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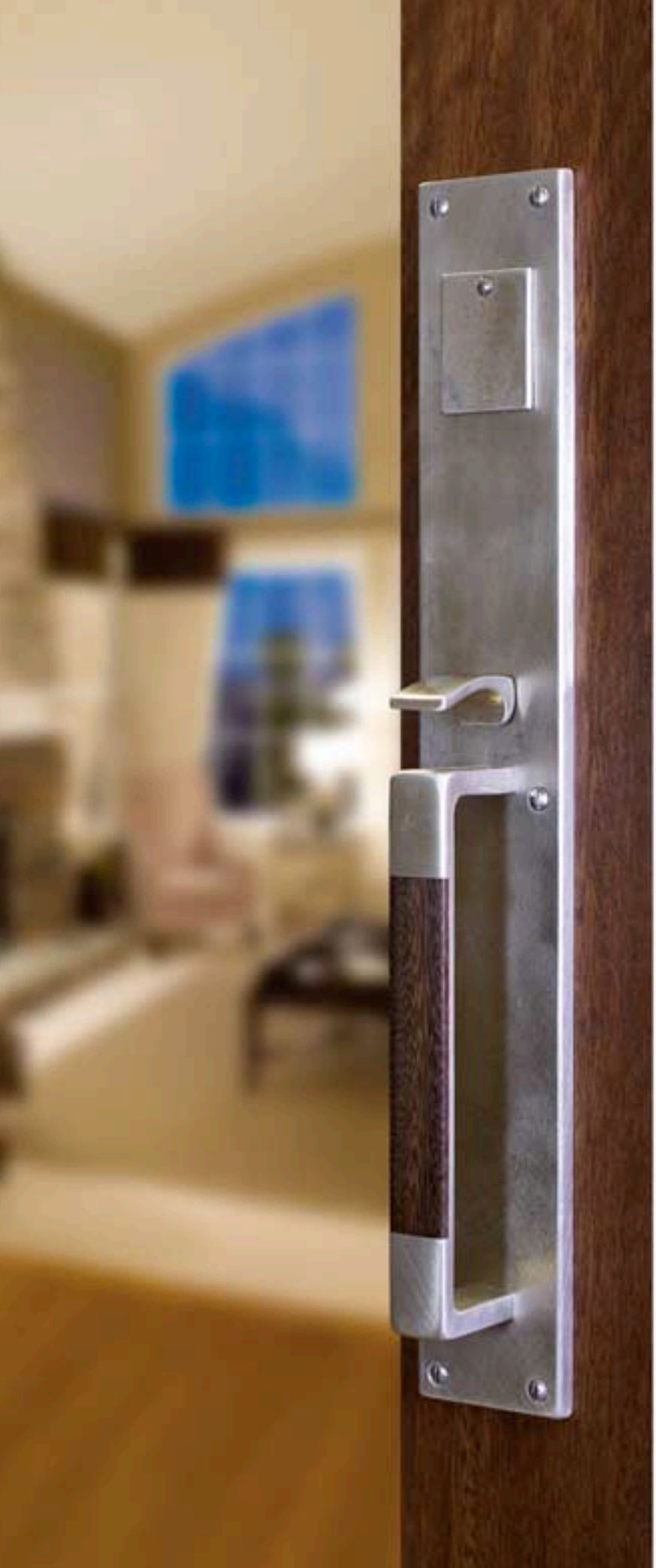

