



Contemporary Green Built

Casual Elegance with Superb Style

by Bette Boersma

Located on an inland lake near Traverse City, this issue's featured home in the Northern region is a spectacular blend of green building and superb style.

Designer Stephanie Visser of California, formerly of Michigan, had worked with the homeowners on previous projects. Working with them on this home required several commutes back to Michigan. For one thing, the innovative green design of the home demanded many architectural decisions up front.

The poured concrete walls, for example, had to incorporate all plumbing and electrical elements. Tex tubing runs through the concrete floors to circulate hot water heat, made ultra-efficient because of the R-factor of the concrete. An external wood burning furnace supplies supplemental heat for the water.

"For so many reasons, I am proud of this home," says Visser. "When the house is finally complete, it will be an amazing home. I really believe in the whole process of green building. Not only is it a really big movement in home design, but some of my family members have suf-

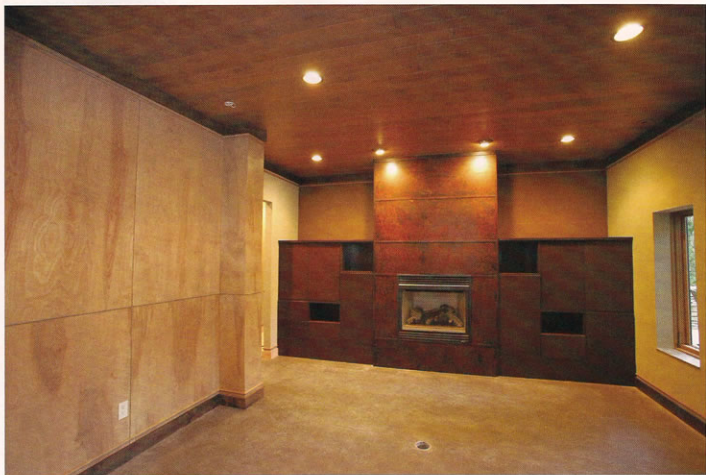
fered from allergies to the toxic chemicals in fabrics and other building materials."

Not only does this home's concrete construction method preserve trees, the finish of the interior walls is integral to the concrete. In other words, this home uses very little drywall for finishing interior walls.

One of the distinctive themes of this home is bringing the outside in. The natural beauty of the setting flows indoors through large framed windows that act as framed art on the walls. In addition, all light fixtures are recessed so nothing interrupts the visual sense of being outdoors.

"My approach to home design is to treat it like 3-D art," says Visser. "Every piece is selected for its aesthetics and function. Like a painting, everything has a purpose and is part of the whole. One more stroke would be too much, and one less, it's not complete."

The neutral stucco and stone exterior helps the home to fit its environment in a style reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright. All the outdoor light fixtures are finished in raw steel, which matches the finish



Fireplace surround is a hand pounded metal.

“One of the distinctive themes of this home is bringing the outside in”

on the indoor fireplace. A seamless flow has been created by bringing the materials and finishes used outside into the interior of the home.

The house is amazingly well landscaped, including a waterfall and a stream running under the front walk. Lilac slate steps are cantilevered to look like they are floating. “We bring the outside in with the same lilac slate in the foyer, just inside the beautiful double front door.” The outside entrance has a cathedral ceiling supported by columns.



An efficient and contemporary laundry room.



Caesar stone countertops and a glass tile back splash add subtle elegance to the kitchen.



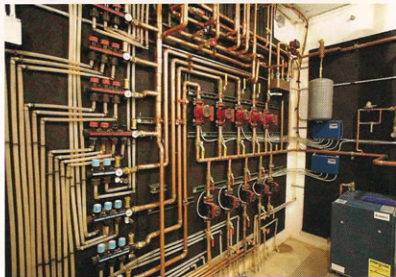
Upscale kitchen with quartz countertops and Sub Zero fridge add to the punctuality

From the slate floor entry, you can look directly across to the beautiful fireplace clad in raw steel. To the right a three-season room is incorporated into the space, again bringing the outside in. The kitchen to the left has a glass tile back splash, Caesar stone counter tops, and cabinets made of rift cut oak in two tones of chocolate and natural. This cabinet style and these two tones carry through out the house.

