ISSUE ONE • NOVEMBER 2026

# ATLANTA *Strategically*

THE METRO ATLANTA LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

FIRST EDITION



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*The rooms worth booking this fall*

**Five Atlantas, *Five Different* Daily Lives**

THE COVER STORY

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*Sometimes the smartest move is no move at all.*

**The Perfect Fall Weekend**
Three days, spent well.

REAL ESTATE | NEIGHBORHOODS | LIFESTYLE | MARKET INSIGHTS



THE INTRODUCTION

# The Work Is the Introduction

*Hey y'all. Welcome in.*

I became a Realtor in November 2022. Metro Atlanta was new to me then, and I did not know anyone here. There was no list to call and no circle to lean on. The work started with first conversations, first tours, and the first families who were willing to trust someone new to the city.

I spent fourteen years as a military spouse. We moved from place to place, and most of those years there was no family nearby. My husband's deployments came and went across those years, which taught me the importance of looking up an area and connecting with trusted professionals before planting roots someplace new.

In those years, we raised our three girls and earned my associate's degree in criminal justice and then my bachelor's in criminal justice administration. It has always been important to me that our girls saw me finish what I started. Those years taught me how to carry a full load and still keep going.

Before real estate, I owned my own in-home daycare on a military base. I also worked for years as a 911 dispatcher for emergency services. People called on hard days, and my job was to stay clear and get them help. I held CIT certification, Crisis Intervention Team training, for moments when a call needed extra care. That steadiness is still how I work now. When a moment feels heavy, I stay calm, I listen, and I keep the next step clear.

Family after family, closing after closing, that kind of listening built this practice. Each closing ended with a family holding keys and starting a new chapter in a home of their own.

On October 19, 2026, I finished my MBA. I can do hard things.

Provision is the picture underneath all of it. Nature wakes up and simply is. It is fed and provided for in each season, without striving. I learned that across years of being trusted in hard moments, first with children and callers, and now with families making a move.

***I rest in gratitude for all that has already been provided.***

Atlanta Strategically grew out of the same habit of service. With this magazine, I gather what I learn about homes, rooms, people, and places across Metro Atlanta and share it freely with readers.

Thank you to every family who has trusted me with a move so far. If you are just finding your way here, you are welcome here too. Welcome to Issue One of Atlanta Strategically.

*Courtne Gamble*

METRO ATLANTA LUXURY REAL ESTATE

FROM THE ADVISOR'S DESK

# Fall is when this market tells the truth.

***The spring rush is over, and so are the summer bidding wars. What you get here is the numbers, your choices, and my honest advice on what to do with them.***

A LETTER FROM COURTNE GAMBLE

Four years ago this month, I became a real estate agent.

I did not come into this business knowing anybody in it. What I had was a license, a willingness to learn out loud, and clients who trusted me before I had a track record to point to.

To my clients, thank you. You trusted me with your homes, your money, your timelines, and the tender seasons around all of it. I have never taken that trust lightly, and I never will.

What began as one family's yes has become family after family, closing after closing, all across Metro Atlanta.

Every family I have served since then taught me something the classes never covered. How to slow down at the table. How to tell the truth about a house, even when the truth costs the deal. How to keep people calm when the numbers get loud.



COURTNE GAMBLE
STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE ADVISOR

***"Atlanta, thank you for letting me earn my place here, one kitchen table at a time."***



By November, this market has settled into something spring never gives you: calm. The noise is out of the headlines, the open house crowds are smaller, and what is left is a market you can actually think in.

So I built this issue the way I work with my clients: straight with you. You will find the October numbers for Metro Atlanta, in plain English. What they mean if you are buying. What they mean if you are selling. What today's rate really does to a monthly payment. And my honest take on the end of the year, including something you will not hear from most agents: waiting is a real strategy, and I will be the first to tell you when waiting is the right call for you.

I started this magazine for one reason. Buying or selling a home is one of the biggest financial decisions you will ever make, and you deserve advice that treats it that way: straight answers, and numbers you can check for yourself. If a question comes up while you read, my calendar is on page 46. I would be glad to talk it through with you.

Here is to a calm, clear November, and to every client who made these four years possible. Thank you for trusting me, and thank you for letting me earn that trust again with every home and every family.

Take your time with this one. Start with the parts that speak to where you are right now. And when you are ready to talk about what is next for you, I am right here.

***"I love this season for my clients. The pace slows down a little, you can think clearly, and clear thinking is where the good decisions come from."***

CG

*Courtne*

COURTNE GAMBLE
STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE ADVISOR

# Inside This Issue

*Good living first. Good guidance throughout.*

*Three parts: the life of this city, the state of the market, and advice you can actually use.*

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*November 2026. Market figures as cited on pages 31 and 36. Event dates as listed by venues and city calendars; confirm before you go.*

# November in Atlanta, Briefly

***Six short notes on the season: art, books, opera, and the first lights of the holidays.***

ALL NOV **Martin Puryear: Nexus, High Museum.** A career-spanning show from one of America's great sculptors, here all month. Go on a quiet weekday and take your time.

NOV 12–17 **Book Festival of the MJCCA, Dunwoody.** A week of author talks worth clearing an evening for. Check the schedule and pick your night.

NOV 13 & 15 **Atlanta Opera: Silent Night, Cobb Energy Centre.** The true story of the Christmas truce, sung. Moving in a way you will not expect.

NOV 17–22 **Death Becomes Her, Fox Theatre.** A big Broadway comedy in the most beautiful room in Atlanta. Dress up a little.

OPENS NOV 19 **Holiday Designer Showhouse, Buckhead.** A Paces Ferry house dressed for the season by Atlanta designers, room by room. The best idea-shopping of the year.

OPENS NOV 14 **Garden Lights, Holiday Nights, Atlanta Botanical Garden.** The city's light show opens mid-month. Timed tickets, so book the evening you want before it sells out.



THE HOLIDAY DESIGNER SHOWHOUSE, BUCKHEAD — A PACES FERRY HOUSE DRESSED FOR THE SEASON. IMAGE CREATED FOR ATLANTA STRATEGICALLY.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Pick one thing you really want and put it on the calendar. November fills up fast. Garden Lights is timed tickets, so book your night early. And if you only make one outing, make it the showhouse: a Buckhead house dressed for the holidays, room by room. Dates as listed by venues and city calendars. Confirm times and tickets before you go; fall weekends sell out.

COVER STORY

# The Quiet Luxury of Staying Put

*Why the right home is about more than making a move.*



# Staying well is a skill.

***If it is not your time to move, it can still be your time to love where you live. Enjoy the home you have on purpose.***

There is a kind of wealth nobody posts on Instagram. It is knowing which floorboard creaks, which window catches the morning, and exactly how long the coffee takes to feel like Saturday.

