

feature

SUSTAINABLE *style*

BY JIM FOX // PHOTOGRAPHY BY SANDY MACKAY



Natural colour choices for this galley kitchen give it a timeless appeal that's bright and inviting. **LEFT:** Classic dining furniture adds a splash of colour and gives the combined living-kitchen-dining area a sophisticated look.



TOP LEFT: A cathedral ceiling makes this cosy, traditional living room seem much larger. **TOP RIGHT:** The fridge and pantry are recessed into the back of the fireplace enclosure, which serves as a focal point tying the three spaces together. **RIGHT:** Mark and Steven enjoy a morning coffee in their kitchen.



Like so many people in this world, the most beautiful elements of this home are the ones you can't really see – that come from deep within; found in the structure, the land and the inclusion of nature in this case.

Architect Steven Dearlove and Interior Designer Mark Duncan of **Duncan+Dearlove Design Associates**, have designed this earth-friendly beauty in the rolling hills just outside Priceville, with the goal of eventually living off nature alone. "Our original intent was to build an off-grid, straw-bale house. Because of cost we had to give up on straw-bale construction but being off-grid is still a possibility for the future," says Dearlove.

With complete energy self-sufficiency just a short step away, these visionary homeowners have made an admirable green start from which all of us can learn.

Early on the homeowners teamed up with builder Ben Kazimier of Kazimier Custom Homes in Mansfield. The fine working relationship that developed allowed the owners and the general contractor to create an energy-efficient home that is both beautiful and green.

This innovative custom-designed home, enlisting a myriad of energy-

conserving approaches, is set at the end of a winding gravel road that runs through picturesque cedars, pines and firs. The subtle grey board and batten exterior with its white window trim suits the country home's terrain and matches the three-car garage housing Dearlove's classic car collection.

"I've designed this home in my mind several times in the past," he says. "Often you design a home to suit a particular site. Here, it was half and half. We chose a site to suit the house we had in mind. There are plenty of flat properties in the area but we wanted one with an interesting topography including fields, forest and a pond."

The 56-acre property offers a panoramic view extending far across the surrounding rolling hills. Aside from providing visual interest for the open-concept living room and kitchen, the glazing on the south side of the home allows for passive solar heat to warm the home in winter while solar shading on the same side provides cooling in the summer. *Continued on page 24*

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Duncan's interior design complements the exterior of the home perfectly. "The overall feeling we wanted to create was quiet and calm – not trendy." Duncan's nod to classic design can be seen in details from the natural light streaming from overhead skylights to the chocolate slate tiles cladding the central wood-burning fireplace. The hearth separates the galley kitchen from the great room and anchors the open space on the main floor.

The same air of serenity extends to the unique recessed fridge and pantry at the rear of the fireplace enclosure. The colour of the fireplace repeats itself in the Moss shade of a parallel section of the Biscotti-coloured kitchen cabinetry by Fischer Construction. Taupe quartz countertops, sand walls, and white trim on doors and windows also contribute to the dominant tranquil mood Duncan intended.

"Good design is timeless," states Duncan. "The hard finishes should be neutral. You can add colour and switch things up down the road if you want."

Asked about the classic furniture pieces that grace the setting, Duncan says simply, "You have to start with the things you love and build from there." *Continued on page 26*

Breakfast is served in the main-floor master bedroom, which offers a spectacular view of the rolling hills outside.

TOP RIGHT: A spare room upstairs features a sloped ceiling, built using SIPs to make the home more energy efficient.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Like the rest of the house, the upstairs bathroom is a bright and tranquil space to relax.




