave of generational turnover is on the horizon in Charleston's luxury home market. Many baby-boomer owners are reaching their 70s and 80s and are expected to **cash out, downsize, or pass on their estates** to heirs in the coming years. Industry observers project that the *great wealth transfer* – estimated at **\$84 trillion** from Silent Generation and Boomers to younger generations through the 2040s – will fundamentally reshape luxury real estate markets ([Sotheby's Report: \\$84 Trillion Wealth Transfer Set to Reshape Luxury Real Estate Market | HOUS Stock News](#) (Sotheby's Report: \$84 Trillion Wealth Transfer Set to Reshape Luxury Real Estate Market | HOUS Stock News). In the U.S. alone, around **\$30 trillion in assets** are anticipated to shift to younger hands by 2030, much of it to women heirs ([Values, community woo young and](#)

[female shoppers to luxury brands - Luxury Portfolio International](#)). This means a larger cohort of Gen-X and millennial millionaires will be in positions to purchase luxury homes. As the older “old money” retiree segment exits, the incoming buyers are increasingly “**new money**” – self-made wealth from technology, finance, entrepreneurship, and other high-growth sectors. These new buyers tend to be younger (often 30s to 50s) and more diverse. Notably, a recent report found that **54% of luxury homebuyers under 35 are women**, reflecting a demographic broadening in who is purchasing high-end properties ([Values, community woo young and female shoppers to luxury brands - Luxury Portfolio International](#)). Overall, luxury consumers will skew younger in the next decade; Gen Z alone is projected to account for 75% of luxury purchases by 2030 (albeit this figure includes luxury goods, it underlines the emerging influence of younger wealth) ([Values, community woo young and female shoppers to luxury brands - Luxury Portfolio International](#)).

Origins of the Next Wave of Buyers: The Charleston area’s desirability and relative value are drawing affluent newcomers from across the country. In recent years there’s been an *influx of out-of-state buyers* from higher-cost regions like **New York, New Jersey, California, and the Northeast** who are attracted by the Lowcountry lifestyle and favorable pricing compared to their home markets ([Charleston Housing Market Trends in 2021](#)). These buyers often pay cash and find Charleston’s multi-million-dollar homes a bargain relative to metro areas like NYC or San Francisco ([Charleston Housing Market Trends in 2021](#)). Additionally, Charleston’s growing reputation as a tech and innovation hub (nicknamed “Silicon Harbor”) has enticed successful tech entrepreneurs and remote-working professionals to relocate to the region ([US property: Charleston’s blossoming tech scene draws in young buyers - Charleston Business News - Charleston Regional Development Alliance News & Blog](#)) ([US property: Charleston’s blossoming tech scene draws in young buyers - Charleston Business News - Charleston Regional Development Alliance News & Blog](#)). Many new high-net-worth residents are coming from industries such as **technology startups, software and IT, finance (hedge funds, private equity), and healthcare**, as well as a sprinkling of entertainment and sports figures seeking quieter luxury retreats. Geographically, besides the Northeast and West Coast, affluent buyers from major cities in the Midwest and Southeast (Chicago, Atlanta, Washington D.C.) are also contributing to the demand. Real estate reports note that Charleston’s luxury segment remained robust through 2024 “*driven by an influx of affluent buyers, many seeking second homes or permanent residences*” in areas like Kiawah Island and Sullivan’s Island ([Charleston Real Estate Market: Year-End Review and 2025 Predictions -](#)

[Handsome Properties | Blog](#)). This trend is expected to continue into 2025 and beyond. In summary, the profile of the Charleston luxury buyer is evolving from predominantly older, inheritance-wealth retirees to a mix that includes younger, self-made millionaires relocating for lifestyle and investment – a **new generation of owners** who will shape the market through 2030.

Impact of Wealth Transfer on the Luxury Home Market

The impending intergenerational wealth transfer will have profound effects on Charleston's high-end real estate. **Baby boomers**, who currently hold an estimated 57% of the nation's wealth and a large share of luxury real estate ([Baby Boomer Trend Report by Engel & Völkers Americas - Issuu](#)), are increasingly focusing on estate planning. Many have established trusts or estate plans to pass properties to their children. In practice, this means a substantial number of multi-million-dollar homes on Kiawah, Seabrook, Daniel, and Sullivan's Island will transition to the next generation over the coming decade.