People will sell you luxury as the next address. A bigger kitchen. A better zip code. A fresh start with better light. And sometimes that really is the right move. I help people make it, and I fight hard for them when I do.

But just as often, the best decision is to stay right where you are, on purpose. Plant the garden. Learn your neighbors' names. Let your house become a home the slow way, because that part only comes with time.

This is for anybody standing in their kitchen wondering if the answer is a different house somewhere else. Start here instead: what would this home feel like if it really fit the life you are living right now?

And if staying is not right for you? If the schools, the drive, or this season of life has really changed, then move. Move clear, not guilty. Page 40 walks you through doing it well. Either way, make your decision from a peaceful place. That is how I want my clients to live, here in Atlanta.

Staying, when staying is what fits your life, is its own kind of luxury. Sometimes it is falling in love with your own street all over again. I will always tell you the truth about that, even when the truth is: wait.

*Courtne Gamble*

METRO ATLANTA LUXURY REAL ESTATE



A quiet corner, made for slower light.

***"A home you can afford, in a place you love, lived in on purpose. To me, that is the whole luxury."***

### STAYING WELL, IN THREE MOVES

**01** **Fix the Friction.** Write down the five little things that bother you every day. Most of them cost less to fix than you think, and a lot of the joy of staying is hiding on that list.

**02** **Claim One Room.** Make one room truly yours. One room you love can carry the whole house while you take your time with the rest.

**03** **Use Your Street.** Walk your street in the evening light. People do not fall in love with square footage. They fall in love with Tuesdays.

FROM MY PRACTICE

# A Rule Is Not Real Until It Is Built Into the Process



Most people set rules with AI the way they set intentions. They say it once, in a chat, and expect it to hold.

It does not hold. The rule slips, and you end up going around and around, fixing the same thing and getting mad at the AI.

I learned this running my own business.

***A rule held in memory gets you a good intention. A rule built into the process gets you a brief, a job, and a gate that stops the work when the rule is broken.***

My practice runs on a trained AI system. **Twenty-one specialist seats**, each with a named job, directed by one person and held to a standard every day.

Staffed as people, that same coverage would group into a lean team at $205,000 to $300,000 a year, salaries only. I run it as a system I direct, with no staff.

If you are carrying your whole week yourself, this is where the first piece gets built. That first piece is a workflow where your rules live inside the work itself, so your standard holds on the days you are not watching.

## The Lesson Underneath All of It

## The AI Leverage Intensive

**$750.** Private ninety minutes on Zoom, one on one. One trained workflow, built live on your business, plus the documented starter system sheet. Paid in full at booking.

*Courtne Gamble*

METRO ATLANTA LUXURY REAL ESTATE

**go.courtnetheagent.com/intensive**

CG

# ATLANTA
## STRATEGICALLY

THE METRO ATLANTA LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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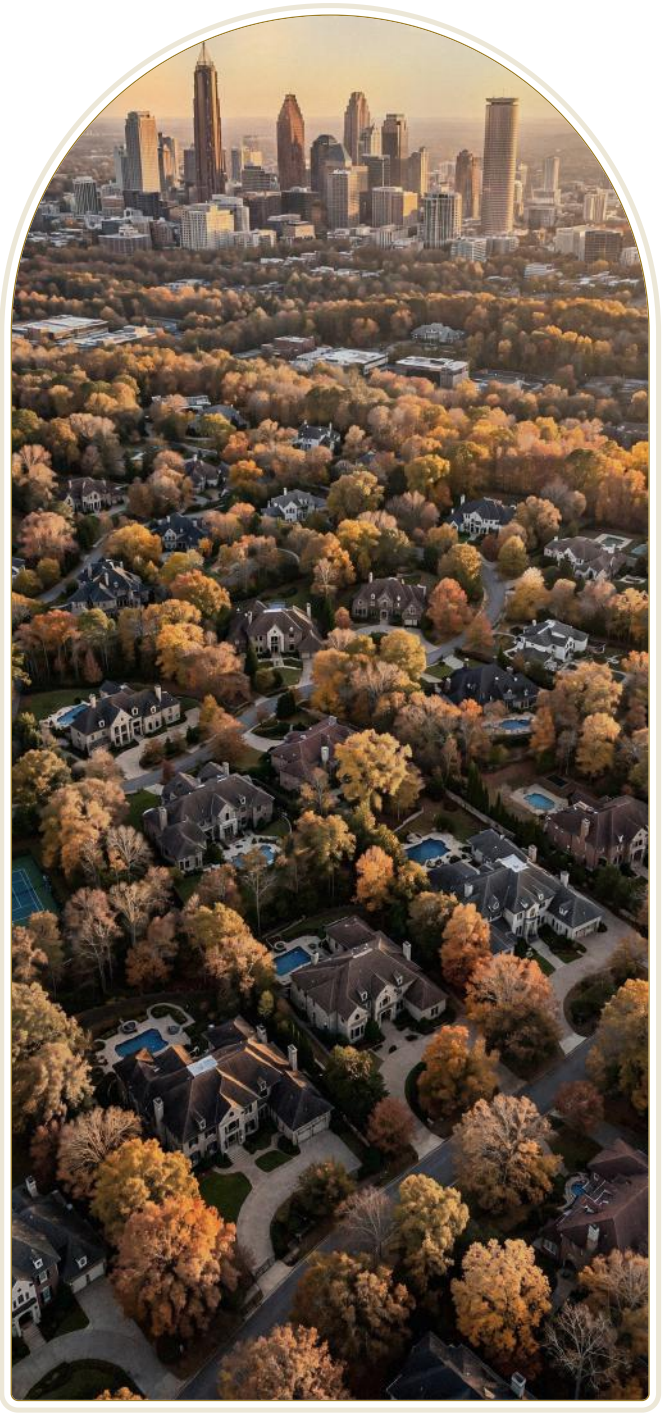
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# Neighborhoods That Feel Like Home

You are buying a whole life, so much more than rooms. You are buying your mornings, your drive, and the place where your people gather. Start with the life you want to live.

***On the next page are five different Atlantas, and each one is a different daily life. Read for the life first. The houses will sort themselves out after that.***



BUCKHEAD, RISING OUT OF THE TREES.

# Five Atlantas

***Five different daily lives, each with its own kind of luxury.***

## Buckhead

Atlanta's polished front porch. Grand homes, garden streets, Phipps and Lenox for luxury shopping, and Buckhead Village for dinner that turns into a stroll.

***"Dinner that turns into a stroll."***

BEST FOR: PRESENCE, PRIVACY, AND EVERY SERVICE CLOSE AT HAND.

## Milton and Alpharetta

Space to breathe, top schools, and equestrian calm twenty minutes from city energy.

***"Equestrian calm, twenty minutes from city energy."***

BEST FOR: GROWING FAMILIES WHO WANT LAND, QUIET, AND FRIDAY-NIGHT COMMUNITY.