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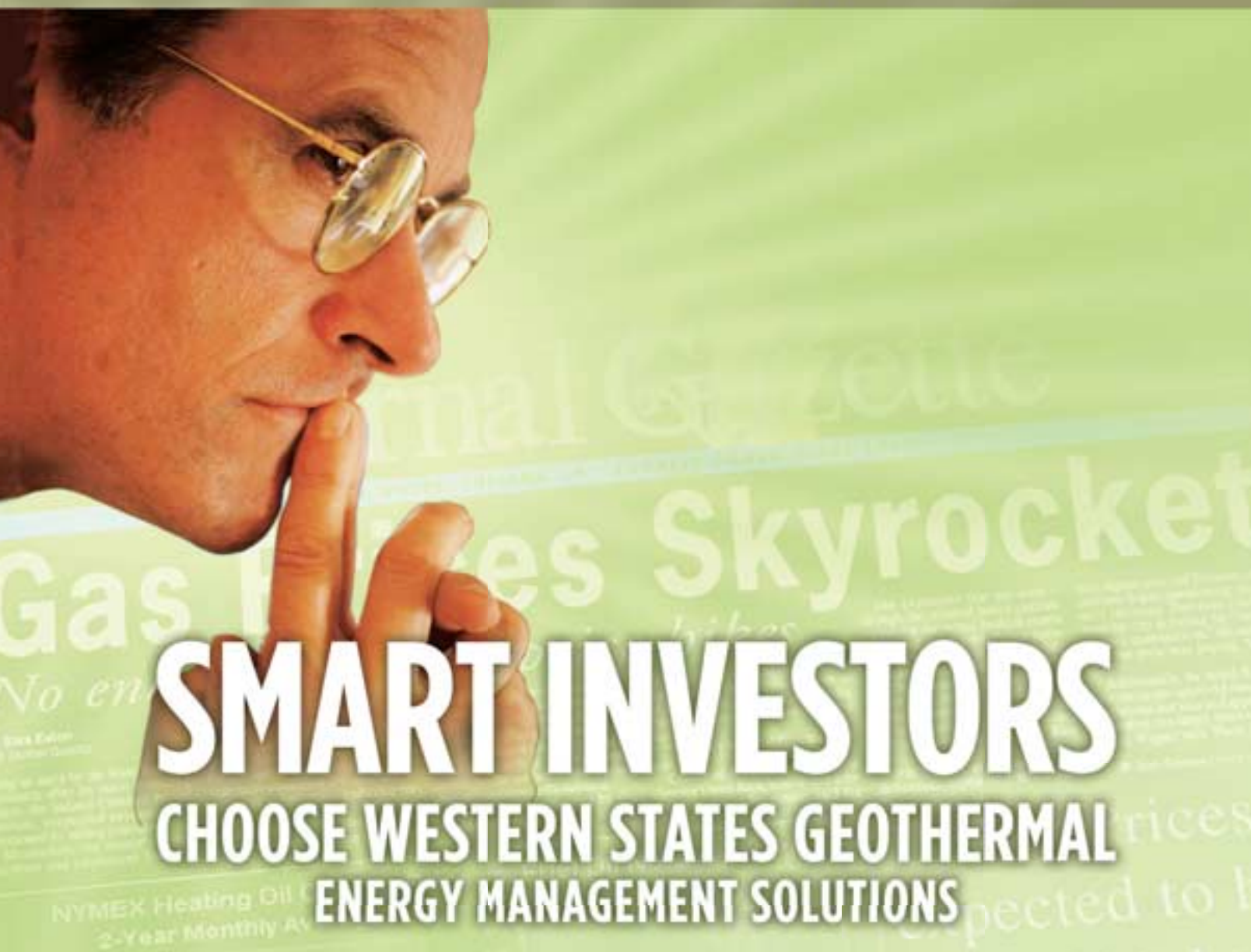

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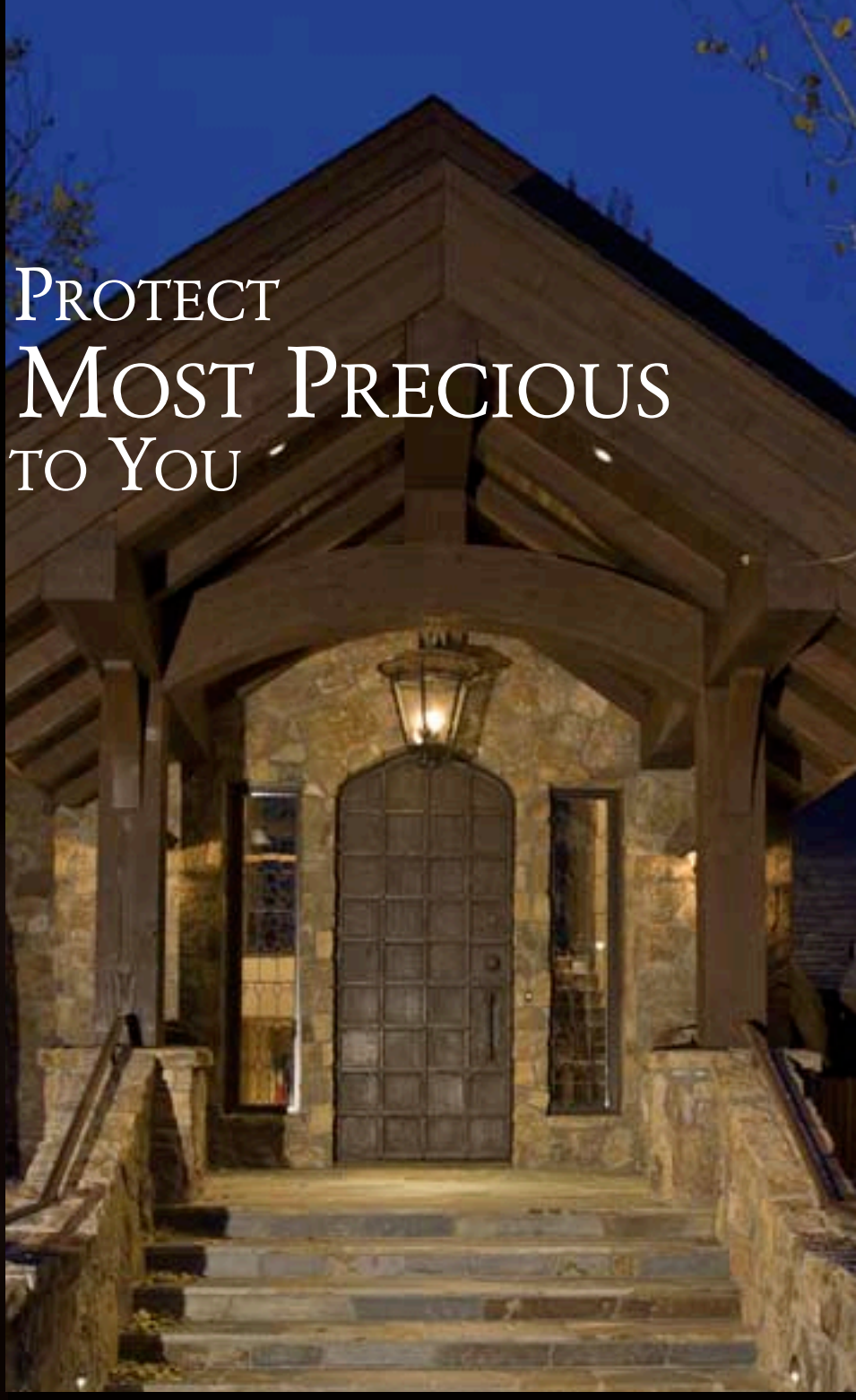