However, early evidence suggests that **heirs are often inclined to sell** these inherited luxury properties rather than keep them. According to a 2023 Charles Schwab survey, *nearly 70% of people who expect to inherit a home plan to sell it rather than retain it* ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents' House - Mansion Global](#)). The reasons are both emotional and practical. High-end coastal homes come with significant carrying costs – *property taxes, insurance, utilities, and maintenance* – which can be daunting for heirs, especially if they already own homes elsewhere. In many cases, adult children inherit a large family home or vacation estate that they cannot easily use or afford to maintain. As one report noted, *“rising costs are a bigger part of the calculus these days when heirs decide whether or not to keep an inherited house”*, with factors like **soaring insurance premiums on coastal properties** pushing more heirs to put inherited beach homes on the market ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents' House - Mansion Global](#)). In the Charleston area, where hurricanes and flooding are risks, insurance and upkeep costs have climbed sharply; this makes selling an attractive option for heirs who would rather unlock the cash value of the property. Indeed, advisors observe that given the elevated home values in recent years, many inheritors opt to **“cash out” for financial security**, using the proceeds to fund other goals (investment, paying down debt, or their own home purchases) ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents' House - Mansion Global](#)) ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents' House - Mansion Global](#)). Additionally, inheriting

a multi-million-dollar home often involves **splitting among siblings**. If one heir cannot buy out the others – a common scenario as “*high home prices...made it impractical for heirs to buy out their siblings*” – the simplest solution is to sell the property and divide the proceeds ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents’ House - Mansion Global](#)).

Estate Liquidation and Market Effects: As a result of these dynamics, Charleston’s luxury market is likely to see a **greater supply of high-end listings** entering the market via estate sales and downsizing boomers. Over 2025–2030, it is probable that many long-held family estates on Kiawah and Seabrook will be listed for sale as the original owners age out. This influx of supply could *temper the pace of price growth* in the short term if listings outnumber active buyers. Heirs who choose to sell quickly may price homes competitively, increasing inventory. However, the wealth transfer also creates **new demand**: younger affluent buyers coming into money (through inheritance or business success) will be looking for their own luxury properties, potentially balancing the market. In effect, one generation’s decision to sell can become an opportunity for another generation to buy. The Sotheby’s 2025 Luxury Outlook anticipates that the coming \$84 trillion wealth transfer “*represents a pivotal market transformation, with younger generations’ preferences reshaping luxury real estate dynamics*” ([Sotheby's Report: \\$84 Trillion Wealth Transfer Set to Reshape Luxury Real Estate Market | HOUS Stock News](#)). We may therefore see shifts in **pricing trends** and property preferences. If many inherited properties hit the market, buyers could have slightly more bargaining power by the late 2020s, slowing the steep price appreciation seen during the early 2020s. Conversely, prime properties in these island communities (e.g. oceanfront homes on Kiawah or Sullivan’s) will still command premium prices if demand from new millionaires remains strong. Notably, luxury real estate has shown resilience – in 2024 the high-end segment outperformed middle-market housing in the U.S. ([Sotheby's Report: \\$84 Trillion Wealth Transfer Set to Reshape Luxury Real Estate Market | HOUS Stock News](#)) – suggesting that abundant new wealth can sustain prices even as inventory grows.

Construction and Development Implications: The turnover of estates is also likely to influence new construction and renovation trends. Many homes owned by boomers were built in the 1980s–2000s; as these come into the hands of younger buyers, there may be a push to **update or replace** older structures. Heirs who sell to new owners often sell “as is,” and the new “new money” buyers may prefer to **tear down and build custom** or undertake major remodels to fit modern tastes. In Charleston’s islands, where land is limited, we anticipate a *redevelopment cycle*: older homes (even if luxurious) could be

demolished to make way for more contemporary designs and high-efficiency construction that today's buyers want. This trend means **sustained demand for custom home builders and architects** who specialize in high-end projects. On the other hand, some baby boomers are choosing to simplify by **downsizing locally** – for instance, selling a large Kiawah estate and building a smaller, manageable home in a nearby luxury community. This creates opportunities for builders to construct new, right-sized luxury homes or upscale townhomes that cater to affluent seniors. Overall, the great wealth transfer will inject liquidity and churn into the luxury housing market: expect more listings from estates, more **liquidation of inherited homes** (due to cost burdens on heirs), and a resulting shift in market dynamics as fresh buyers absorb these properties. Builders and developers should watch these trends closely – a surge in available high-end lots or teardown opportunities could lower land acquisition costs and open the door for new projects aimed at the next generation of luxury homeowners.

