



BUILDING A DREAM HOME THE JEANNETTE WAY

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Though Jeff and Roberta Jeannette do not think of themselves as environmental messiahs, their message to the residential architectural community is wholly “green.” The Jeannette lifestyle might impress some as an extreme green approach to living; it may, however, be a glimpse into the not-so-distant future—not only in Long Beach, but throughout the nation.

The couple met at the acclaimed architectural school at the University of Arizona, Tucson. Roberta had moved from Chicago—the child of artists. Jeff was in from the ritzy Newport Coast of The OC. That was in the mid-1990s.

The pair have been together ever since. Only now, the Jeannettes are a family of four—Griffin, 4, and Carter, 1. On Oct. 1, 2006, the Jeannettes moved into their desert-modern home, just 10 days before Carter was born.

Griffin and Carter may be leaving some of the lightest ecological footprints of any children in the city. That’s because the Jeannettes have created their Quincy Avenue home with passive solar energy in mind. So-called passive techniques use walls, windows, floors, and roofs, as well as exterior elements and landscaping, to control heat generated by solar emissions. Solar heating designs accumulate and store thermal energy from direct sunlight. “We are in a limited world,” says Jeff. “Resources are not forever,” adds Roberta.

A 1950s stucco box house once sat on the Belmont Heights lot where the Jeannettes now live, work, and play. But the old kit home—one that could be ordered from a Sears catalog and assembled on the spot—was not simply destroyed. Rather, it was deconstructed by The Reuse People, an organization that recycles building materials to the fullest extent possible, donating them to Habitat for Humanity. (Jeff is currently on The Reuse People advisory board.)

Made with concrete blocks and featuring a diamond-plate stairwell, the two-story, four-bedroom home is equipped with a rooftop panel array of photovoltaic solar conductors that, according to Jeff, “zero out electric bills.” The



house, Jeff explains, is made from "common materials, used differently." For example, blocks of concrete provide the walls and floors, while the carpet, as well as the frames and boxes that supply the ample kitchen cabinet space, consist of formaldehyde-free, recycled materials held together with toxin-free, uber-strong glue.

What's more, the 2,800-square-foot domicile has a three-car garage, a 450-square-foot architectural office, and a guest suite. Vertically sliding glass garage doors provide an outdoor ambiance, while cool winter days are mitigated by in-floor radiant heating, an embedded central heating system that utilizes heat conduction and radiant heat for indoor climate control, instead of the more common, convection-reliant, forced-air heating. The warmth actually emanates through circulated hot water flowing beneath the flooring.

Further, the house is landscaped with plants suitable to the arid coastal environment that defines the beach cities of Southern

California—vegetation that requires little water but is aesthetically pleasing. Flora such as clumping bamboo, flax plant, and horse-tail reed add beauty while requiring minimal water.

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Utilizing a design innovation known as "daylighting," the overall light of the surrounding sky is optimized and directed toward illuminating the interior spaces. Daylighting substantially reduces the costs associated with

electrical lighting, as well as the need for air-conditioning in rooms ordinarily heated by light bulbs or ballasts. With high-performance windows, insulated glass spacers and frames, and air-tight construction, a building envelope is created that prevents heat loss by up to 75 percent.

In order to control overheating, while also maintaining the warm temperatures throughout the interior after the sun sets, heavy-mass quarry tile and gypsum board are strategically applied within the Jeannette home. This allows for the absorption of solar energy, which slowly radiates back into the house as needed throughout a 24-hour period.

Jeff and Roberta are unquestionably "green," but not dogmatic. Their lifestyle is their advertisement.

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