## Midtown

Piedmont Park as your backyard, the High Museum and Symphony down the street, and the BeltLine Eastside Trail for golden-hour miles.

***"Golden-hour miles, culture on foot."***

BEST FOR: LOCK-AND-LEAVE LIVING WITH CULTURE ON FOOT.

## Virginia-Highland and Inman Park

Porches, bungalows, and dinner you can walk to.

***"Porches, bungalows, and dinner you can walk to."***

BEST FOR: SHADE TREES AND UNHURRIED EVENINGS.

## Decatur and the Eastside

A town square people truly love, excellent schools, and streets that glow in the fall.

***"A square people love, and streets that glow in the fall."***

BEST FOR: FAMILIES WHO WANT VILLAGE EASE INSIDE THE PERIMETER.



The BeltLine Eastside Trail, toward Midtown.



An intown street in November.

A NOTE FROM ME

***"Price it right, and the market rewards you first. Beautiful and honest beats beautiful and hopeful, every time."***

THE WEEKDAY TEST

Visit a neighborhood at 10 a.m. on an ordinary weekday. Catch it in passing, on your way to an appointment, at whatever random time the day gives you. Groceries, traffic, quiet, light. If the weekday works, the house can too.



*She built the firm that*

# Protects

*what families build.*

*"We are helping people build wealth, protect their investments, and create opportunities for the next generation."*

— IN HER OWN WORDS

## TIFFANI HAWES, ESQ.

*Owner of The Hawes Law Firm, LLC*

IN CONVERSATION WITH COURTNE GAMBLE · STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE ADVISOR

*She has watched too many families learn this the hard way. So when I asked her what every family needs in place, before they need it, she did not hesitate.*

# An estate plan, *without question.*

— TIFFANI HAWES, ESQ.




"As an attorney, I've seen how much confusion and unnecessary stress families experience when someone passes away without having their affairs in order. People work their entire lives to acquire homes, investments, and other assets, but sometimes never take the necessary steps to make sure those things are protected and passed down according to their wishes."

*It is the same counsel she gives every family who sits down with her firm:*

## Not just for the wealthy

*"If you own a home, have children, or have anything you've worked hard to build, you need to have those conversations."*

## Protection is part of building

*"Building wealth is important, but protecting it and knowing how it will transfer to the next generation is just as important."*

***Twenty years, one standard*** *"Every transaction matters, regardless of the price point."*

# What the rooms have taught her

*She sits in rooms where families finally have the conversations they have been avoiding for years. I asked her what she hears there, and what it has changed in her own life.*

What I've learned is that so many families avoid difficult conversations because they assume they have more time. But beyond the financial side, I've also learned that time is something you can't get back."

## ON PROTECTING HER *Peace*

*"It's taught me that success means very little if you don't have the peace to enjoy it. I've learned that* ***everything*** *does not require my immediate attention, every problem is not mine to solve, and every opportunity is not meant for me."*

— TIFFANI HAWES, ESQ.

*"Boundaries don't make you less ambitious. They allow you to sustain your ambition."*



*And she is quick to say the firm was never hers alone:*

*"People see my name on the building, but there are so many individuals who have poured their time, knowledge, energy, and commitment into making this firm what it is."*

*"A real estate closing might be routine for us, but for the person sitting across the table, it could represent years of sacrifice, their first investment, a fresh start, or a dream they've worked their entire life to achieve."*

*It is how she sees the work. It is also how she talks about this city, and about what she is building next.*

## Her Atlanta, *her next*

"My Atlanta is really about the people and the experiences. It's also the Atlanta where you can be ambitious, entrepreneurial, and unapologetic about wanting more for yourself and your family. Atlanta isn't just where I've built my business. It's where I've built so much of my life."

*And under all of it, the thing she returned to most: family.*

"For years, I was focused on building a successful law firm. Now, I'm thinking more about building something that has an impact beyond me. I'm also thinking about legacy differently: not just what I can leave financially to my children, but what I can teach them about work ethic, ownership, discipline, and creating opportunities for themselves."

*"I don't believe you ever have to stop reinventing yourself."*
— TIFFANI HAWES, ESQ.

# The Atlanta Table: Fall Dining

***Fall is a good season to eat out in Atlanta. These are the rooms I recommend, for the big nights and for the tables that feel like home.***



ATLAS SETS A ROOM THE WAY IT SETS A MENU, QUIETLY AND WITH CONFIDENCE.

### FOR THE BIG NIGHT

**Atlas, Buckhead.** The tasting menu room inside The St. Regis. French cooking with a Southern heart, and service that remembers your name. The room is low and golden, the courses come out quietly, and yes, the cheese cart is worth it.

**Omakase Table, Buckhead.** Twenty courses at a quiet counter. Warm rice, cold fish, and the chef's knife never misses a beat. Book ahead. You will be glad you did.

**Mujo, West Midtown.** Atlanta's Michelin-starred omakase. A handful of seats in a very quiet room, and seafood worth planning your month around. Some courses come to the table still smelling of charcoal.

### FOR THE TABLE THAT FEELS LIKE HOME

**Lazy Betty, Midtown.** Big, ambitious cooking, served with real warmth. The plates come out bright and generous, and the room laughs a little louder than most fine dining rooms do. The date night everybody recommends, for good reason.

**Chops Lobster Bar, Buckhead.** Celebrations and power dinners since 1989: dark wood upstairs, and a steak with a proper crust. Downstairs at the Lobster Bar, it is iced shellfish and sushi. This place earned its name.

**Miller Union, West Midtown.** Farm-to-table the way it should be done. Order the farm egg in celery cream. It is warm, silky, and gone too fast. Get the grilled bread for every last bit of the sauce.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

# The Atlanta Table, Continued

HOW FALL TASTES IN ATLANTA

The first cool night on a patio, something roasted on your plate, and a table shared with people you love. That is fall in Atlanta. It is a good season to try somewhere new, or to go back to a place that always takes care of you.



THE RESERVATION TEACH

For fall weekends, book the special-occasion room two to three weeks out, and the neighborhood table the week of. Ask for the quiet corner when you book, not when you arrive, and put the celebration in the reservation notes. Restaurants take good care of guests they know are celebrating.

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NEW AND NOTABLE

**Mastro's Ocean Club, Downtown.** In the old CNN Center building, opening November 6, with seafood towers and big steaks, live music nightly, and windows looking out over Centennial Olympic Park.

COURTNE'S REVIEW

***"I was overly impressed with the quality of food, of course, but above all the quality of service and the ambiance."***

FROM THE PREVIEW, NOVEMBER 5




THE SUSHI STATION, PREVIEW NIGHT

# Quiet Luxury at Home

*Quiet luxury is a feeling, not a price tag, and it is built on calm, not cost.*

## 01 One Brave Color

Pick one rich color (forest, espresso, oxblood) and let everything else in the room support it. Holding back a little is what makes it look expensive.