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CONSTRUCTING QUALITY HOMES AND COMMERCIAL PROJECTS IN THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY FOR 30 YEARS

from the editor

As we crafted the stories in this issue, building them around our editorial mission to celebrate sustainable lifestyles, a theme emerged: getting back to basics.

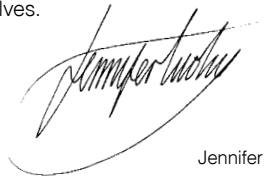
This idea of going backward to go forward, going back to the land to learn how to live in harmony with our planet in the future, pervades each piece. None more unexpectedly so than in *My Sun Valley Dream Home* (page 15).

PHOTO BY PAULETTE PHLIPOT

The conventional idea of a Sun Valley dream home these are not. Firefighters, artists and architects built these homes, which anyone, on any budget, can be inspired by and learn from. Each owner stripped down and threw out that traditional idea, rebuilding it infused with personality, vision and a commitment to a sustainable lifestyle.

In *Tapping In* (page 10), we investigate the benefits of taking heat from the earth. *Green Gables* (page 28) showcases a home orientated to harness the power of the sun. Both ideas first employed by cavemen. In *Backyard Birds Take Flight* (page 33), Karen Day waxes lyrical on the peculiar resurgence of raising chickens. These tried and true tricks of our forefathers that had seemingly been forgotten, return. Now with the added benefit of electricity, flat screen TVs and Eggloos.

The hot new word in environmental décor is upcycle, finding new uses for old things. Again, a return to something we should have always done. Before you scrap that car, pull its seatbelts and make a funky yet functional chair, or craft a piece of artwork from its license plates. Buff up that abandoned radiator and make it the centerpiece of your living room. Read about people who have done these things, and more, for the good of the planet and ourselves.



Jennifer Tuohy, Editor-in-Chief

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PUBLISHER Pam Morris
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Jennifer Tuohy, editor@sunvalleyguide.com
ART DIRECTOR Tony Barriatua
COPY EDITOR Barbara Perkins
WEB SITE DESIGNER Coly McCauley
AD PRODUCTION Coly McCauley, Erik Elison
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Karen Day, Dana DuGan, Jason D.B. Kauffman, Sabina Dana Plasse, Sarah Latham, Trevon Milliard
CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER David N. Seelig
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS Thia Konig, Paulette Phlipot, Tory Taglio
BUSINESS MANAGER Connie Johnson
MARKETING/SALES DIRECTOR Ben Varner, advertising@svguide.com
SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE William Pattnosh
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Randy Carroll, Gayle Kerr, Irene Robinson, Jerry Seiffert

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ON THE COVER: TOM & LARA MCLEAN IN FRONT OF THEIR HOME. BY THIA KONIG

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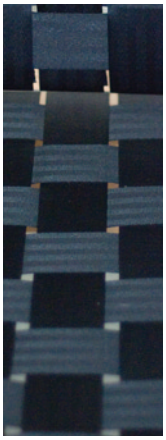
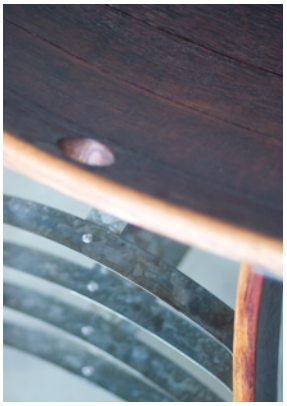
BEAUTY AND SCULPTURE IN BUILDING

