Renovation is one of the biggest investments made by a homeowner. The calculation of cost versus value extracted is constantly examined for reassurance that the project is worth the time, energy and cost.

All renovations have an objective, usually to increase enjoyment of the home. The primary reason behind renovating is incorporating features that enhance the amount of light, space and beauty, which leads many homeowners to consider adding in French doors.

French doors have an aesthetic appeal that achieves an elegant, timeless look inside or outside the home.

Born in the Renaissance Period, French doors were first introduced as windows that reached the floor. Renaissance architecture focused on symmetry and proportion, with a heavy emphasis on light, thus creating the necessity for glass panes. This new approach to doors helped bring more natural light into the home, which was especially useful in an era before electricity.

Today French doors remain a popular renovation choice in American homes for adding brightness, ventilation and elegance. In addition, there is a romantic association with French doors that can boost a home’s resale value.

To ensure the renovation pays off, it is fundamental to research the best way to incorporate French doors in your home.
Did You Know?

The French door style has become so popular that it has made its way beyond patio doors to garages and even refrigerators.

A French door is formally defined as a door that has glass panes for most of its length and usually comes in a pair.

Idea 1: Conversion of a window to a French door.

Have you ever considered if a window in the living room might be better as a door? It can do wonders to open up a small space. Converting a window to a French door creates a convenient and stylish entryway, especially in older homes, which may not have another door besides the front entrance.

If you have an underused outdoor area, the French doors provide accessibility to make it a garden or open area for entertaining.

“Inside/outside dining is something we often design for,” says Design-Build firm isARK studio. “Here in Austin the weather is great so there are only a few months out of the year that you don’t want to be outside. French doors allow for you to easily make that extension.”

Idea 2: Replace regular doors with French doors inside the home.

The French door style has become so popular that it has made its way beyond patio doors to other areas of the home, such as garages and refrigerators. Recently, the French door wall oven was identified as a top trend at the 2014 Kitchen and Bath Industry Show.

Instead of regular doors, elevate the look and feel of a room with interior French doors. French doors add more character than regular interior doors while offering the function desired. Spaces with the best opportunity to include French doors for an instantaneous “upgrade” are the master bathroom and the balcony. French doors also create a welcoming entry to the home office or formal dining room. Tall French doors in high ceilings add a dramatic effect.

“Master suites, balconies, cabanas and secondary entries can all benefit from a full lite French door,” says Design-Build firm isARK studio. “Any space that would benefit from an integrated inside to outside room would be well suited for the installation of French doors.”
Idea 3: Pair doors with transom windows and sidelights to bring in more light and style to the room.

Architects and designers often combine windows and doors together to create a distinct effect. Doors and windows that are integrated well in the room are beautiful to look at, almost like pieces of art on the wall.

In addition to windows, transom and side lights are complementary supporting elements for visual emphasis of the patio door. Transom windows provide additional ventilation while maintaining security due to their smaller size. Side lights, usually vertical, are also narrow in design and used to bring in additional light. For example, take a look at a pair of French doors with grids. Then consider adding an arched transom on top. The soft shape of the arch accents the grids’ sharper geometrics.

For a less elaborate design, valence grids on top of the doors might suit your taste. Generally, the simpler the design, the more it draws the eye to the exterior views the window or door offer.

If you choose to use door shades, carry the same shade to windows in the room to create a cohesive look.

Idea 4: A series of French doors in a wall.

A way to truly make a statement of panoramic views is to put in a series of French doors in a wall. This design calls attention to the outside through the allure of French doors that now act as both doors functionally and a set of windows visually.

To accommodate tight spaces that might not have adequate room for the in-swing and out-swing operation, consider French sliding doors. A French sliding door is a sliding door with wider panels around the glass to give the appearance of a traditional French hinged door.

Did You Know?

When French doors were first invented, they were referred to as French windows.
Idea 5: Personalize the French doors to your home’s style

When undertaking a renovation project, try not to let price dictate choice or fall in love with a style that does not deliver on your functional needs. Instead, learn about all the options available to personalize the French doors to match your home’s style and your personal comfort. In the process, evaluate the payoff for the investment.

With the continuous development of innovative hardware and glass glazing, you may be pleasantly surprised by the options available. Insulated glass can replace the need to purchase door treatments so you can enjoy the look of your French doors without covering them with long, heavy drapes. If you desire sound control, double pane glass can reduce noise by up to 20 percent better than single pane glass.

Choose your door by material before setting your heart on a color. Certain frame materials, such as vinyl, have fewer color options. Wood frames typically have the most color options because wood is easier to stain.

Designer Linda Evans recommends, “Start by selecting which door type suits your particular circumstance. Then, exterior color, grid pattern, and finally hardware options most complementary to your home.”

Once you have chosen your door by material and operation style, it is time to have fun with décor options.

Use a single frame color for all windows and doors to create a coherent, integrated design. This is particularly effective in a room with many corners or holds an irregular shape.

Add subtle definition to the windows and doors by painting the walls a slightly lighter or darker shade. A neutral frame color encourages the eye to look beyond it while a contrast can keep the vision within the boundaries of the interior space. This is especially useful if you are trying to distract from unattractive outside views.

Grid options and hardware should be chosen to reflect the architectural style of your home.

“For a contemporary style I might suggest non grid doors with a standard door handle in satin nickel,” Linda Evans recommends. “Feeling more traditional? Add vintage grids and oil rubbed bronze hardware.”

Sources:
Mpelemba Lifestyle Network, SFGate Home Guides, Journal of Light Construction