## 02 Layer the Light

Overhead light for tasks, lamps for faces, candles for the feeling. Three heights of light, and any room feels done on purpose.

## 03 Touch Counts

Wool, linen, wood, stone. If it feels good in your hand, it will feel good in the room. In the fall, texture is what makes a room feel warm.



SET THE FALL TABLE: AMBER GLASS, LINEN, AND FOOD THAT BRINGS PEOPLE CLOSE.



LAYERS, LIGHT, AND ROOM TO BREATHE.

EXCERPT · FOR SELLERS

One staging tip from me: style the gathering room first. A buyer will forgive a small bedroom. They will not forgive a dining room that does not invite them to sit down.

And while you are selling, you still live there. You should still want to live in it and love it, not feel like it is a model home you cannot enjoy. That matters.

*Courtne Gamble*

# Seasonal Living: The November Home Edit

*Ninety minutes, five resets, and your home will feel cared for heading into the holidays.*

**1** **Welcome the Light**

Wash windows inside and out. Swap tired bulbs for warm 2700K. November light does half the staging for you.

**2** **Make the Entry Honest**

Clear the bench, add a real plant, check the porch light. First impressions start at the curb, not the kitchen.

**3** **Service the Cozy**

Chimney sweep booked? Furnace filter fresh? Do it now, in November, instead of during the first cold snap, when everybody else is calling too.

**4** **Layer One Room Deeply**

A throw, a cushion, a low lamp, something that smells like cedar or fig. One room you really love changes how the whole house feels.

**5** **Gather on Purpose**

Put two dates on the calendar now: one dinner, one slow porch morning. A home gets happier when it hosts people.



A KITCHEN THAT WORKS HARD AND GATHERS WELL.

EXCERPT · FOR BUYERS

Do this edit in the home you are in now. Notice what still does not fit, even after everything is clean, warm, and layered. That gap is honest information. It is your real must-have list. Carry it with you when you start looking, and let it guide you.

*Courtne Gamble*



WHAT'S IN FOR FALL

# The Warm House *in & out*

FIVE TELLS · ONE TOUR

*What luxury looks like this season, and how to spot it on the next tour.*

BY COURTNE GAMBLE · STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE ADVISOR



The all-white kitchen had a good run. It is over. What replaced it is warmer, softer, and much more interesting to live in. A tour moves fast: in the front door, through the rooms, and out again, sometimes in twenty minutes. A trained eye makes those minutes count. Five things tell the truth about a house, in the order the eye meets them: the wood, the stone, the walls, the metals, and the ceiling overhead. Learn to read those five, and the right house stops being a feeling. It becomes a fact.

THE TOUR — 01 WOOD · 02 STONE · 03 WALLS · 04 METALS · 05 CEILING

*The wood sets the temperature. The stone sets the tone.*

## 01 Start with the wood




White oak is holding strong, and walnut is moving in beside it. Warm cabinets. Warm floors. If a kitchen feels warm before a hand touches a thing, the wood is doing that. Read the tone first: warm wood glows under good light, where gray stain and gloss white sit flat. Then read the grain. Real wood shifts color from board to board. A printed pattern repeats, and once the eye learns the difference, it cannot unlearn it.

## 02 Stone is the art now




Quartzite is the counter of the season, and Taj Mahal is the name you will keep hearing. Soft veining runs through it like a river. The finish right now is honed and matte, never shiny.

# Run your hand across it.

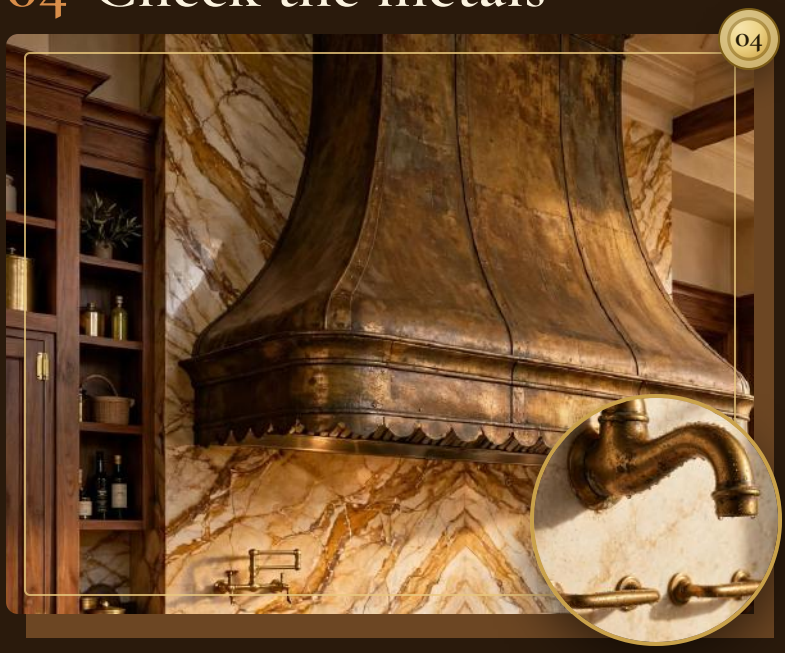
*Real luxury feels calm, not slick.*

## 03 Look at the walls

Limewash and plaster give a wall a soft, cloudy depth that flat paint cannot copy. Light moves across the surface through the day. Picture-frame molding is back, too. Quiet lines, and a plain wall feels tailored.



## 04 Check the metals



Unlacquered brass is the favorite this year, and it is allowed to age. It darkens a little over time, the way real things do. That darkening is not wear. It is a living finish, proof the metal is real. Mixed metals are on purpose now, not a mistake.

## 05 Now look up

Builders call the ceiling the fifth wall, and at this level the fifth wall gets designed, not just painted. Beams. Coffers. Tongue-and-groove wood. A treated ceiling is one of the clearest signs a home was built, not just assembled.

*The test takes ten seconds: stand in the room and look up.*

COURTNE GAMBLE · STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE ADVISOR · INTERIORS SHOWN ARE EDITORIAL ILLUSTRATIONS



*None of this is about chasing a trend. It is about training your eye, so when you walk into the right house, you know why it feels right.*

# The Perfect Fall Weekend

*Come for a weekend. Leave picturing a life here.*



ATLANTA AT GOLDEN HOUR.

IMAGE CREATED FOR ATLANTA STRATEGICALLY.

FRIDAY

## Start at Golden Hour

AFTERNOON

Check in and settle in.

GOLDEN HOUR

Walk the BeltLine Eastside Trail while the light turns gold.

EVENING

Dinner at Lazy Betty.

NIGHT

Get some rest. Saturday is full.