Architectural Influence & Builder Partnerships

The Charleston area's luxury home aesthetic is significantly shaped by a few **prominent architects** who have extensive experience designing custom homes on Kiawah, Seabrook, Sullivan's Island and beyond. Three notable figures are **Darryl Cobb**, **Steve Herlong**, and **Beau Clowney** – architects whose design philosophies and portfolios set the bar for high-end residential architecture in the Lowcountry. Successful custom home builders will often find themselves collaborating with these architects, so understanding their approach and forming strong working relationships is vital.

Darryl Cobb (Cobb Architects): Darryl Cobb is a Charleston-based architect with over 30 years of experience in custom residential design ([Darryl A. Cobb - Cobb Architecture](#)). He founded Cobb Architects in 2000 and has since become an integral part of luxury home design in the region, crafting bespoke homes from downtown Charleston out to the sea islands. Cobb's design philosophy marries artistry with livability – he describes great architecture as *“a beautiful piece of art – sculpture that you occupy”*, emphasizing creative form **combined with high quality construction** ([Darryl A. Cobb - Cobb Architecture](#)). His projects often feature classic Lowcountry elements (wide porches, wood detailing, harmony with the natural setting) executed with impeccable craftsmanship and sometimes a contemporary twist. Darryl Cobb has **extensive project experience on Kiawah Island** in particular. Clients note that he and his team are *“experienced with*

Kiawah Island [which] has many requirements for building” ([Testimonials - Cobb Architecture](#)) – a reference to Kiawah’s strict Architectural Review Board guidelines and environmental regulations. In practice, Cobb’s firm works closely with builders through all phases: *“from the first conceptual sketch through the construction process”*, paying attention to every detail ([Darryl A. Cobb - Cobb Architecture](#)). This hands-on, collaborative approach means that builders partnering with Cobb can expect frequent site visits and open communication to ensure the design vision is faithfully executed ([Testimonials - Cobb Architecture](#)). His design style is versatile within an upscale coastal vernacular – from shingle-style beach homes to modern marshfront retreats – always tailored to the client’s dreams (the firm’s motto: *“Masterfully crafting your dreams into reality”* ([Cobb Architecture - Charleston SC - Dream Homes, Renovations, Building Design](#))). For builders, working with Darryl Cobb requires a commitment to quality and an appreciation for fine details and craftsmanship. In return, Cobb’s projects are often award-winning and highly publicized, giving builders a chance to showcase their abilities on a grand stage.

Steve Herlong (Herlong Architects): Steve Herlong is another leading residential architect in the Charleston area, known especially for stunning waterfront homes on Sullivan’s Island, Isle of Palms, and other coastal locations. As principal of Herlong Architects + Interiors (based on Sullivan’s Island), he brings a philosophy centered on **harmonizing homes with their environment**. Herlong believes that *“houses are connected to their environment and [should have] a distinctive style [that] belongs... just as it is”* in that setting ([Our Philosophy – Herlong Architects | Architecture + Interior Design](#)). This principle translates into designs that look *“kind and reassuring”* in the landscape – for example, a beachfront home that feels like it naturally belongs by the dunes. He and his team pursue *“perfection in architecture and interior design”*, which means an obsessive attention to proportion, materials, and client needs ([Our Philosophy – Herlong Architects | Architecture + Interior Design](#)). Uniquely, Steve Herlong does **not impose a signature aesthetic**; in his words, *“far from having a specific design aesthetic, [I] listen to what clients want and try to give them that”*, resulting in a better house and happier occupants ([Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong -](#)). This flexibility means Herlong-designed homes can range from charming Caribbean-influenced cottages to sleek contemporary builds – whatever best fits the client’s vision and the property. He is also well-versed in the technical challenges of coastal construction: *“addressing the various codes and guidelines”* and ensuring homes have *“high performance qualities”* to withstand hurricanes, salt, and flooding is a challenge he enjoys ([Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong -](#)). Many of his

homes are engineered with elevated foundations, storm-resistant materials, and other resiliency features seamlessly integrated into the design. For custom builders, collaborating with Steve Herlong requires **adaptability and strong client focus**. He appreciates builders who can execute diverse styles and who engage enthusiastically in the creative process. Builders who have worked with Herlong note his genuine enjoyment in collaboration and his satisfaction when a project's interior finishes and details come out beautifully ([Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong -](#)) ([Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong -](#)). To build Herlong's designs effectively, contractors must be detail-oriented (to meet perfectionist standards) and knowledgeable about advanced building techniques for coastal environments. A positive partnership with Herlong often means working hand-in-hand to exceed client expectations – and indeed, his clients routinely give rave reviews ([Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong -](#)).

