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## Green = gold

Burden home in Freeport is first in New England to achieve coveted rating

By Avery Yale Kamila, Lifestyle Editor

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Tim Greenway photo

This inviting kitchen and dining space caters to modern design sensibilities, while keeping the earth and the home's owners in mind. The cabinets were made without formaldehyde and the countertops are PaperStone, a recycled product that looks and feels like soapstone.

Go green, win gold. That's the lesson to be learned from the Freeport home of Jeremy and Lidija Burden.

The house won a gold certificate this month from the U.S. Green Building Council. Designed by Christopher Briley and built by Joshua Fedorka, the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design showcase home is not only award-winning, it also highlights an unmet need in the local real estate market.

The four-bedroom house (or more accurately a hole in the ground) was on the market for less than a week when the Burdens made an offer. Living in a Bath apartment above the family dental practice where Jeremy works, the couple had looked at many homes and subdivision lot packages, but they were having trouble finding a house with the health-conscious features they wanted.

"Everything we saw was just cookie-cutter, Home Depot, big boxes," Jeremy says, "and then this came along. An efficient, healthy home."

Jeremy says he looks for product performance before making a purchase. Until he and Lidija found Briley and Fedorka, and learned of the pair's past success with Harmony House (just up the street), they didn't know if a high-performance home could be found in the local real estate market.

"They sell fast for us," says Fedorka, who is currently building a similar house in Brunswick. "We're under \$600,000 for lot, land and house."

Since they built their first green spec home (without a buyer already lined-up) and then quickly sold it, Briley and Fedorka have seen demand heat up even more.

"We get phone calls now from people asking about green building," Fedorka says. "People are a lot more educated."

Their new home, which Jeremy and Lidija moved into last June, comes with two geothermal heat-pumps, a sunroom, a passive solar design and a super-insulated frame. As a result, the Burdens' electric bill (their only utility bill) is running less than \$200 a month this winter and costs about \$75 per month in the summer. The home is wired for solar panels, so someday it could cost nothing to run.

Even better: "We don't use any fossil fuels," says Lidija. "A lot of the people who came over in the summer said, 'Oh, close the door. The air conditioning is on.' But it's not."



Tim Greenway photo

Jeremy and Lidija Burden moved into their home in June.



Tim Greenway photo

Designed by Christopher Briley and built by Joshua Fedorka, who share a Yarmouth office, the Burden house is highly energy efficient, with two geothermal heat-pumps, a passive solar design and a super-insulated frame.

Because the home sports a tightly-sealed envelope and a large thermal mass (the tile in the sunroom and the granite in the massive fireplace), it stays warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Even during the muggiest weather this past August, the home's temperature never rose above 75 and the humidity stayed low.

While many of the home's health-promoting features are hidden from view (such as the heat-recovery air exchanger), it's inviting layout and pleasing interior design are on full display.

"The best thing is the flow of the house," Jeremy says. "There's no wasted space. The volume of this house feels big, but it's not."

You enter the home under a breezeway separating the garage from the living space (a deliberate design move made to keep petroleum fumes in the garage from seeping into the house). Here a graceful stairway winds upwards and the foyer gives way to the living room straight ahead and the kitchen around the corner.

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The home's sleek cooking space is open to the dining area and sunroom and separated from the living room only by the fireplace. The kitchen's white cabinetry is free of formaldehyde and the countertops feel like soapstone but are actually PaperStone (a durable mix of recycled paper and cashew resin). It's an eco-friendly product used again in the master bath to create a custom, double vanity for a narrow space.

Underfoot, the warmth of the radiant heat rises through the bamboo floors. This Asian feel is picked up by the dining room furniture made from mango wood, a sustainably-harvested tree that grows to maturity in just five years.

Lidija, who keeps an art studio upstairs in the future nursery, made the kitchen's upper cabinets dazzle with doors filled with glass dimpled by air bubbles. She also created the stained glass work in the wall between the dining room and the sunroom. It echoes the soothing, earth-toned colors Lidija selected for the home. (The paint, of course, emits fewer air pollutants than traditional paints.)

"There's so much light in this house," Lidija says, and it's true. Huge windows are everywhere on the south-facing walls and the sunroom floods the downstairs with light and views of snow-covered spruces. Because all you can see is trees, the windows aren't hidden by draperies.

"We're just tucked away enough," Lidija says. "And when you have a beautiful window why spoil it with curtains?"

And with such a natural setting, the Burdens also felt no desire to spoil it with a chemical-laden home.

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