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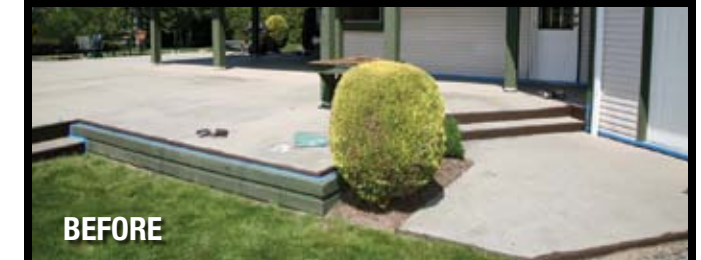
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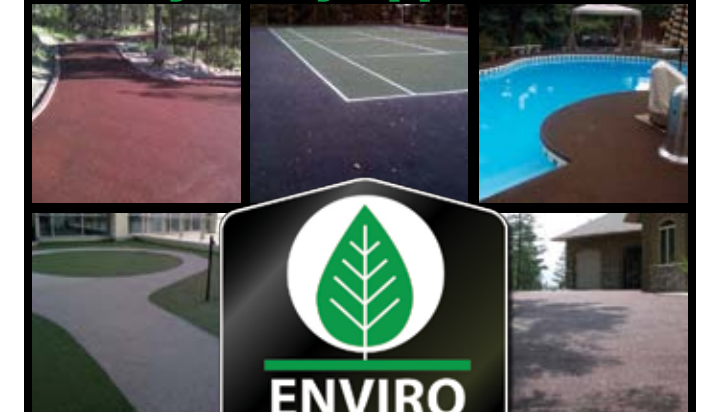
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The lower level boasts a walkout to the backyard and doubles as Mark's office space. **RIGHT:** An antique jukebox is set against an exposed cement wall that helps hold the passive solar heat the home captures. **BOTTOM:** Mark and Steven's eco-friendly home aglow at night.



In developing his initial design for the home, Dearlove followed Duncan's advice. "Commencing architectural school in 1979, I was greatly impacted by the North American energy crisis. I vividly remember a magazine cover at the time asking: 'Will We Freeze In The Dark?' That was the beginning of my eco-consciousness," he says. "During the 90s I was struck by the waste involved in consumer packaging. Until now, I haven't had a chance to apply my conservation ideas. With the completion of this house, I'm proud to say energy conservation actually works."

Dearlove believes others could benefit from his experience. "One of my long-term goals is to build homes with low-energy consumption; homes that would appeal to regular homeowners."

This house incorporates a number of cutting edge elements that make it an elegant example of eco-sustainability. It began in January 2010. Dearlove stood, facing south, extended his arm to point to where the home should be built to take full advantage of the sun's passive solar heat. It continued with the insulation of walls and ceilings to a rating of R40, double the amount required for walls and 30 per cent more for ceilings, by code. SIPs (structural insulated panels) were used in the fabrication of the home's roof, which allows for a towering 20-foot cathedral ceiling on the main floor with ceiling fans to help distribute the heat.

The cost of SIPs is higher than that of materials for a comparable framed structure, but a well-built home using SIPs will have a tighter building envelope with higher insulating properties, which results in fewer drafts and lower energy consumption. To offset the home's tight energy envelope, four earth tubes running underground to the home from a distance of more than 100 feet, are used as a passive way to allow for fresh air exchange in all seasons without the need for mechanical means or any electrical load.

Here, propane does not just power the outdoor barbecue. It provides energy for the boiler, which heats water for domestic use as well as hot water for the in-floor heating system. Clearview Concrete installed the



three-inch thick, floating concrete floors on the main level and a four-inch thick slab on the lower level. The depth creates more mass to hold the passive solar heat that the home captures. The positive result is a total energy cost that is half of what it took to power a previous home two-thirds the size of the present one.

Practical considerations aside, the home owes much of its appeal to the superb interior design elements that Duncan has incorporated. "First of all, Steve and I wanted the home to be sustainable. We tried to keep the price under control by balancing our needs with our wants," says Duncan.

Dearlove and Duncan demonstrate that although building green demands plenty of forethought and planning, it's a very rewarding experience, which is obtainable for many home builders. **OH**



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