UPCYCLED DÉCOR

Finding new uses for old things

By Sarah Latham
Photos by Paulette Phlipot





Upcycle Ottomans: made from re-purposed Jute Fair Trade Coffee Bag. At The Open Room, Ketchum, 208.622.0222. $360. **United States Map by Aaron Foster:** made from re-purposed license plates. At The Picket Fence, Ketchum, 866.944.5511. $4,290. **Ostrich Feather Pillows:** brown & white, by Darnsfield & Ross. At The Picket Fence. $430. **111 Meriweather Hailey House Coat Holder & Corbels:** made with salvaged wood from an old Hailey house. At Great American Furniture, Bellevue, 208.578.3555. $265. **Wine Barrel Bench & Wine Barrel Stool:** made from re-purposed wine barrels, original wine stain. By Walsworth Eco-Furnishings, showing at Silver Creek Outfitters. 208.720.3682 for pricing. **Seat belt Chair:** courtesy Rocky Mountain Hardware, through White Canvas Designs, 208.928.6366. $385. **Split Cedar Fence Wine Holder:** made from an old power pole. Great American Furniture. $24. **Scented Pine Fresheners:** made from food-grade wax and essential oils. Great American Furniture. $6-$26. **Klockwerks Unique Trumpet Clock:** at Art Quest West, Ketchum, 208.727.9700. $495. **Silverware Teapot Wind Chimes:** by Tempest in a Teapot. At Art Quest West. $150. **Rustic Window Frame Mirror:** at Art Quest West. $290. **Cherry cabinet top & birch leg side table:** at Great American Furniture. $345. **Natural Sisal Rug:** through White Canvas Designs. $255. **Entry Piece/ Hall Tree:** made from vintage door and cabinet. At Great American Furniture. $955. **Mahoney's siding bench:** made from the Bellevue bar's former exterior. At Great American Furniture. $210. **Wooden serving platters:** photographer's own.

TAPPING IN

Touted as the perfect renewable energy source for Idaho, geothermal systems fire up proponents in the Wood River Valley. Affordable housing and schools are doing it. Should you? By Trevon Milliard. Photo by David N. Seelig.

Why choose geothermal?

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency rates geothermal heat pumps as among the most efficient of heating and cooling technologies, with estimated energy savings of up to 70 percent.
- They don't need gas to operate, so there is no combustion, flames or fumes and no chance of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Geothermal heat pumps use 25 to 50 percent less electricity than conventional heating or cooling systems (source: U.S. Department of Energy).

What's the cost?

Retrofit: To install geothermal forced-air or radiant heating into an existing 2,000-square-foot home runs between $25,000 and $30,000.

New construction: To install geothermal forced-air heating* into a 2,000-square-foot home during construction costs about $45,000. (This includes installing ductwork).

Tax credit: Either method is eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit toward the $25,000-$30,000 geothermal unit. With new construction the credit can be extended to the $15,000 of ductwork.

More money back: The additional cost of installing a geothermal system is returned in energy savings in five to 10 years (source: U.S. Department of Energy).

**Radiant heating systems can be added for an extra cost*

Tim Flaherty's home uses the ground beneath it to heat its water, forced-air and radiant heating systems, driveway snowmelt and even the outdoor pool. And not a single hot spring flows through his Gimlet property.

The ground that Flaherty's large house sits on has no special qualities. It absorbs and retains the sun's energy in the same way all earth does, maintaining a warmer temperature than the air in the winter, and a cooler temperature in the summer.

Just eight feet beneath the earth's surface the temperature ranges between 45 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit year-round, depending on latitude. In the Wood River Valley, it averages about 50 degrees. By tapping into that heat, water coming out of Flaherty's faucets can reach a toasty 120 degrees. "That's where the magic of the ground-source heat pump comes in," said Evan Lawler of Western States Geothermal, the year-old Ketchum company that installed Flaherty's geothermal system. The heat pump enables water to go from 50 degrees to whatever temperature is required. And it doesn't stop there—geothermal heat pumps can also provide heating (and cooling) for forced air, radiant heat, air conditioning, pools, snowmelt and spas.

The best analogy, according to Lawler, is a refrigerator. The common household appliance also uses a heat pump, which doesn't put cold into the unit, but removes heat from the interior. Geothermal ground-source heat pumps similarly take heat out of the earth by flowing water or an antifreeze solution through a hose running underground in a closed loop. The liquid never leaves the hose but absorbs the earth's surrounding heat and then transfers it to a heat pump inside the house. Once the liquid has done its job of heating, the now-cooled liquid cycles back underground to be rewarmed and used again.

A common alternative to this closed-loop system is an open loop. Widely used in this area, an open-loop system uses two hoses extending from the house down to the aquifer. One of the hoses pumps water out of the aquifer, acting like a straw. The ground water travels to the heat pump where it transfers its heat. Once the water's heat is extracted, it is returned to the well through the second hose. "The water never sees the light of day," Lawler said. "It isn't contaminated or mixed with anything else. The temperature is just changed."

The technology isn't new, just improved. Mechanical engineer Brian Formusa of Thermal Temp has been installing heat-pump systems since the early 1980s. System glitches from back then have been fixed. "But it's still an

evolving science," he said. For example, no simple equation exists for determining the length of hose needed in a closed-loop system. It's usually overestimated to be safe. But the loop is the most expensive part of a geothermal system.