SATURDAY

## Art and Porches

MORNING

The High Museum.

LUNCH

Lunch in Virginia-Highland.

AFTERNOON

Wander Decatur Square.

EVENING

The Fox Theatre. Some rooms make an ordinary Saturday feel like an occasion, and that is one of them.

SUNDAY

## Slow and Sure

MORNING

Piedmont Park with coffee, and the skyline over the lake.

BRUNCH

Brunch in Midtown.

LATE MORNING

Drive through one neighborhood you could love, and notice how it feels at 10 in the morning. That feeling is telling you something true.

### WHAT STAYS WITH YOU

People come for a weekend and leave picturing a life here. A lot of that is this city itself, and what people here are like.

**THE CULTURE**

Museums in the morning, live music at night, and art worked into ordinary days.

**THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

People here are building things, and you can feel that energy on every block.

**THE COLLABORATION**

People look out for each other and share what they know. That spirit runs through this city.

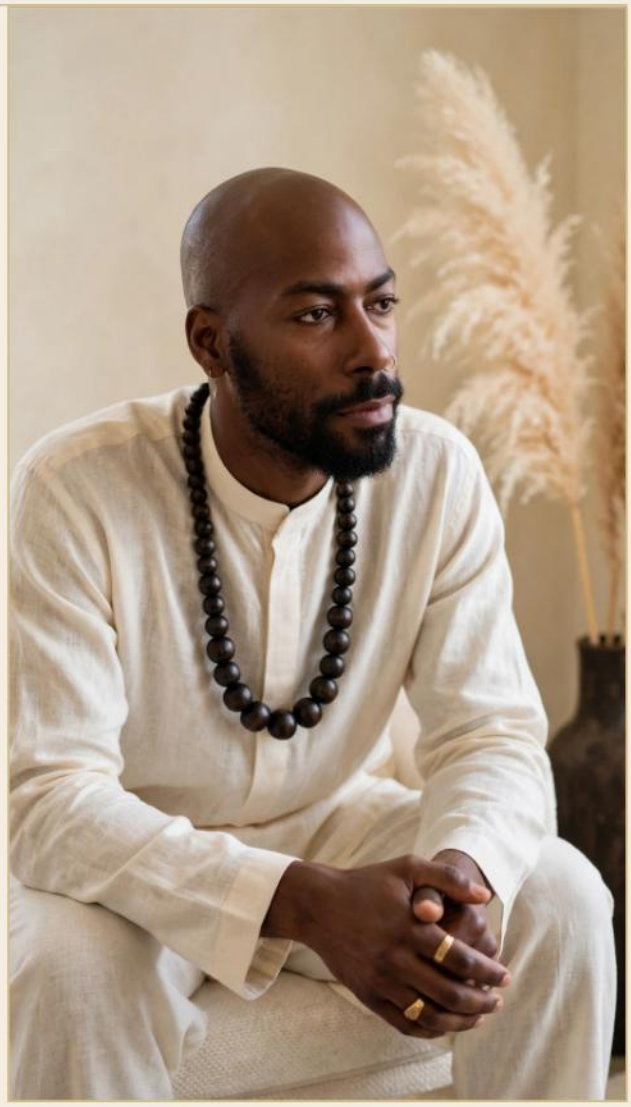
**THE DIVERSITY**

Every neighborhood brings its own people, food, and stories. There is room here for all of it.

# The Mind Under Pressure

## *Who do you talk to when you can't talk to anyone?*

For the last thirty years, Cornelius Gamble has been the thinking partner for people carrying a decision they cannot say out loud. He sits with owners and leaders, the ones everybody else calls, until the call is theirs again, and they get their mind back.



**CORNELIUS GAMBLE**

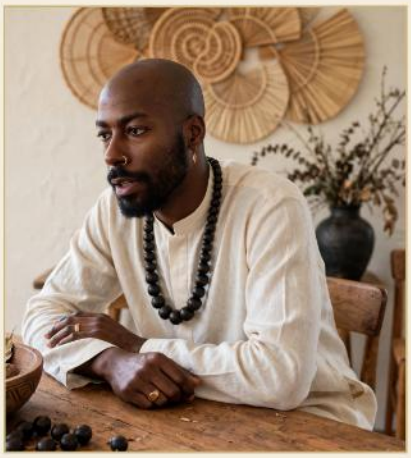
FOUNDER & THINKING PARTNER, PRESSURE TESTED GLOBAL

IN CONVERSATION WITH COURTNE GAMBLE · STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE ADVISOR

# You are the one everybody calls.

The weight is heavy. Payroll is on you. The business is on you. The family is on you. Your family looks to you to be steady, so you hold it in. Your significant other carries the home with you, so you do not put this weight on them.

Your business partner has a stake in your answer, so you edit yourself before you say it. Your peers would understand. They carry it too. But your standing is on the line in that circle, so you never say it plain. Your team comes to you for the answer. You cannot hand them the question you are carrying.



16 YRS
MARINE CORPS

**48** *in 100 owners find it hard to know who they can talk to.*

> *A founder put it this way: "You can't take it to your spouse. You can't take it to the family. You just got to hold that, cuz you the one they coming to."*

## First, I let him talk.

A man comes in carrying a lot. So I do not start with answers. I say, okay, let's talk about it. Tell me what's on your mind. We can start there.

Then I listen. I ask him questions. People try to speed up when the pressure is on. I learned in Iraq, slow is smooth, and smooth is fast. So we slow down. We get the thing plain.

I am not handing him an answer. The answer is already in him. He just has to hear it.

## You know this man.

Most days he carries it well. What he never gets is one place to be unfinished. To say the unpolished thing and have it cost him nothing.

I know that man because I have been that man, so I am not guessing what heavy feels like.

*-C. Gamble*

# The pressure that made me.



It started early. I saw what the weight did to the people who carried it, the ones responsible for everything and everybody else. Women and men, both. I watched the pressure build up on them, with nowhere for it to go. I watched it alter their character. When they could not get the pressure off, it started affecting their decisions. Then it snowballed.

The Marine Corps put real weight on top of that. Combat. What I saw over there, the families, the kids, I still carry that. And I sat with Marines in the hardest moments of their lives, as a suicide prevention officer. You do not sit in rooms like that and stay surface level.

