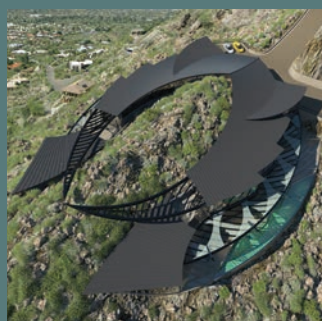
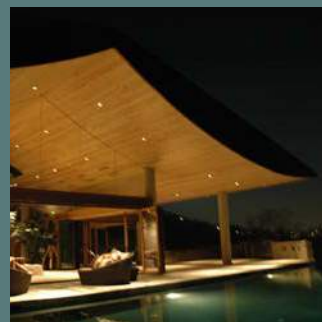


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Value in Sustainability - The Big Picture

By Jeremy Meek

The most exciting trend emerging among new homeowners is their desire to combine advanced “green” technology with exquisite design and quality workmanship. This trifecta is no longer the exception, but quickly becoming the norm. While many realize the tremendous value of such additive features, there is still one snag keeping this trend from really taking hold.

The upfront investment of building sustainably often becomes a deterrent for those unaware of the long-term benefits of owning a sustainable home, such as improved health, significant financial incentives, and overall lower utility costs. Homeowners who understand the real value of sustainability have learned to see the big picture. They realize that when such features are fully considered, the rewards could end up more than paying for the investment, proving that your sustainable home can be truly valuable in more ways than one.

Truth In Numbers

The value of a sustainable home begins with the most obvious – the direct impact to your health and our planet. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the average U.S. home emits a large portion of the nation’s carbon footprint, which is twice

as much carbon dioxide as the average passenger car. Additionally, residences use 74% of water in the United States each year. The U.S. Green Building Council also presented studies that found pollutants such as dust or gases being emitted from building materials are two to five times more prevalent indoors than outdoors. This is a serious concern for the well being of those inside your home, as traditional building practices don’t often take into account sustainable strategies that

The long-term rewards of owning a sustainable home could more than pay for your investment when designed and built properly.

could potentially eliminate these risks.

A Holistic Approach

To maximize the rewards of owning a sustainable luxury home is to create a system that refrains from using many resources in the first place. This means more than simply installing a row of solar panels or buying a piece of “green” equipment. Every decision in the process of building a home should help minimize the use of electricity, water and gas. Essentially, the design, construction, and operation of the house needs to be viewed from a systems approach. To fully optimize the efficiency of your home, employ an experienced team of professionals. The architect, builder, interior designer, and

engineering consultants, engaged over the course of the project, can guide you to build and maintain a high quality and sustainable home that achieves your lifestyle goals.

Big Incentives

According to the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (www.dsireusa.org) there are currently 48 incentives, special loans and tax credit programs in the state of Arizona developed to encourage energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives

within the home. Your design and construction team should be knowledgeable of these programs and be able to guide you through the planning, design, and construction process to optimize the sustainability of your home.

See The Big Picture

Don’t settle. Instead, see the bigger picture. A sustainably built home gives you the total package: an exquisitely designed residence that offers you significant returns throughout its entire life cycle. Focusing on the initial cost of owning a sustainable residence is the easiest way to settle for a home that is substandard in comparison to the more advanced homes available on the market. ■



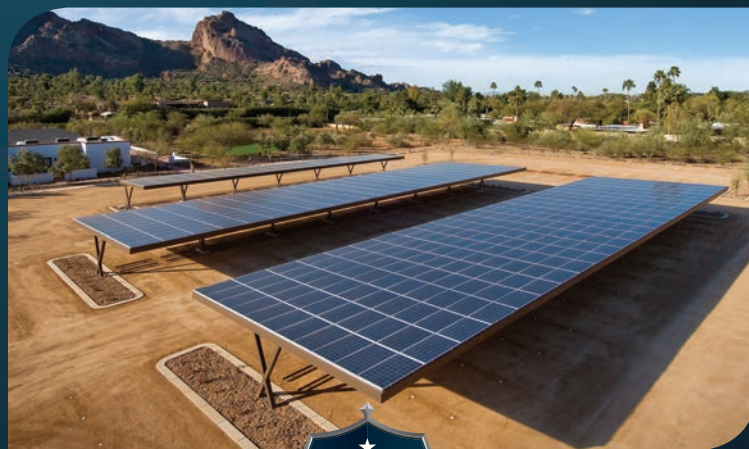
Jeremy Meek is the Sustainability Programs Manager at Desert Star Construction

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—Jerry Meek, *President*

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