

This Austin Home Goes Green

In renovating their 1926 residence, Michele Grieshaber and Michael Klug built sensibly and sensitively. BY GARY D. FORD



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

The Hyde Park nabe is a little Greener because of this home. David cuts grass with a push mower, and the family waters their yard and flowers from a rainwater harvesting system. For kitchen countertops and cabinets, they chose sustainable materials.



This new-old house blends in so well with Austin's historic, tree-lined neighborhood of Hyde Park. Its owner, Michele Grieshaber, especially loves her home's outdoor living space—the blue sky above it, the green around it you can see, and the Green in it that you can't.

The Green you can't see counts the most.

Several years ago, Michele fell in love with this 1926 bungalow when she relocated to Austin from London. Three years ago, she met and married Michael Klug, who moved in with sons Sam, 16, and David, 14, and a lovable old English cocker spaniel, Angus.

The newlyweds knew they needed more space, so they boldly stepped forth into a renovation project in their first year of marriage. To make their residence more livable, they thought up, out, and Green.

Five-Star Award Richard Morgan, Austin Energy's Green Building manager, helped with that "color" scheme. So did contractor William T. Moore and architect David Webber, who accomplished the task with alternative building materials and recycled vintage woods and hardware. They also enlarged the house while lowering its utility bills.

On a neighborhood Web site, Michele saw that the PBS series *This Old House* wanted to portray a restoration with Green elements. She offered her project for consideration and was selected.

Working around their jobs, Michele and Michael rolled up sleeves and sneezed sawdust with the construction and filming crews. After the final painting (a neighbor, Carol Cohen Burton of Constructive Arts, designed the color schemes) they were back in their reno-

vated home in time to watch themselves featured on the program in 2007.

Even more gratifying was earning the coveted five-star Green Building award from Austin Energy for their efforts.

Second Life for Leftover Lumber

The couple selected sustainable building materials instead of newly harvested wood, chose low-flow plumbing fixtures and low-energy lighting, and hung a ceiling fan in each room.

In working "up" they raised the roof just enough to install two upstairs bedrooms and a bath. They turned the second-floor landing, a pass-through space, into a study niche by adding a desk, bookshelves, and a plump chair perfect for reading a good novel.

Recycled longleaf pine rafters now serve as stair newel posts and handrails.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SARAH KERVER



Yellow pine from an old textile mill gleams as upstairs flooring.

Keeping Up With Two Times Adding more “out” to the house helps them save energy inside. Windows and doors of double-pane insulated glass, with a coating that keeps heat out, open to new decks upstairs and downstairs.

“For the first 300 days I lived here I would wake up and say, ‘Oh, blue sky.’ And then I stopped counting,” Michele says as she steps out onto the upstairs deck.

Now she counts the ways her family saves in a house that keeps up with two times: its faithfulness to its 1926 design and its pledge to keep its corner of Hyde Park a little Greener. ●



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