Beau Clowney (Beau Clowney Architects): Beau Clowney, a sixth-generation South Carolinian, has been a prolific luxury architect in the Lowcountry for decades. His work is widely acclaimed for **blending the old with the new** and paying homage to Southern architectural traditions ([Voices of Charleston - Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell - Preservation Society of Charleston](#)). Clowney's design approach could be described as contextually inspired modern classicism. *"We are not formal Classicists, but our designs are inspired by classicism,"* notes his business partner, focusing on the *"scale, proportion, detailing and honesty of materials that make older buildings great."* ([Voices of Charleston - Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell - Preservation Society of Charleston](#)) In practice, a Beau Clowney home might feature historically influenced elements – such as symmetrical facades, grand columns or reclaimed wood beams – combined with modern layouts and technology. The key is that each design **respects the Charleston vernacular** and the specific site. Clowney insists that even when designing something new or contemporary, he is *"thinking of how the design can be integrated contextually"* with its locale ([Voices of Charleston - Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell - Preservation Society of Charleston](#)). This could mean using regional materials, maintaining a low profile under the tree line, or incorporating wraparound porches and operable shutters that echo historic Lowcountry homes (while also being functional for shade and storms). Many Beau Clowney projects thus feel timeless yet fresh – a balance of *heritage and innovation*. In the Kiawah Island area, Clowney's firm has contributed to projects like the Kiawah River development, where they created designs that *"enhance the timeless quality of place"* and uphold principles of stewardship of the land ([Kiawah River Nominated for Design in Great Spaces Award](#)). For builders, partnering with Beau Clowney Architects demands **craftsmanship**

of the highest order. Since the designs often feature custom millwork, intricate masonry, and high-grade materials, builders must deliver precision and quality. Clowney’s team also values problem-solving and longevity: they critique developments that don’t hold up (“sagging balconies... water infiltration... not sustainable” in the local climate) ([Voices of Charleston - Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell - Preservation Society of Charleston](#)), so a builder working with them should prioritize durability and proper technique. Establishing a good relationship with Beau Clowney likely means demonstrating respect for Charleston’s architectural heritage and showing pride in fine construction. Builders who can bring Clowney’s elegant designs to life – blending old-world touches with new-world engineering – will earn a strong reputation in these exclusive communities.

Best Practices for Builder-Architect Collaboration: Given the stature of architects like Cobb, Herlong, and Clowney in Charleston’s luxury market, custom home builders should approach partnerships with them (and others of similar caliber) professionally and proactively. Some best practices include:

- **Early and Open Communication:** Engaging the architect early in the construction planning and maintaining an open dialogue is essential. The architect-builder relationship should be like a “well-conducted orchestra” – each with a unique role but working in harmony ([Achieving Architectural Vision with a Colorado Home Builder – Vertex Homes Colorado](#)) ([Achieving Architectural Vision with a Colorado Home Builder – Vertex Homes Colorado](#)). Builders should be involved from the initial design phase whenever possible, so they understand the design intent and can offer input on construction methods or cost efficiencies. This *early collaboration helps integrate the creative vision with practical execution*, preventing misunderstandings. As one architect noted, “*if the builder isn’t proactive in addressing all the small details early on, unnecessary questions and issues are likely to arise during construction.*” ([Achieving Architectural Vision with a Colorado Home Builder – Vertex Homes Colorado](#)) By coordinating closely on specifications and plans up front, the team can avoid costly changes later.
- **Respect for the Design Vision:** Custom builders should demonstrate a commitment to realizing the architect’s design faithfully. This means paying attention to details (materials, proportions, finishes) and not cutting corners. Architects like Cobb, who often visit job sites, appreciate builders who treat the plans as gospel yet also bring solutions to the table for any on-site challenges

([Testimonials - Cobb Architecture](#)). Building exactly to spec, or communicating promptly if adjustments are needed, builds trust. When an architect sees that a builder “gets it” – prioritizes the aesthetic and structural details that make the design special – they are more likely to recommend that builder for future projects.

