

GREEN HOMES

A FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE LIVING



Marcus Larson/News-Register

Asparagus green walls and stainless steel fixtures brighten Tim Elliott and Lori Pillsbury's kitchen. Elliott, a professional chef, wanted an open space so he could visit with guests while cooking.

LIVING SMALL

Couple's custom house is 1,300 square feet of utilitarian charm

By **STARLA POINTER**
Of the News-Register

The house Tim Elliott and Lori Pillsbury built is small, compared to many new homes, but it has everything they need.

Room for themselves and their two dogs, a wiggly black Labrador retriever and a 200-pound English mastiff. Space for guests and storage. A wrap-around porch for outdoor living and priceless country views. Best of all, a green pedigree that makes the environmentally minded couple proud.

"Our budget was less than many homes built in cookie-cutter subdivisions, even including the land," Pillsbury said. "You may get a bigger house in a subdivision, but we have a custom-constructed, energy-efficient house with a great view."

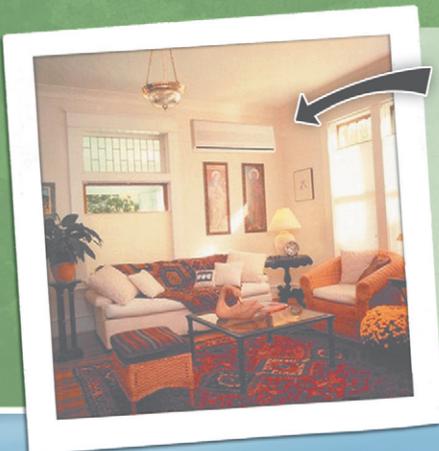
She and her husband knew they wanted to build their

See **SMALL**, E7

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Small

Continued from E6

own house when they moved to Oregon from Florida two years ago. They had fallen in love with the West Coast during a vacation

“We felt immediately welcomed here,” Pillsbury said. “We enjoyed Florida, but Oregon is much more laid-back and more environmentally minded.”

She works for the state Department of Environmental Quality. He is a former environmental scientist now serving as a chef at the Chehalem Springs Retirement Community in Newberg.

“Green is really important to us,” she said. That preference led them to their contractor, Cellar Ridge Custom Homes, which specializes in green construction and remodeling.

Cellar Ridge’s John Mead and Carson Benner helped them choose and modify house plans to fit onto their 1.3-acre site near Lafayette. The contractor was very open to incorporating materials and fixtures Elliott and Pillsbury discovered at Habitat for Humanity ReStore outlets and other supplies of recycled goods.

The master bath’s Jacuzzi tub was a ReStore find, for instance, as were the house’s ceiling fans, door handles, windows and exterior lighting fixtures. Other materials are reclaimed or aren’t usually used in residential construction, such as the professional chef’s toolbox that serves as a kitchen cabinet.

“Cellar Ridge worked with our strange ideas,” Elliott joked.

One of the couple’s stipulations was that the house be “not so big” — an unusual request for a contractor to hear, Benner said.

In the U.S., houses have grown bigger over the decades.

In the 1950s, new homes averaged about 300 square feet per occupant. Today, most new single-family res-

FAST FACTS

Green highlights of the Elliott-Pillsbury house:

- Most leftovers from the construction process, such as cardboard and metal scraps, were recycled rather than dumped in a landfill.
- Dual-flush toilets save water.
- Offset-stud exterior walls have blown-in polar blanket insulation for energy efficiency.
- Exposed concrete floors are durable and easy to clean, and have built-in radiant heating.
- CFL lighting throughout is energy efficient and user friendly.
- Passive solar orientation takes advantage of natural light, warmth and cooling breezes.
- Durable metal roofing is made with recycled materials.
- Many fixtures were reclaimed or purchased from Habitat for Humanity ReStore outlets.

idences feature nearly 1,000 square feet per occupant.

The Elliott-Pillsbury house encloses just over 1,300 square feet on two stories — relatively small by current standards, but still twice as big as the house the couple owned in Florida and laughably large compared to the boat on which Elliott once lived.

“We see a lot of young couples with an awful lot of house — more to clean, more to dust, more to heat,” Elliott said. “That’s not necessary for us.”

He and his wife make a concerted effort not to accumulate more possessions than they need. Before they left Florida, they sorted and purged what they could, and they’ve been very selective about what they’ve bought in Oregon.