But how is groundwater entering Flaherty's house at 50 degrees Fahrenheit able to heat tap water to 120 degrees? Another refrigerator analogy works best. To take the heat out of air inside a refrigerator, gas flows through a pipe, expanding when traveling inside the refrigerator and compressing when it's outside. The expanding gas picks up heat from inside the refrigerator and carries it to the outside. This exponentially cools the inside of the refrigerator because expanding gas cools. An easy example: Spray an aerosol air freshener, and notice that the expanding gas causes the spray and container to become cold.

A ground-source heat pump does the opposite, using the 50-degree groundwater to heat a refrigerant that boils and evaporates at a low temperature. That gas is then condensed back into a liquid—the opposite process of an aerosol spray can—and heats to a high temperature in a closed system. This heats water or air passing over coils.

The technology isn't new, just improved.

According to Lawler, the beauty of the system is that it can be reversed in the summer for air conditioning by "taking heat out of the home and putting it back into the earth," which will now be cooler than the air. "And before you get rid of that heat, you can preheat your water," he added.

Because it sounds complicated, people assume geothermal is expensive, requiring constant maintenance and attention. "Think about the last time that you did maintenance on your refrigerator," Lawler said. "You see decade-old ones still chugging along."

And there are no fancy geothermal gadgets to clutter one's home. A standard heat pump takes the same space as a conventional water boiler, with the majority of equipment hidden underground. And it's all controlled by a traditional thermostat system.

But (and there's always a but), geothermal is an investment at the onset, costing 30 to 40 percent more than conventional water-heating boilers that depend on gas or electricity. But the payback comes quickly, especially with a federal tax credit reimbursing homeowners for 30 percent of the project's cost. (Commercial buildings receive a 10 percent tax credit.)

Also, while a heat pump uses electricity, like a refrigerator, it does not require combustion or natural gas. "I got my gas bill," Flaherty said, "and it was pennies of what it would be if I didn't do it." For every unit of electricity the heat pump uses, Lawler said, it provides about four units of equivalent "free" energy to heat whatever method is chosen (water or air or both), making it on average 400 percent efficient.

Because of this combination of payback and practicality, Idaho Office of Energy Resources Administrator Paul Kjellander said ground-source heat pumps have seen a spike in demand from Idaho homeowners over the last couple of years. "Besides saving money, it's a way to avoid the volatility of gas prices," he said.

Last year, Kjellander was part of the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance board that oversaw a taskforce investigating the pros and cons of geothermal. The taskforce found geothermal technology to be highly beneficial in Idaho. "Idahoans have long used geothermal energy for direct-heating purposes, decreasing their use of other types of energy such as natural gas and electricity," the taskforce reported. "Direct heating is still a key use for Idaho's geothermal resources and should be encouraged and expanded."

The Wood River Valley will soon see ground-source heat-pump applications in commercial-size buildings. Western States Geothermal will install a geothermal snowmelt system for affordable housing complex Northwood Place in Ketchum. Last November, the Blaine County School District received a $4 million matching-funds grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to use geothermal pumps to heat its school buildings.

School District Business Manager Mike Chatterton said construction will begin this summer in Carey, Bellevue and Hailey, and be finished next year. The rest of the county's schools will see geothermal implementation after that.

Using the ground for heat isn't a new idea. Thousands of years ago, people took advantage of the earth's ability to retain the sun's energy by living in caves.

The ground-source heat pump makes geothermal viable pretty much anywhere, and an easy choice for any homeowner. The components require the same space as a conventional boiler, and the energy-efficient technology doesn't impart the aesthetic interruption that solar panels can. John Ashton, who is installing a system in his 4,600-square-foot Warm Springs home, considered solar panels but quickly turned toward geothermal. "This seems to be the most practical," he said. "And I don't have to put things sticking out of my roof."

RUN A GREEN BUSINESS

Restaurants lead the way in sustainable business models
By Sabina Dana Plasse. Photo by David N. Seelig.

Adorning a business with eco-conscious "green credentials" is not as daunting a task as it may seem. Follow the lead of forward-thinking valley restaurants that endorse sustainable business models by contributing to both a sustainable economy and the well-being of the planet. From the ingredients they use to basic operations, valley restaurants are serious about implementing green living and sustainability practices on a daily basis.

By its nature, a restaurant has many options for going green, but employing green business practices, including using sustainable building materials for constructing or remodeling, applies to all industries.

At Ketchum's newest restaurant, Sego, being green was part of the business plan (and menu) from its inception. Owner Kevin Steussi went out of his way to build his contemporary restaurant almost exclusively employing local artisans and contractors.

Ketchum potter Lauren Street created 180 bowls for Sego at Boulder Mountain Clayworks, and Sten Sorenson of Ketchum's Glassworks made Sego's hostess stand with wood recovered from a railroad trestle in Utah. Rob Beck supplied applewood cuttings sourced from Idaho apple orchards for the kitchen's wood-fired oven, and the restaurant's tables and banquettes were made in Burley from recycled wood. Employing local businesses, even those that aren't outwardly green, is an essential element in working toward a sustainable community.