Colors in the house rotate around a warm yellow gold and terra cotta, counter balanced by cool taupe and black, with a little bit of soft lake green. "To arrive at the palette, we studied the surroundings, using color to again bring the outside in. The property overlooks an inland lake, and the whole house feels like it sprung up from the environment. The style is contemporary and refined, yet casually appropriate for the Northern Michigan area," says Visser.

Off the living room is a hall to the den and master suite exuding a Zen-like quiet with neutral shades and French doors to the patio. The master bath has large tile, a freestanding tub and glass shower, and of course a large walk-in master closet. Materials and design are classic and timeless rather than trendy.

An innovative open wood stair and beam system with stainless steel



In floor heating system for fuel efficiency



railing and with glass landing. Light from wall sconces shines through the glass stairs. The upper level over the master suite houses two guest bedrooms, a guest bath and a small den. One of the bedrooms features a Kirei board (a green product made from sorghum grass) built in "bed wall."

Over the garage is a self-contained office space with cut stone floor and balcony over the back yard.

The lower level provides recreation and hobby space for the owner, an amateur table-tennis enthusiast. Besides the game area, a lounge allows players a break. The space also includes a bathroom, a wine cellar and a special acoustically designed sound room/study. □

TOP: A landscaped waterfall adds to the outdoor charm.

LEFT: The backyard also received special attention with unique details.



SUBCONTRACTORS PROUDLY SUPPORTING CIRCLE G CUSTOM BUILDERS-PHILIP GOMEZ

Custom Doors & Trim: **ZIEGLER WOODWORKS, INC.**
Home Security: **E.P.S.**
Kitchen Cabinets: **KITCHEN DESIGN STUDIO**
Stone, Gravel: **KASSON SAND AND GRAVEL**
Landscape & Design: **LANDSCAPE LOGIC**
Fireplace Surround Kitchen Table Support:
NORTHERN IRON WORKS
Stucco Surfaces: **SURFACES**
Quarts Counter Tops: **TOP OF THE WORLD GRANITE**
Home & Interior Design: **VISSART**
Electrical Supply: **VOLTAGE ELECTRIC**

Circle G Custom Builders, LLC



Phillip Gomez started building at age 16 and has always been drawn to the construction industry. He studied law enforcement in college, but ultimately chose construction. He worked for two major construction companies for the better part of two decades before he started his own company, Circle G Custom Builders. Currently, in addition to his staff of eight, Circle G keeps two framing companies busy year-round, and works with a team of regular sub-

contractors. Circle G has also found ways to keep material costs down for clients and developers by forming relationships with sister supply companies.

The company does everything from custom homes and major remodels to decks and built-ins. Their expertise ranges from residential to commercial projects. "We often design custom built-ins in our shop to install on site," Gomez said.

"We rarely advertise. At least 95 percent of our business comes from word of mouth or referrals from our clients," he continued.

The company is very philanthropic and donates to several local organizations and sporting teams and an organization that supports families of active military personnel. When working with clients, Circle G first strives to listen to their desires and needs. Then matches their dreams to reality.

"Our goal is to pay attention and communicate, then finish the project on schedule and within budget," according to Circle G.

Circle G has known the project owner for many years and has done multiple projects for him. This history reflects the company's value of making every job the best it can be.

Another value the company works toward is building green. They choose products and materials that are environmentally less harmful to create a clean, healthy environment for their clients. For example, Hurd Windows use Guardian glass, one of the few glass products recognized by the American Cancer Society for its high SPF rating. Circle G Custom Builders also uses Fresh Aire paint, which does not emit volatile organic compounds or VOCs into the air. "And on the jobsites, we always recycle our waste," he adds.

Gomez definitely chose the right career path and his clients certainly have and will continue to benefit from the expertise he has garnered along the way.

For more information, contact Phillip Gomez at Circle G Custom Builders LLC 13955 South Lautner Rd, Traverse City, MI 49684
Email: www.circlegonstr@aol.com; Office phone: 231 944 1190.