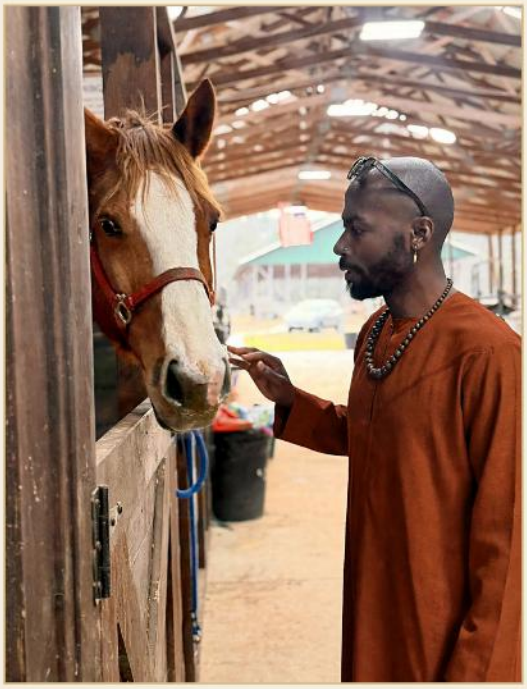
Then I came home and lost the identity I had built for sixteen years. I had to find out who I was without it. I can connect with people at a deep level because I have been in the deep places myself. I carried it. Some of it I still do.

> That is why I sit with men now, while the pressure can still come off, before it goes into their decisions.

# Before the decision.

It starts with the Clarity Check. Twelve questions. Just you and the truth. About ten minutes. The questions separate what actually happened from what a man has been assuming.

What a man walks away with is a plain look at himself. From there, we talk. Twenty minutes. We do not start with the decision. We start with the man.



## R YOU GOOD

Before any decision gets worked, I ask one question. R You Good. Red, yellow, green.

Red is pause. When a man catches the spike, he stops. He does not speak. He does not decide. He takes no action in red. The pause breaks the reaction before it becomes the decision.

Yellow is yield, and yellow is where we breathe. We do not just say breathe. The breath runs on a count. In for four. Out for six. The heart slows on the out breath.

Green is go. And by the time a man reaches green, his mind is clear enough to see straight.

## THE PRESSURE CODE

Every piece of work we do runs through the Pressure Code. It is the framework over all of it. Five moves, in order. Observe. Decide. Act. Review. Train.

# You get your mind back.



I really came to Atlanta because of the culture. To see so much of our people doing well, and that's the norm.

And these are carriers. People holding a family in one hand and a business in the other, keeping both standing.

I traveled the world in the Marine Corps. Our kids got to see a lot of different things, a lot of different places. But our culture at this level, we did not see that anywhere else. It was very important that they experience this. Not as a visit. As normal.

Because this is Black excellence as everyday life. Building, owning, leading, all around you. And truth be told, it inspired me too.

It felt good to be here. So we built here.

**You get your mind back. Quiet enough to think. Clear enough to decide. Steady enough to trust your own call, right in the middle of the pressure. You carry what is yours without it carrying you.**

THOUGHTSHIFT

*My complimentary e-book, Thoughtshift, is a short, simple read with tools you can put to work right away.*

— CORNELIUS GAMBLE, FOUNDER & THINKING PARTNER

# The October *Numbers*

*The market in plain words: homes priced at $1 million and up in Metro Atlanta, at the end of October.*

When a home costs this much, the loan is almost always a big one, called a jumbo loan. In October, that big loan cost less than a regular loan.

**A REGULAR LOAN**
Rate stays the same for 30 years

**7.24%**

Freddie Mac's weekly count, week of Oct 29, 2026

**A BIG LOAN (JUMBO)**
Rate stays the same for 30 years

**7.20%**

Mortgage Bankers Association weekly count, week ending Oct 30, 2026

*A regular loan is a loan of $832,750 or less. A jumbo loan is any loan bigger than that. In the same count that found the 7.20% big loan rate, the regular loan rate was 7.30%.*

HOW FAST HOMES SELL

## *Price a home right, and buyers still pay the full asking price.*

What buyers paid, out of every dollar the seller asked:

**SOLD IN THE FIRST WEEK:** Buyers paid the full asking price, and on average a little more on top.

**SOLD IN 8 TO 30 DAYS:** Buyers paid about 97 cents of every dollar asked.

**SOLD IN 31 TO 60 DAYS:** Buyers paid about 94 cents of every dollar asked.

**SOLD AFTER 61 DAYS OR MORE:** Buyers paid about 92 cents of every dollar asked.

What it means: the longer a home sits for sale, the less it sells for. Time is what costs a seller money, not the market.

*The exact numbers, as averages against the first asking price: first week, 100.2% of the asking price. 8 to 30 days, 97.0% of it. 31 to 60 days, 94.0% of it. 61 days or more, 92.3% of it. These numbers come from 3,727 homes that sold for $1 million or more in the twelve months ending September 2026. That is 7.7% more homes sold at this level than the year before. Source: FMLS sales records, shared in the Richardson Report, Oct 30, 2026.*

HOW MANY HOMES ARE FOR SALE

## 4.7 months

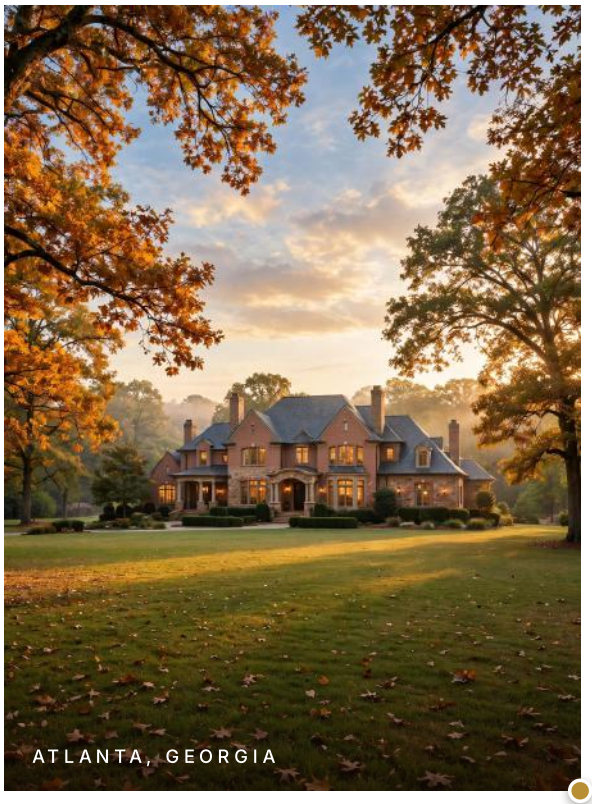
of homes for sale at $1 million and up, end of September 2026. What it means: if no new homes came up for sale, it would take about 4.7 months to sell every home on the market, at the speed homes are selling now. For homes under $2 million, sellers still have the stronger hand.

## Close to a year

of homes for sale at $3 million and up. What it means: at the speed homes are selling now, it would take close to a year to sell them all. Almost half of these homes, 46 out of every 100, have been waiting for a buyer for four months or more. At this level, buyers have the stronger hand.

The middle price for a home sold above $1 million was $1.327 million in July 2026. Half of those homes sold for more than that, and half sold for less. That middle price is up 1.1% from the year before (FMLS). And 32 out of every 100 homes listed at $1 million or more have lowered their asking price. The first number is an opening, not a verdict.