- **Adaptive Problem-Solving:** No custom build is without surprises (weather delays, supply issues, unforeseen site conditions). A builder strengthens their relationship with architects by handling problems collaboratively. Rather than unilaterally making changes, a good builder will consult the architect and client, propose alternatives that maintain design integrity, and be transparent. This teamwork approach aligns with the “**collaborative approach**” architects like Herlong champion ([Welcome to Herlong Architects | Architecture Firm Near Me | Local ...](#)). It also reassures architects that their creative intent won’t be lost when issues arise.
- **Professionalism and Reliability:** Delivering on time and on budget (to the extent possible) is crucial in luxury projects. Architects stake their reputation on the homes they design; if a builder’s poor project management causes delays or cost overruns, it reflects poorly on all parties. Conversely, a builder who consistently produces high-quality work, meets deadlines, and provides excellent client service makes the architect look good as well. Over time, this can cement a **long-term partnership**. Many top architects have a short list of preferred builders who have proven their skill and dependability.

In essence, custom builders should see architects not as adversaries or mere plan-providers, but as creative partners. Especially with renowned architects in Charleston’s elite communities, a symbiotic relationship – where the architect’s vision and the builder’s execution merge seamlessly – leads to the **best outcomes**. By following the practices above and showing genuine enthusiasm for the architect’s design philosophy (be it Cobb’s artistic detailing, Herlong’s site-specific perfection, or Clowney’s contextual classicism), builders can form alliances that elevate their own stature in the luxury market. Successful projects often lead to word-of-mouth referrals in these circles, as happy clients, architects, and builders all contribute to each other’s reputations.

New Money Buyer Expectations: It's also important for both architects and builders to note that the incoming generation of luxury buyers may have different expectations than the previous clientele. The “**new money**” buyers of 2025+ are typically younger, tech-savvy, and accustomed to contemporary design and convenience. They often favor **modern amenities and sustainable design** elements. Sotheby's research indicates that today's luxury buyers “*want move-in-ready homes with sustainability and wellness elements already added.*” ([4 Things Wealthy Homebuyers Want - Business Insider](#)) In practice, that means features like solar panels, high-efficiency HVAC systems, smart home technology, home gyms or spa-like wellness rooms, and even leisure amenities such as boutique home theaters or sport courts are increasingly in demand ([4 Things Wealthy Homebuyers Want - Business Insider](#)) ([4 Things Wealthy Homebuyers Want - Business Insider](#)). Unlike the older generation who might enjoy overseeing a custom renovation, many younger buyers “*don't want to deal with improvements... They want it ready... and they're willing to pay for it.*” ([4 Things Wealthy Homebuyers Want - Business Insider](#)) Builders should be prepared to **adapt to these preferences**. For instance, a new-money client might request a more modern architectural style (clean lines, open floor plan, big glass walls) as opposed to the traditional styles prevalent in Charleston; architects and builders need to accommodate such tastes while still respecting community guidelines. Additionally, younger affluent buyers place value on *personalization* and experience – they want homes that reflect their personality and values. This could manifest as unique material choices (reclaimed wood for sustainability, or bespoke artisan fixtures), or design elements that enable a certain lifestyle (a music studio, a rooftop deck for entertaining, etc.). Builders who understand these expectations can better satisfy their clients. Ultimately, *the luxury custom homes of the late 2020s will likely feature a blend of timeless elegance and cutting-edge convenience*, mirroring the blend of old-and-new that Charleston itself represents. Architects like Clowney are already adept at this blend; builders must likewise be ready to bring such visions to life, ensuring that quality and innovation go hand in hand.

Strategic Business Insights for Custom Home Builders

Facing the changing demographic and economic landscape, custom home builders in Charleston's luxury sector should formulate strategies to thrive. Below are key insights and recommendations:

1. Anticipate the Changing Buyer Profile: Builders should stay informed about the local market demographics. As outlined, the average luxury buyer is trending younger and more often self-made wealthy. This means builders might deal with clients who are tech entrepreneurs in their 40s rather than solely retired CEOs in their 70s. Understanding the mindset of these **younger, “new money” clients** is crucial – they may be less patient with lengthy build timelines, more budget-conscious even if wealthy, and highly discerning about modern design and tech features. Builders can anticipate needs by conducting market research or even simple outreach – for example, speaking with luxury realtors about what incoming clients are requesting. **Marketing materials** can be adjusted accordingly: use imagery and language that speaks to a vibrant, contemporary lifestyle (e.g. showcasing a smart-home system or an eco-friendly design your firm built) to resonate with the values of Gen X and millennial buyers. It’s also wise to note the increasing role of women in purchase decisions; ensuring your sales approach is attentive and respectful to all decision-makers (husbands, wives, and even adult children advisors) will make a good impression. In short, an agile builder will tailor their approach to suit the **next wave of clients** – folks who may be new to the Charleston area, new to building a custom home, and coming from different cultural expectations of service.