Taking sustainable practices further, Sego is working with the Environmental Resource Center, food co-op Idaho's Bounty and Blaine County School Superintendent Lonnie Barber to build a community garden across the street from the restaurant. The garden is intended to inspire children to cook fresh food and provide a resource for the community. "It will build a culinary tradition from the earth," said Sego Executive Chef Taite Pearson. "Food is not just on a plate to eat, it's an experience."

Back to basics—back to the food. Idaho's economy has long been tied to its agriculture, and by supporting locally grown produce, a business hits two essential pillars of the environmental movement. Buying local reduces the environmental impacts of lengthy transport and contributes to the sustainability of a local economy. In addition, customers like it. "It's important for people to know where food comes from and not be scared of it," said Pearson. "We know all the owners of every farm and ranch we buy from."

> "I explored take-out food containers for 18 months."
> *Jim Funk, Despo's*

The restaurant's list of Idaho purveyors includes several Buhl farmers and ranchers, including MM Heath Farms, which provides such delicacies as sugar pumpkin, butternut, delicata and red kuri squashes and, of course, potatoes. Sego also serves Idaho cheeses from Rollingstone Chèvre (Snake River Valley) and Ballard Family Farms (Gooding). The pig's feet and chicken eggs are from Dick and Melinda Spring's Blaine County farm.

Pearson has a special affection for pork and serves a trio of pork with heirloom beans, which includes pork jowls and bellies from Gem Farms near Boise. "It speaks simplicity and getting back to the roots of rustic American food," Pearson said.

First steps

Empower staff
Form a "green team" to brainstorm ideas. Set obtainable goals, relay ideas back to the business and take steps to implement and measure success. Create a contest and reward employees for achieving goals.

Establish recycling
Invest the time to set up a practical way to steward items from desk to recycling bin. Using simple containers, signage and a recycling collection plan makes the difference between success and failure.

Switch the lights
Installing energy-efficient light bulbs saves money. Use Idaho Power's program to reap cash incentives for energy-saving improvements (up to $100,000 per site) www.idahopower.com.

Sego's crew works hard to maintain a sustainable business in downtown Ketchum. Left to right, Sarah Lipton (pastry chef), Fernando Valdez (server), Taite Pearson (chef), Charlotte Hemmings (server), Kate Ristow (server), Vinny Carpenter (baker).

Focus on the simple
Turn off lights and computers. Left on 24/7, computers produce over 1,000 pounds of greenhouse gases each year. Remind with signs.

Celebrate success
Let employees and customers know what you're doing, why you are doing it and what you've achieved. Companies that tout their green credentials often see an improvement in customer loyalty.

** Information courtesy Environmental Resource Center, Ketchum, Idaho*

While it's the new kid on the block, Sego is not the first restaurant to embrace the sustainability and scrumptiousness of local food. Scott Mason, executive chef and owner of the Ketchum Grill, has bought lamb from Lava Lake Lamb in Carey since the ranch opened in 1999. But the latest sustainable practice Mason has implemented is buying a whole, hormone- and antibiotic-free cow from Chickadee Creek Ranch outside of Twin Falls. "The cows are grass fed," Mason said. "It was a big commitment money-wise, but it works. And it's exciting for the cooks to work with a whole cow."

An innovative green businessman, Mason has implemented some surprising environmentally friendly practices in his restaurant. For example, he buys dishes at local thrift stores for to-go plates, eliminating the need for Styrofoam take-out boxes. Fellow Ketchum restaurant owner Jim Funk opted to completely eliminate take-out at his Despo's Mexican restaurant. "I explored take-out food containers for 18 months," Funk said. "If it's not handled right, it wastes money and resources. Why spend money on containers when they are not compostable?"

Despo's is the only certified green restaurant in Idaho. Funk, who has been in the restaurant business for 40 years, got the certification through the Green Restaurant Association (dinegreen.com). Certification requires that the restaurant accrue a certain number of points in seven categories: water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, sustainable furnishings and building materials, sustainable food, energy, disposables, and chemical and pollution reduction. Another key point is to be Styrofoam free.

CK's Real Food in Hailey also went a step beyond food. While he buys as much as possible local and organic, chef and owner Chris Kastner built his restaurant with sustainability in mind. He used reclaimed lumber and energy-efficient materials made of concrete and recycled polystyrene foam, and installed solar panels on the roof. "A restaurant consumes a great deal of electricity through refrigeration devices," Kastner said. "I have offset electric costs through solar power. The next thing is to get a solar hot water tank." As an added bonus, the power of the sun has saved him up to 15 percent in energy costs.

In the 21st century, implementing green business tactics and understanding sustainability is not a fad. Businesses in the Wood River Valley are serious about being cost effective, offering quality products and taking care of the environment, all while contributing to a positive community.