WHERE THESE NUMBERS COME FROM. Loan rates: Freddie Mac's weekly count, week of Oct 29, 2026, and the Mortgage Bankers Association's weekly count, week ending Oct 30, 2026. How fast homes sell, and how many are for sale: FMLS sales records for homes at $1 million and up, shared in the Richardson Report, Oct 30, 2026. The middle price: FMLS Market Intel report, July 2026.




# Beyond the A

## *When a Life Moves Between Two Cities*

***"Some moves do not fit inside one map."***

A family sells in Atlanta and buys outside Washington. An executive takes the role in Maryland and keeps a home here. A couple decides the next chapter is written in a different city, and suddenly the biggest transaction of their lives has to happen twice, in two markets, on one timeline, without dropping either end.

Most people try to run a move like that with one agent stretched across both ends, or two strangers who have never spoken. Both ways cost money. The house here sells a month after the house there closes. The movers come before the funds do. A deadline in one state quietly eats the deposit in the other.

Here is how the move is supposed to work.

**First,** the two ends are planned as one transaction. The closing here is not a date, it is the funding for the closing there, so the sequence gets built backwards from the day the family needs to sleep in the new home. School start dates, lease overlaps, bridge options, rent-backs: all of it goes on one calendar that both agents can see.



**Second,** there is a trusted professional standing in each city. Not a name off a search page. Someone whose work is known, whose communication is known, whose standard has been watched up close. In the Washington and Maryland corridor, that person in my professional life is Christian Givens, a realtor I count as a friend in this industry and a referral partner I trust with my own clients. When one of my households is headed that way, his is the name I give, because I know how he carries people, and he knows the same about me when his are headed south.

**Third,** the client tells their story once. A two-city move already asks a family to pack up a life. It should not also ask them to re-explain their finances, their fears, and their non-negotiables to a new stranger every two hundred miles. The agent on the sending end hands over the whole picture, warmly and completely, so the receiving end starts where the relationship already is.

I tell my Atlanta clients this plainly: your move does not end at the state line, and neither does my responsibility for it. What I cannot do for you in another market, I make sure is done by someone I would trust with my own family. That is the difference between a referral and a handoff. **A referral is a name. A handoff is a person, briefed, expecting you, and ready.**

Atlanta will always be home base for my work. But our side of this city is full of people whose lives reach beyond it, and a magazine and a practice that serve them have to reach too. Beyond the A is not a departure. It is the same standard, carried into the next city, by people who hold it the same way.

*Courtne Gamble*

METRO ATLANTA LUXURY REAL ESTATE



# The Calm Behind the *Closing*

***"What most people don't see is the constant communication, the attention to detail, and the problems we catch before they become bigger issues. A smooth closing doesn't happen by accident. It's the result of being proactive, knowing your contracts, and making sure nothing falls through the cracks."***

**NIKEISHA JAKES**

*Founder & Owner | Harmony Transaction Solutions*

***"Sometimes the most valuable thing we do isn't what happens at the closing table. It's what we prevent from happening before anyone gets there."***

## HER STANDARD



"My standard really comes from something simple: the Golden Rule. Treat people the way you would want to be treated."

"I often say that I want Harmony Transaction Solutions to be the Chick-fil-A of real estate transaction coordination. Not because we're trying to be a fast-food restaurant, of course, but because of the level of customer service, consistency, and care people associate with that brand."

"To me, excellence isn't about doing something extraordinary once. It's about doing the ordinary things exceptionally well, every single time."

## WHAT THE BEST AGENTS DO

"The best agents understand the value of having a true partner in their business. They communicate, trust the process, and allow us to do what they hired us to do."

"You hired us to take something off your plate, so let us take it off your plate. When everyone respects their role and communicates effectively, the entire transaction runs more smoothly."

***"If our name comes up in a room we're not in, I want the response to be simple: 'You need to work with Harmony. They just get it.'"***

*Nikeisha Jakes*

*Founder & Owner | Harmony Transaction Solutions*

*Quiet on the creek.*

LUXURY NOTES

# The $1M+ Tier

***Slower, pickier, and still moving.***



THE VIEW FROM UP HERE: THE CITY BELOW, AND A HIGH STANDARD ABOVE IT.

**$1.38M**
MEDIAN SALE PRICE AT THIS TIER

**4.1 mo**
INVENTORY AT THIS TIER

**38 days**
MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET

**97.1%**
OF ASKING PRICE SELLERS RECEIVE

Sellers are getting 97.1% of their asking price. Price with discipline and you get paid. Reach too high, and the market corrects you quietly.

By price band, things are steady, not hot: $1M to $2M is up 4.2%, $2M to $3M is up 2.8%, and $3M and above is flat. Inventory is up about 18%, and only 22% of listings draw multiple offers, down from 40% two years ago. Buyers here are patient and specific. Sellers who price with discipline still get paid.

***"Price it right the first time. It is a much shorter conversation than explaining a cut later."***

*Courtne Gamble*

# GUIDANCE

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# Your leverage is real. Use it on terms.

***Fall buyers win on preparation and terms, not on rushing.***

1. **Get pre-approved** — When your numbers are verified, your offer comes across calm and believable.
2. **Price the payment** — If it works at today's rate, it works. A future refinance is a bonus, not a plan.
3. **Write your must-haves** — Three true needs, two nice-to-haves. Protect the list.
4. **Take the second look** — With homes at this tier taking a median of 38 days on the market, the right house will still be there in the daylight. Go back and look again.
5. **Negotiate terms** — Credits and rate help often beat a small price cut.
6. **Keep your protections** — Inspection and financing terms exist for a reason. Keep them.

***"Should you wait? If the home, the payment, and your life do not line up yet, then wait. Waiting is a strategy. It is not fear."***

THE ONE-MINUTE TEACH

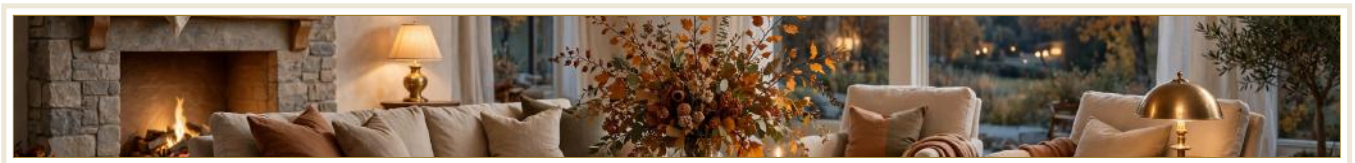
A seller credit aimed at your rate can move your monthly payment more than the same dollars off the price. Before you offer, have your lender price both, side by side.