2. Adapt Offerings to ‘New Money’ Preferences: We’ve seen that new luxury buyers prioritize **wellness, sustainability, and technology**. Builders should invest in expertise and partnerships that allow them to deliver these features. This could mean training project managers in the latest *smart home systems*, forging relationships with green building suppliers (for solar panels, battery backups, high-performance insulation, etc.), and staying abreast of wellness design trends (home spas, gyms, air/water filtration, biophilic design elements). Homes that promote health and environmental responsibility are not just niche now – they are becoming mainstream in the luxury market. In fact, properties with wellness-focused amenities can sell for 10–25% more than traditional luxury homes in some markets ([6 Health and Wellness Trends in High-End Real Estate - RISMedia](#)). Charleston’s climate and setting also lend themselves to **indoor-outdoor living features** that younger buyers love – think resort-style outdoor kitchens, saltwater pools, and entertaining terraces. Builders should be ready to incorporate such features seamlessly. By proactively integrating these high-demand elements into their projects (or at least offering them as options), builders can make themselves more attractive to choosy clients. Essentially, align your product with what *today’s* luxury buyers want to buy, not what yesterday’s buyers wanted.

3. Strengthen Digital Marketing and Brand Storytelling: To attract the new generation of clients, who often start their search online or through personal networks, custom builders need a strong digital presence and a compelling brand. Emphasize your company's **values and community reputation** – modern affluent consumers, especially younger ones, prefer brands that share their values and provide a sense of community ([Values, community woo young and female shoppers to luxury brands - Luxury Portfolio International](#)) ([Values, community woo young and female shoppers to luxury brands - Luxury Portfolio International](#)). For a builder, this could involve highlighting commitments to quality, integrity, sustainability, and client service. Showcase testimonials (particularly from any younger clients you've had), and use social media or blogs to tell the story behind your projects – for example, how you collaborated with a top architect on a Kiawah oceanfront home, or how you incorporated Lowcountry artisan craftsmanship in a Sullivan's Island build. Such narratives create a personal connection. Additionally, ensure your website and portfolio are up-to-date with high-resolution photos, 3D tours, or even drone footage of your custom homes. Many new clients will be remote or out-of-state and will shortlist builders based on online impressions. Those impressions should exude professionalism and modernity. Consider producing content like **video walkthroughs**, behind-the-scenes looks at the construction process, or interviews with satisfied homeowners – these can engage a savvy audience and set you apart. Also, given that a lot of luxury sales involve referrals, networking in the right circles remains key: attend or sponsor events at local country clubs, charity galas, or luxury property showcases where high-net-worth individuals and influencers (including real estate agents and architects) mingle. By boosting both your digital marketing and real-world presence, you position your firm as the **go-to builder** for the upcoming cohort of luxury buyers.

4. Leverage the Wealth Transfer Opportunities: The wealth transfer isn't just a challenge – it's an opportunity. As baby boomers' properties change hands, builders can find new business in several ways. First, **estate preparations and renovations:** aging owners who plan to sell may invest in sprucing up their home to maximize sale value (kitchen/bath remodels, cosmetic updates). Builders can market renovation services for luxury homes, positioning themselves as experts in updating older high-end residences to current tastes. Second, when heirs do sell family homes, often the properties will be bought by someone who wants to renovate or rebuild. A savvy builder could even target recently sold high-end homes (via MLS or networks) to approach the new owners and offer their services for any modifications. Third, some heirs *will* keep the property but

perhaps opt to remodel it to better suit them. Given that nearly three-quarters of parents plan to leave a home to their kids ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents' House - Mansion Global](#)), there will be a steady flow of inherited homes – many of which need modernization. Builders should be prepared for **renovation projects** that respect an existing structure's character (in case the heir is sentimentally attached) while updating systems and style. Finally, builders might consider developing some **speculative projects** if they see a gap in the market. For instance, if a number of large outdated homes are selling relatively cheap (as estates), a builder-developer could purchase one, tear it down, and build a brand-new custom home tailored to what the new generation of buyers want, then sell it for a profit. This is of course a higher-risk strategy, but in prime locations like Kiawah or Sullivan's, a well-designed new home will likely find a buyer given the limited supply of land. In all cases, staying attuned to the turnover of properties (perhaps via relationships with luxury brokers or by following property transfers) will help builders capitalize on the **market churn** that wealth transfer brings.