See **HOMES**, E8



Marcus Larson/News-Register

Above: **Scissor trusses allowed the top floor to be opened up into one large room, which Elliott and Pillsbury use as a bedroom and office.** Below: **The couple are slowly and selectively furnishing their new house with special pieces, such as this dining table.**





Submitted photo

Workers installing the radiant floor system, a series of tubes that carry hot water within the concrete slab.

Workers install metal roofing made from partially recycled material.

Submitted photo



Homes

Continued from E7

"We ask, 'What are we gonna do with that?' before we buy anything," Elliott said.

There is one exception, though. "Except for shoes," Pillsbury said.

The couple originally considered building an A-frame. But lenders weren't keen on such a non-traditional dwelling, they said.

Instead, they modified a farmhouse design with a wrap-around porch. They enclosed part of the porch for a laundry and mud room, and used scissor trusses to open up the second floor into one big room, with an accompanying bathroom and closet.

"The scissor trusses gave us much more living space," Elliott said, describing how the bamboo-floored bedroom is large enough to hold Pillsbury's home office, too.

A woodstove in the living room provides heat for both levels. They installed wall heaters in the upstairs master bedroom to satisfy their lender, but rarely use them.

The ground floor also features radiant heat from hot water tubes buried in the concrete slab. The couple hasn't used that much yet either.

Elliott said the radiant floor system depends on a super-efficient water heater, which is electric. Once they install solar panels on the porch roof to produce some of their own electricity, he said, they will feel freer to run the water heater, and thus the radiant floor, more often.

A heat recovery system recirculates the air. The system, one of the green features, removes stale indoor air and uses it to preheat incoming fresh air. This keeps the heating system from working so hard, they said.

Eventually, they want to put in a gray water recovery system. They also have plans for a vegetable gar-



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From left to right: Jamie DeRoave-Lewis, Laura Rapp, Jody Purdy, Robin Marshall-Hubbard, Tonia Olson - Brokers



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"With all the decisions, we wanted a house that was very utilitarian, in which everything had a purpose. We kept use in mind and kept our eyes open throughout the construction."

Small

Continued from E8

den, where they can grow ingredients for Elliott's French provincial-style dishes.

"With all the decisions, we wanted a house that was very utilitarian, in which everything had a purpose. We kept use in mind and kept our eyes open throughout the construction," Elliott said.

About the only thing that's not strictly utilitarian is the palette of colors. The couple did the painting themselves, using no-VOC paint in bright hues.

The industrial-look kitchen is asparagus green. The master bath is the hue of Thompson seedless grapes. Fragrant clove, a brownish orange, marks the living room and bedroom, with

trim painted a color called "Cider Toddy."

Elliott and Pillsbury made the move in October, four months after commencing construction. And they love it.

As a chef, Elliott particularly likes the kitchen, which he designed with professional appliances, stainless steel counters, open shelving and a floor drain to ease cleanup of the stained concrete flooring. The kitchen is open to the rest of the downstairs area, so he can talk with guests while he's cooking.

Pillsbury loves many aspects of the house, including one that's not quite as public. "I really like the low-flow, dual-flush toilets," said Pillsbury, whose professional mission is water quality. "They were more expensive, but they really do use less water, and they're intuitive."



The Jacuzzi tub, a ReStore find, serves as a focal point in the master bathroom. A mosaic of river rock forms the trim.

Marcus Larson
News-Register

CALENDAR

Dec. 21

The McMinnville Garden Club will have a holiday luncheon from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the activity room of Hillside manor, with a talk by Barbara Blossom Ashmun titled "How I'm changing my garden and attitude in older age." Reservations are required by Tuesday, Dec. 15; e-mail pdsorensen@comcast.net or send \$15 with name and phone number to McMinnville Garden Club, P.O. Box 386, McMinnville, OR 97128. Information: www.mcminnville-gardenclub.org.

Feb. 12-14

Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District will hold its annual native plant sale Thursday through Saturday, at its offices on Southwest Second Street, McMinnville. For more information, call 503-472-6403.

Feb. 26, 27

The Yamhill County Master Gardeners will sell trees and shrubs donated by Oregon nurseries from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday and Saturday at the Yamhill County Fairgrounds, 2050 N.E. Lafayette Ave., McMinnville. Admission and parking are free. Proceeds are used for college scholarships and to support high school horticulture programs. For more information, contact Alan Wenner at 503-435-1131 or awenner@hotmail.com.



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