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MY SUN VALLEY DREAM HOME

Built to shelter, celebrate and endure, the habitats of four Wood River Valley couples show the labor and love that can transform simple structures into inspiring homes. Meet the everyday firefighters, architects and artists who are living that dream.

a barn reborn

by jennifer tuohy

photos by thia konig

a striking American flag carved into the side of a huge barn door greets those who brave the mile-long driveway to Tom and Lara McLean's mid-valley home. An appropriate welcome to the home of two firefighters, this bold display of patriotism is merely the first step in a fascinating journey into the lives of this eclectic couple.

Inside the 16-year-old structure, the mood is flamboyant, yet reserved, colorful yet muted, eclectic yet stable, utilitarian yet wildly inappropriate (a stray cat lives in the bathroom sink). The couple's style and substance resonates through every beam, uniting in a harmony as surprising and serendipitous as the marriage it shelters.

Splashes of bright color and whimsical arrangements complement the earthy, wooden undertones of the interior's design. An arrangement of luminescent baubles resting in a handmade ceramic bowl, their shimmer highlighting the rich tone of the artfully placed vases behind them, could be straight from the pages of *Elle Décor.* The neighboring 1900s Belleville stove and assorted antique tools would perhaps be more at home in a miner's cabin. Organic and constantly evolving, this mesh of sensibilities endures.

For many, home is where the heart is. For the McLeans, their home is the beating organ of their union. Without peers and without pretense, the home is not carefully crafted to awe visitors or cow little children; instead it is the sum of successfully surmounted challenges.

Lara McLean, formerly Babalis, arrived in the valley in 1998. Ketchum was to be a stopping-off point on the way to San Francisco, where a thriving career as a death metal superstar awaited. Tom arrived from Bellevue, Washington, in 1985. He came to ski and stayed for the summers. Lara is vibrant, energetic and colorful (despite being regularly dressed in black). Tom is a man of carefully considered words. So Lara sums it up for him, "We're very different. Poor guy."

"Wood is always interesting to me." tom mclean

In 1999, the couple had been dating a few months when Tom bought the barn. "We wanted to have a home here, but we couldn't afford to buy a ready-made one," he said. "Considering a 'home with potential' cost upwards of $700,000 at the time, our best bet was to buy something that was beyond potential." So they settled for a barn "not fit for human occupancy" on two acres for $325,000.

For most, the prospect of bringing a rundown home up to potential involves at best a few licks of paint, at worst some minor structural work. For Tom and Lara, it started with digging under the foundations and putting in concrete supports ("I poured the concrete myself" the 5-foot nothing Lara claimed proudly).

The prospect of building a home nearly from scratch did not intimidate Tom. "I didn't have any experience with building my own home, but I knew I could find all the info I needed if I looked hard enough." He relied on a handful of friends and contractors, as well as Sun Valley architect Suzy Schick-Bille to help bring the structure up to residential requirements. But in essence, he built it himself while he was training in Boise to be a paramedic. One Thanksgiving, when faced with 16-foot-long wooden beams needed upstairs, but currently residing downstairs, he improvised. "I built this shoulder sling that I could put around the beam and over my shoulder to carry them up the stairway," he said. "Even being in pretty good condition, it was absolutely a struggle with every step. I got to the top of the stairs with one beam, and I hear Lara behind me." Tears welling up in her eyes, she pleaded with him to stop, stop trying to do it all by himself.

"There's a lot of personal satisfaction in being able to do a difficult, hard job by yourself," said Tom. "Thinking smarter than a piece of wood. There are elements of danger, and I guess foolhardiness, but it's a lot of fun. Given a chance, I'd do it again because it's so interesting and rewarding."

Tom's building style is a torrent of clichés. From "necessity is the mother of invention" to "one man's trash is another man's treasure," his comment, "I'm a bit of a saver," is uttered with trademark understatement. His sources are varied, things he comes across in his line of work, scrounging around in wrecked buildings and burned houses (with permission). Every piece has a story. Some tell of Ketchum's bygone days, some of the couple's heritage. "I spent a very long night pulling those beams out of the foundation of Louie's restaurant." The bricks on the patio and the flooring for the Cape Cod-style potting shed came from The Buffalo Café, and the attractive track lighting in the kitchen once lived in a cowboy store on Ketchum's Main Street.

In the center of the house, wall-less windows salvaged from an old Ketchum home hang from the ceiling, separating the living area from the hallway and adjoining kitchen. The Victorian radiator doubling as a windowsill for some thirsty plants was salvaged from the Shoshone desert. An imposing, industrial 1978 Wolf range, occupying pride-of-place in the open-plan kitchen, belonged to Lara's aunt, Felisa Vanoff.

A charming double Dutch door (that once stood in Ketchum's Old Colonnade) welcomes visitors into the home. And while it's hard to imagine Lara channeling Betty Crocker and doling out cherry pies through the open top to vagrant neighborhood children, the door's New World aesthetic completes the home's rugged Wild West character.

Ensconced by wainscoting from a downtown Ketchum building, the living/dining area is a collectibles cave, from the old fire department lounge chair to the exquisite handmade dining room table (made by Tom's hands). Here Lara threw in a few of her mod touches. "It's my couch," she said. Peppered with monotone squares, the space is funky and functional. "I'm totally into black and white right now. This came from Pier One," she whispered conspiratorially over the striking area rug.

