

BUSINESS OF HOME

TRADE TALES | OCT 3, 2025 | 

Do you prefer new builds or historic renovations?



By *Aidan Taylor*

Choosing between a new-construction project and a historic renovation can be a tough one, as each comes with a host of pros and cons. This week, we asked nine design pros—Assel Baimakhan, Ali Henrie, Aria Jahanshahi, Abigail Kahan, Erica Leader, Jenny Magdol, Olga Malyev, Steffie Oehm and Micaela Quinton—whether they prefer to work on a new-build home or one steeped in history.



Aria Jahanshahi Courtesy of Opa Architecture

COLLECTIVE ACTION

“Though our work spans both, we have found that renovations often yield the most surprising and rewarding design opportunities. Our strongest projects emerge from a full and ongoing dialogue—collaborations not only with our clients but also with the contractors and craftspeople who bring the work to life. In historic renovations, the existing space itself becomes an active participant in that dialogue. Original details, proportions and materials are not only preserved, but also carefully highlighted, reframed and responded to through new design interventions. This interplay allows a project to tell a richer, layered story that feels both contemporary and timeless. While new construction can be exciting, it rarely offers the same nuance as weaving new work into the fabric of an existing place.” —*Aria*

Jahanshahi, Opa Architecture, New York