

The Bulletin

HOME

Home still is a work in progress for Bend family

By Katrina Hays
For The Bulletin

For Brad and Annette Adkins, getting there is more than half the fun.

The Adkinses recently built and moved into their home off of Polar Star Road in Bend. There are no kitchen cabinets yet, and no decks to soften the rather austere look of the exterior of the house, but the Adkinses, along with their two teenage sons, are content to work on their home and let it develop.

"It's a work in progress," says Annette.

The Adkins family moved to Central Oregon six years ago from Seattle.

Annette and Brad grew up in Bend, and were happy to bring their family back to the area.

While in Seattle, the Adkins family spent a great deal of time cruising the coastal waters around the San Juan Islands, often living aboard their 33-foot sailboat for weeks at a time. Having a family of four living in a sailboat taught them a lot about living in a small space, and using that space wisely.

See Home / E5



Melissa Jansson / The Bulletin
Brad Adkins designed this closet shoe rack.

COVER STORY

Family is doing most of the finishing work

Home

Continued from E1

When it came time to design their on-land home, both Brad and Annette knew they wanted something efficient, simple and beautiful.

"We didn't want a freak house, but we wanted it to be different," says Brad, 43.

The Adkinses say that they spent a year designing the house. They worked with local architect Cheryl Heinrichs, who helped them design a house that is clean-cut and elegant.

The lower level of the Adkins home is made of ECO-block construction. ECO-blocks are blocks or panels made of expanded polystyrene that are stacked to create exterior walls for buildings. Reinforcing bar is added and concrete is poured into the blocks to create a strong and energy-efficient structure.

This lower level provides a stable base for the timber frame construction that makes up the upper level of the house.

"We saved a lot of money by using ECO-block downstairs and timber upstairs," says Annette, 41.

The exterior of the home is angular in appearance. The stucco walls are painted a light gold, contrasting with deep, brick-red corrugated metal highlights. It is visually arresting, due to the mul-

ti-angled roofline and "pop-outs" that rescue it from being a plain-Jane square building. The main living area is 2,000 square feet.

The house was built to be a passive solar home. It has a large number of south-facing windows that soak up the heat.

"We knew we wanted a timber-frame house from the beginning," says Brad. "We liked the warmth that wood brings to a home."

The large exposed beams in the house make for an interesting contrast to the bold colors that the Adkinses painted the interior plaster walls.

"We love color," says Annette. "We wanted to bring the outside in with rocks and colors."

The walls of the home are an olive green-gold, with aubergine purple accent walls. The cement radiant-heat floor is inset with glass brick that allows light from the lower level rooms to glow upstairs. More glass brick windows are set into the walls. They were placed so that it looks as if glass beads are tumbling down the walls.

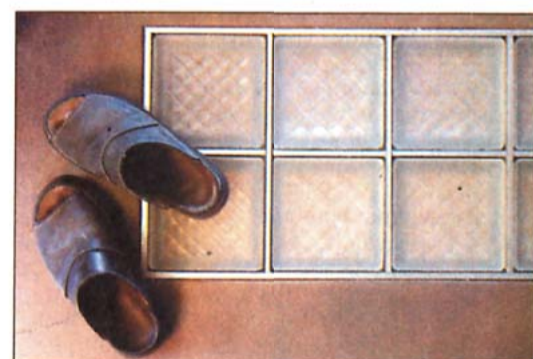
The unconventional construction materials that the Adkinses used allowed them creativity in deciding where they could put windows.

The upper story walls are made of SIP (structurally insulated foam panels). These panels interlock and are stuccoed on the outside and plastered on the inside. Unlike conventional frame building, the Adkinses did not have to frame in each window — they could put a window in wherever they wanted, and at whatever angle they chose.

"We really liked the freedom of working with the SIP," says Brad.

Rocks are set into the floor, creating a dry creek bed that meanders from the front door into the main living area. Larger lava rocks are set along walls, here and there. The plaster contains patterns of leaves and grasses — small details that give the home the airy, outside feeling that the Adkinses wanted.

It is an eclectic home, bringing together the warmth and Western feel of wood and the cool, Frank Lloyd Wright modern feel of high



Photos by Melissa Jansson / The Bulletin

Corrugated metal accents and angled pop-in windows, top, give the Adkins home an original look. The Adkins family, clockwise from lower left, Annette, dog Corey, 14, Brad and Dusty, 17, sit in their kitchen and living room. The family used innovative construction materials to build a unique, comfortable home.

walls, angles and open space.

Annette's craft room is a loft that hangs over the main room. Below it is the media room, very masculine and warm with deep purple walls.

Downstairs, the master bedroom and bath is small by modern standards, but simple and functional. Harkening back to the Adkinses' sailing roots, the sleeping room holds just the bed, while the bath tucks a great deal in a small space. The double-head

shower and sink are contained together in a glass-walled corner that is right next to the open closet. It is an efficient use of space that does not feel cramped.

The Adkinses did most of the finish work on the home themselves. "We come up with ideas of what we want for our home, and Brad figures out a way to do it. It's very cool," says Annette.

An example of this lies in the master bathroom closet. The Adkinses wanted a closet system to

hold clothes and shoes, so Brad designed what he calls "functional art" out of copper tubing and maple plywood. The result is a beautiful and unusual set of shelves and hooks.

"I love to play with conventional materials and wrangle them into a unique look and function," says Brad.

This patient wrangling is present all over the house. The Adkinses were unable to find a cabinetmaker for their kitchen cabi-

nets who would work to their specifications, so Brad will build the kitchen cabinets himself. Some day there will be decks outside. This will all come in time, and that is just fine with them.

"I love my house — it's more fun anticipating what it's going to be, and growing into that," says Annette.

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Brad Adkins shaves in this sink, left, installed within the master bath shower.