*Courtne Gamble*

GUIDANCE · IF YOU'RE SELLING

# Fall sellers win best on smell and light.

November buyers are serious. They have choice, they have time, and they can tell in one scroll whether a home was prepared with care.



DINNER, DONE RIGHT: THE GATHERING ROOM LEADS EVERY FALL LISTING.

**Price Is the Invitation** — Your list price is your marketing plan. Price it with the recent sales near you, and you earn attention in week one, when attention is worth the most. Reach too high, and the market will quietly move on, even from a beautiful home.

**Light Sells the First Visit** — Clean windows. Warm bulbs. One green plant by the door. Fall light in Atlanta is a gift; let it in. Photograph on a bright morning, and lead with the room people will gather in.

**Smell Is the Welcome:** A buyer breathes a home before they really see it. Clean is the base, and a faint warmth over it says people live well here. Keep it light. A home that smells cared for invites a buyer to slow down, stay a little longer, and start picturing their own evenings in the room.

**Listen Early, Adjust Once** — Showing feedback is the market talking to you for free. If three buyers say the same thing, believe them. Adjust once, with confidence, and tell the home's story around what it does best.

**Use Help Wisely** — A rate buydown or a closing-cost credit can protect your price while making the buyer's payment work. It is often the cleanest way to meet in the middle.

***"The market pays for the home you have, not the price you wish it carried."***

***Thinking of listing before year-end? Start with a pricing conversation, not a paint chart. I will bring the nearby sales and a straight opinion.***

*Courtne Gamble*

# The End-of-Year Window

***"Waiting is not losing. Buying before you are ready is."***

The quiet months tell the truth, and they reward people who are ready. Sellers who list in November and December mean it. Fewer buyers compete. Talks stay calm.

If you are ready, this is a real window. If you are not ready yet, use these months to get ready: your credit, your paperwork, your down payment, and a clear list of what you must have.

EXCERPT · DID YOU KNOW

Fewer homes come up for sale in December than in any other month. Yet in a typical year, December sales come in higher than November's. Quiet does not mean empty. It is where ready buyers and serious sellers meet.



A SUITE MADE FOR SLOW EVENINGS.

*Courtne Gamble*

DEPARTMENT

# Counsel Corner

***Questions I hear every week, answered straight.***



**How do I know I am not overpaying?** — We look at sales within about a half mile in the last 90 days. Your lender and the appraiser use that same yardstick, so we price with it from day one.

**Sell first or buy first?** — For most of my clients: sell first. You know your cash, you carry one payment, and you shop from strength instead of hope.

**What if prices dip after I buy?** — Buy for the life you will actually live there, in a home you can afford no matter what the headlines say. A home you bought for your real life, your regular Tuesdays, will ride out the cycles just fine.

**What makes fall special for buyers?** — Serious sellers, calmer tours, and time to negotiate terms with care. If you are prepared, fall works in your favor.

**Do I really need an agent?** — In this market, yes. Price, terms, and calm advice are where the real money gets saved or lost.

***Bring me your real question, even the one that feels too small. Straight answers are the whole job.***

*Courtne Gamble*

DEPARTMENT · REFERENCE

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# Words Worth Knowing

*Plain English for contract day. No jargon at my table.*

**APPRAISAL**
An independent estimate of value, ordered by your lender.

**APPRAISAL GAP**
When the appraisal comes in below your contract price, and the question of who covers the difference.

**CLOSING COSTS**
Fees and prepaid items due at closing, beyond your down payment.

**SELLER CONCESSIONS**
Money the seller puts toward your costs or your rate.

**CONTINGENCY**
A protection in the contract: a condition that must be met to proceed.

**DAYS ON MARKET**
How long a home sits listed before it goes under contract.

**DOWN PAYMENT**
The cash you bring at closing. More down means a smaller loan and a smaller payment.

**EARNEST MONEY**
Your good-faith deposit. Serious, and usually applied at closing.

**EQUITY**
The part of the home you truly own: what it is worth, minus what you still owe.

**ESCROW**
A neutral holding account until all conditions are met.

**HOME INSPECTION**
A professional look at the home's systems and structure, done before you fully commit. This is one of your protections.

**PRE-APPROVAL**
Your lender's verified yes, based on your real documents. Get it before we tour.

**RATE BUYDOWN**
Paying upfront, sometimes with seller help, to lower your rate.

**SALE-TO-LIST RATIO**
Sale price divided by list price. Over 100% means over asking.

---

*Save this page. Bring it to our consultation, and mark the three words you want me to walk through with your numbers. That is a great way to start.*

*Looking for a place, a table, or an idea instead of a term? The index on page 45 finds everything in this issue.*

# Index

*Every place, table, and idea in this issue, and where to find it.*


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Editorial illustrations appear throughout this issue and were created for Atlanta Strategically.



# Courtne Gamble

METRO ATLANTA LUXURY REAL ESTATE

BOOK A CONSULTATION
go.courtnetheagent.com/connect

*Thank you for reading this first issue with me. I am so glad you are here.*

*Every issue of Atlanta Strategically ends with a note from my mother. Her words have steadied me through every season of my life, and I wanted her voice to have the last word. For her first note, she writes about beginning again, and I cannot think of a better place for us to start.*

# Love, Mom

When I was a girl, my grandmother told me that her one wish was for me to become whomever and whatever I wanted to be. She also said that if a version of me didn't fit, I shouldn't be afraid to reinvent myself. For a long time, I had no idea who I wanted to be, and I didn't realize that becoming myself would mean changing many times throughout my life.

When I was young, books were my escape and my guide. They helped me learn about people and places before I saw them firsthand. As I grew up, they gave me ideas to ponder as I found my way. Later, joining the military took me far from home, where I met new people and saw places I never expected. However, instead of discovering who I was, I felt more lost than ever. Then, some difficult life experiences taught me important lessons, changed my perspective, and helped me see not only who I was but also who I could become.

One of the greatest lessons is knowing that starting over doesn't mean escaping, running away, or moving somewhere new. I've learned that new beginnings are less about where I am located physically and more about where I am positioned spiritually. New beginnings come from shifts in focus that bring me closer to what I truly want and to who I'm created, called, and destined to be. Reinventing myself also requires something deeper: a shift that challenges me to look at myself honestly and let go of what no longer serves my best interests. To start fresh, I have to shed unnecessary weights that hold me back and make space for what matters most. Now that I am more in tune with myself, I don't need as many drastic changes to readjust my compass, but I still need almost daily tweaks.

After 61 years, I finally know what I want to be: the best version of myself. With each new discovery, interest, and insight, I see I can always improve, and I'm not afraid to start over whenever needed. Even though my grandmother has passed away, I hope she knows I'm working every day to fulfill her wish for me - even though it will take a lifetime.




*Coach Carolyn.*

CAROLYN THORNTON NELSON

CG

# ATLANTA
## STRATEGICALLY

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