5. Manage Risk Factors: Several **risk factors and economic shifts** could impact the luxury building business. One is the broader economy – while many high-end buyers are cash-rich and somewhat insulated, a major recession or stock market downturn could reduce the number of active buyers (or their budgets). Builders should maintain financial discipline and not overextend on too many speculative projects at once. Another risk is the *real estate market cycle*: if a glut of luxury homes comes on market (say, due to an accelerated wave of boomer sales or heirs listing inherited homes en masse), there could be a period of softer demand for new construction. Keeping an eye on inventory levels and pricing trends in the Charleston luxury segment is prudent. Also, **regulatory and tax changes** can have an effect – for instance, if property taxes rise sharply or if there are changes to inheritance tax laws at the federal level, that might influence whether heirs hold or sell (and thus affect renovation demand). On the flip side, South Carolina's relatively moderate taxes are a draw for many relocating wealthy individuals. **Climate and insurance** issues form another significant risk in coastal South Carolina. We are already seeing insurers raising premiums or pulling out of coastal markets, which increases the cost of homeownership. Builders should mitigate this by constructing homes to the highest wind and flood standards – if you can advertise that your new build exceeds code for hurricane resistance, that's a selling point to risk-aware buyers and insurers alike. Moreover, consider lobbying or participating in community discussions on resilience; demonstrating thought leadership in climate adaptation can enhance your brand and help protect the market long-term.

6. Embrace Innovation and Partnerships: Finally, custom builders should view the coming years as a time to **innovate** and form strategic partnerships. Partnering with the prominent architects (as discussed) is one avenue – being the preferred builder for an esteemed architect can be a steady pipeline of business. Another partnership angle is with interior designers and landscape architects who cater to luxury clients; by forming a team approach, you can offer a more seamless service to busy new buyers who want “one-stop” convenience. Consider also aligning with tech firms or smart home consultants to bolster your capability in integrating advanced systems (security, automation, audiovisual) in custom homes. The goal is to be able to say “yes” to the new generation’s requests, no matter how high-tech or custom. Embracing **design-build models** could streamline projects for those who want faster results – some new-money clients might gravitate to a firm that can handle everything end-to-end. Economic shifts may necessitate adjustment in business models: for example, if interest rates remain high, even wealthy clients might seek financing options – a builder who can refer a trusted private lender or offer creative construction financing might win jobs over others. Keep an eye on the luxury market beyond Charleston as well; trends often start in places like Palm Beach, the Hamptons, or Aspen. If, say, “net-zero” ultra-green luxury homes become de rigueur in those markets, be ahead of the curve in Charleston by acquiring the skills and certifications to build to those standards. In essence, **flexibility and foresight** will be the builder’s best assets. The demographic tide is turning, but those who adapt can ride the wave of opportunity. Charleston’s luxury real estate is expected to remain in high demand – predictions for 2025 and beyond foresee continued strong growth, with buyers seeking out premium features like waterfront access, expansive outdoor living areas, and smart/eco-friendly design in their homes ([Charleston Real Estate Market: Year-End Review and 2025 Predictions - Handsome Properties | Blog](#)) ([Charleston Real Estate Market: Year-End Review and 2025 Predictions - Handsome Properties | Blog](#)). Builders who align their practices with these emerging preferences, while maintaining the craftsmanship and charm that Charleston is known for, will flourish in the new era.

Sources

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- ([Charleston Housing Market Trends in 2021](#))Keadle Real Estate Blog – *Charleston Housing Market Trends 2021*. (June 29, 2021). *Observations of an influx of buyers from high-priced markets like New York and California, paying cash and finding Charleston’s home prices affordable by comparison.*
- ([Sotheby's Report: \\$84 Trillion Wealth Transfer Set to Reshape Luxury Real Estate Market | HOUS Stock News](#) (Sotheby's Report: \$84 Trillion Wealth Transfer Set to Reshape Luxury Real Estate Market | HOUS Stock News)Sotheby’s International Realty 2025 Luxury Outlook Report. (Jan 23, 2025). *Highlights an anticipated **\$84 trillion** intergenerational wealth transfer from Boomers, and how this will transform the luxury real estate market with younger buyers’ preferences.*
- ([Values, community woo young and female shoppers to luxury brands - Luxury Portfolio International](#)) (Values, community woo young and female shoppers to luxury brands - Luxury Portfolio International)Luxury Portfolio International – *“Values, community woo young and female shoppers to luxury brands.”* (June 1, 2023). *Statistics on demographic shifts: \$30T in assets transferring by 2030, Gen Z comprising 75% of luxury purchases by 2030, and 54% of luxury homebuyers under 35 being women.*
- ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents’ House - Mansion Global](#))Mansion Global – *“The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents’ House.”* (Oct 2023). *Report of a Charles Schwab survey finding nearly 70% of those expecting to inherit a home plan to sell it, indicating many high-value homes will be put on the market by heirs.*
- ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents’ House - Mansion Global](#))Mansion Global – *ibid.* *Discussion of rising costs (renovations, property taxes, insurance) making it harder for heirs to keep inherited homes, with a Charleston realtor noting high insurance costs pushing heirs to sell coastal homes.*
- ([The New Math on Inheriting Your Parents’ House - Mansion Global](#))Mansion Global – *ibid.* *Note that high home prices and rates often make it impractical for heirs to buy out siblings, encouraging whole-property sales.*
- ([Charleston Real Estate Market: Year-End Review and 2025 Predictions - Handsome Properties | Blog](#))Handsome Properties Blog – *“Charleston Real Estate Market Year-End 2024 Review.”* (Dec 27, 2024). *Reports robust demand in Charleston’s luxury segment in 2024, fueled by affluent buyers (second-home and relocation) in areas including Kiawah Island and Isle of Palms.*

