
PITTSBURGH & NORTHERN SUBURBS

The New Construction Buyer's Guide: what builders won't tell you.

A plain-English look at 17 Pittsburgh-area builders — pricing, quality track records, and the fine print that can quietly cost you money or your own representation.

Three things that cost new-construction buyers money

A builder's on-site salesperson works for the builder. These are the gaps that catches buyers off guard.

01

The first-visit trap

Several major builders will only honor your agent's representation if that agent registers you or walks in with you on your very first visit. Tour a model home alone, then bring an agent later, and the builder may refuse to recognize them — leaving you to negotiate against the builder's team with no one on your side.

Applies to: Ryan Homes, Heartland Homes, and D.R. Horton, among others. Talk to your agent **before** you tour anything.

02

Quality doesn't track with brand size

The biggest national names build the most homes — and carry the weakest independent review scores. Smaller regional and custom builders tend to score far higher on customer satisfaction. Brand recognition is not a quality guarantee.

The takeaway: for any new build, budget for an independent, third-party inspection at pre-drywall, pre-closing, and final walk-through. Do not rely on the municipal inspection alone.

03

The captive-lender math

Many builders offer big incentives — closing-cost help, rate buydowns, design credits — but only if you use their in-house lender. These can be genuinely valuable, sometimes worth well over ten thousand dollars. They can also mask a higher rate that costs you more over the life of the loan.

Always do this: get a competing quote from an outside lender and compare the **total** cost, not just the upfront incentive.

17 Pittsburgh-area builders at a glance

Segment, typical pricing, and how each is viewed by independent reviewers.

Builder	Segment	Typical price range	Independent reputation
Ryan Homes	National production	Upper \$200s-\$500s	Mixed — low third-party review scores; common quality and warranty complaints
D.R. Horton	National production	Low \$300s-high \$400s	Weak — very low BBB rating; widely reported quality and service issues
Maronda Homes	Regional production	High \$300s-\$800s+	Mixed — A+ BBB, but quality and communication complaints
Heartland Homes	Luxury (semi-custom)	Upper \$300s-\$1M+	Positive — strong Houzz/Google ratings; quality praised
Eddy Homes	Luxury (semi-custom)	Mid \$400s-\$1.7M+	Positive — high satisfaction; personalized design process
Foxlane Homes	Luxury / 55+	Mid \$400s-\$1M+	Mixed — good testimonials; may discourage buyer agents
Charter Homes	Walkable communities	Low \$300s-\$900s+	Mixed — strong community concept; some quality complaints
Infinity Custom Homes	Luxury custom	High \$400s (TH)-\$2M+	Positive — strong reputation in top school districts
Costa Homebuilders	Luxury custom	\$500K-\$10M	Excellent — perfect Houzz/Yelp ratings; award-winning
Madia Homes	Luxury custom	High \$700s-\$3M+	Positive — strong Houzz reviews; built Pittsburgh Magazine's 2025/26 Ultimate House
Milestone Custom Homes	Luxury custom	\$1.4M+	Positive — boutique, high-touch process; strong Houzz reviews
Graf Custom Construction	Luxury custom	\$400K-\$1.5M	Positive — 5/5 Houzz, A+ BBB; premium build system
Benjamin Marcus Homes	Luxury custom	\$450K-\$2M+	Mixed — A+ BBB; strong finishes, low public review volume
Weaver Homes	55+ / low-maintenance	High \$300s-\$700s	Positive — consistently strong satisfaction scores
Pitell Homes	55+ / semi-custom	High \$300s-\$400s+	Positive — strong reviews; customization-focused
Traditions of America	55+ active adult	Upper \$400s-\$500s	Mixed — great amenities; concerning construction reviews
Laurel Communities	Urban luxury townhomes	\$1M+	Limited public data — marketed through high-end brokerages

Pricing and reputation reflect publicly available information as of early 2026 and change often. Reputation reflects third-party review platforms, not a guarantee of any individual build. Verify current pricing and availability directly with each builder.

How to read the market by segment

Where you'll feel at home depends less on brand and more on the kind of experience you want.

National production builders · affordability & scale

Best for first-time buyers who want new construction at accessible prices and a structured process. Expect a basic base finish with paid upgrades, and be prepared to stay actively involved in quality control. Independent inspections matter most here.

Luxury & semi-custom builders · personalization with backing

A step up in finishes and design input without a fully custom build. Good for move-up buyers who want to personalize a proven floor plan and generally see stronger satisfaction scores than the volume builders.

Custom builders · one-of-a-kind, on your lot

A hands-on, design-forward process for buyers with a bigger budget who want something unique — often built on your own land. Longer timelines, the strongest reputations, and the highest price points.

55+ active adult communities · lifestyle & low maintenance

Single-level living with resort-style amenities and social programming. Separate the community lifestyle from the construction quality when you evaluate — some of the best amenity packages come with the weakest build reviews, so weigh both.

Urban infill & luxury townhomes · walkable city living

New construction inside the city's most desirable neighborhoods, with high-end finishes and city views. A distinct niche for buyers who want a low-maintenance, walkable lifestyle without leaving town.

Five moves that protect you

1 Get represented before you tour

Bring in your agent — or have them register you — before your first model-home visit, so your representation is protected from day one.

2 Inspect independently, three times

Hire your own inspector for pre-drywall, pre-closing, and final walk-through. Get every issue and its fix in writing before you close.

3 Compare the builder's loan to the open market

Take the incentive seriously, but get an outside quote and compare total cost over the life of the loan — not just the upfront credit.

4 Understand the warranty before you sign

Know exactly what's covered, for how long, and how to file a claim. Warranty responsiveness varies widely between builders.

5 Match the builder to the experience you want

Volume, semi-custom, custom, 55+, or urban infill are very different journeys. Pick the segment first, then the builder.

Thinking about building? Talk to us before you tour.

We represent buyers — not builders. We'll help you register correctly, line up independent inspections, pressure-test the financing, and negotiate on your side of the table.

Edmondson Real Estate Group · Keller Williams Exclusive
412-310-0620 · ryan@ergpgh.com · ergpgh.com