- ([Testimonials - Cobb Architecture](#))Cobb Architects – *Client Testimonial (Sue & Fran O’Rourke)*. Affirms Darryl Cobb’s experience with Kiawah Island’s building requirements and his collaborative process, including frequent site visits and effective communication with the builder.
- ([Darryl A. Cobb - Cobb Architecture](#))Cobb Architects – *Darryl Cobb Bio*. Cobb’s view of well-designed architecture as “a beautiful piece of art – sculpture that you occupy,” reflecting his artistic yet practical design philosophy.
- ([Our Philosophy – Herlong Architects | Architecture + Interior Design](#))Herlong Architects – *Firm Philosophy*. Guiding principle that a house should “belong” to its surroundings, and a stated pursuit of perfection in design and business conduct.
- ([Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong -](#))Sea Island Builders Blog – *Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong*. Herlong clarifying that he listens to clients’ desires rather than adhering to one aesthetic, dispelling the misconception that he only designs in a single style.
- ([Team Spotlight: Steve Herlong -](#))Sea Island Builders Blog – *ibid*. Herlong discussing the challenges of designing coastal homes, noting the need for high-performance construction to withstand the elements (hurricanes, etc.).
- ([Voices of Charleston - Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell - Preservation Society of Charleston](#)) ([Voices of Charleston - Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell - Preservation Society of Charleston](#))Preservation Society of Charleston – “Voices of Charleston – Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell.” (Jan 5, 2022). Describes Beau Clowney’s work as blending old and new and paying homage to Southern vernacular architecture; quotes about designing with classical inspiration (scale, proportion, materials) while not being formally traditional.
- ([Voices of Charleston - Beau Clowney & Kate Campbell - Preservation Society of Charleston](#))Preservation Society of Charleston – *ibid*. Beau Clowney emphasizing contextual integration of even modern designs into Southern architectural traditions and climate considerations.
- ([Achieving Architectural Vision with a Colorado Home Builder – Vertex Homes Colorado](#))Vertex Homes Blog – “Achieving Architectural Vision with a Home Builder.” (Sept 19, 2024). Notes that collaboration between architects and builders is crucial, enabling seamless integration of creative vision and execution; highlights the importance of the builder being proactive about details to avoid issues during construction.

- ([4 Things Wealthy Homebuyers Want - Business Insider](#)) ([4 Things Wealthy Homebuyers Want - Business Insider](#))Business Insider – *“4 things wealthy homebuyers want”* (Feb 1, 2025). *Findings from Sotheby’s: luxury buyers in 2025 prioritize turnkey, move-in-ready homes with sustainability and wellness amenities (solar panels, spas, steam rooms, etc.), especially among millennial buyers who “don’t want to deal with improvements.”*
- ([6 Health and Wellness Trends in High-End Real Estate - RISMedia](#))RISMedia – *“6 Health and Wellness Trends in High-End Real Estate.”* *Statistic that properties with wellness-focused amenities can sell for 10–25% more, illustrating the value premium of health features in luxury homes.*
- ([Charleston Real Estate Market: Year-End Review and 2025 Predictions - Handsome Properties | Blog](#))Handsome Properties Blog – *Year-End 2024/2025 Outlook. Predicts that buyers moving into 2025 will seek premium features like waterfront access, expansive outdoor spaces, and eco-friendly designs – trends in line with new buyer preferences.*