When asked if the home is finished, shouts of "No" bounce off the original log walls. A large workshop occupying a third of the home's square footage is evidence of this. Earmarked to be the great room, it is currently the creative hub of Tom's homemaking. Scents of mingled wood emanate from the found treasures littering the concrete floor, all lying in wait for inspiration to strike. "These balusters are from a stairway in the Alpenrose hotel in Ketchum, which stood half-abandoned for the best part of a decade," said Tom. "They need to find a home, be something special but I'm not sure what yet."

A row of weathered wooden planks balance just above head height. "Wood is always interesting to me," said Tom. "If you look at these two boards you'll see numbers stamped into them." Sitting a pre-McDonald's American butt width apart, the numbers once directed rodeo patrons to their narrow seats.

What this barn has taught Tom is evident in its new ambience. From the first piece he ever built (a rickety side table, whose worth is manifest in its continued existence), to the most recent addition (two spectacular armoires that are the centerpiece of the main living space), his education is tangible. "He built these armoires and hutches for me completely

from scratch," said Lara, adding, "He hasn't finished them yet—there should be a piece in the middle. He built the island, all the kitchen cabinets, the grandfather clock. Actually, most everything in here."

Whereas the ground floor is a marriage of the two distinct, yet harmonious personalities that inhabit it, upstairs is a different story. Divided by an invisible line, the attic bedroom is one half her (sparkling, cluttered, charming) and one half him (sparse, neat, uniform). Brought together by a magnificent bed—built by Tom, decorated by Lara—the room reveals many secrets.

A passionate animal activist, Lara displays photos of her many creatures on her Pier One lingerie cabinet, nestled snugly next to her sparkling bridal veil and glittering pillows. Her bookshelves groan under the hefty weight of mind-bending medical texts (for her career as a paramedic alongside her continued education in fire science and psychology), jostling for space with thrillers by novelists such as Dennis Lehane and Robert Crais. Animal behaviorist Temple Grandin's work has pride of place, albeit a crowded one, next to works on horses, dressage, languages, design and history.

Fittingly on the left side of the bed, Tom's space is sparse but fulfilling. The few items speak volumes. His uncle's desk is literally etched with the character of Leo Hammond, an Idahoan who participated in the development of the Frank Church Wilderness and worked on the Alcan Highway. A simple table displays three McLean Tartans, and a stark white stool occupies the ample space in front of an austere dresser, ornamented plainly by the numerous certificates Tom has earned in his career as a firefighter and paramedic.

Tom estimates that over the past decade, he has spent 20,000 hours working on the house ("Or on knowing that I should be."). His intuitive use of other people's cast-offs to create his dream home is both timely and timeless. In the decades of excess and consumption that preceded us, the concept of waste was throwaway. Today, more people are looking to re-use, reduce and recycle, returning to sensibilities rediscovered in America's last Great Depression.

Tom's trusty tools—including an antique combination square that belonged to his uncle and his favorite wooden mallet—unite with Lara's instinctive style, peppered by her rock-star roots, to create a habitat that celebrates family, heritage, substance and heart. In much the same way as the first intrepid settlers of this land—who pulled considerably more than 16-foot beams over their broad shoulders—may have done, the third-generation Idahoan and the death-metal-rocker-turned-firefighter/paramedic have found their utopia in hard work and a deep connection to this land and their hearts. SVG

AND ONE HALF HIM (SPARSE, NEAT, UNIFORM).

castle's castle

by dana dugan

photos by thia konig

Some dream homes come into being through an architect's vision, while some are rigidly controlled by a client's needs. Both ways work.

For Joe Castle, 49, a sculptor from Philadelphia, and his wife, Michelle Feldman Castle, it was a timely combination of their united desires, a cooperative architect and a helpful builder that transformed a humble structure into their personal paradise on the prairie.

Designed by Joe, the original house was a simple working abode set at the mouth of Bellevue's Muldoon Canyon. "It was meat and potatoes," Joe said. Almost wholly comprised of a kitchen and a working art studio, the structure was framed by huge Quaker-meeting-house-style doors. His family thought he was crazy, but there at the very end of a dirt road, he had found a place to be creative and a way of life that suited him.

When he fell in love with Michelle, 43, a graphic designer from Los Angeles, it quickly became apparent that he needed to expand.

Using clips from magazines, the couple created a one-page pictorial of their vision for architects Williams & Partners, adding images of homes they admired to a photo of the original house, as well as incorporating different elements that appealed to them—wood, steel, metal, concrete and rebar.

"EVEN THOUGH IT'S CONTEMPORARY, IT'S IN THE STYLE OF FARMS

The finished structure closely resembles the one they laid out in that picture. Now expanded to 2,300 square feet, the home's exterior is a striking contrast of wood and corrugated metal. This backdrop enhances the setting of Joe's sculptures in the natural grasses around the house, many of which are inspired by and incorporate objects he finds in the surrounding sage-filled hills. The home's greatest charm is in this natural cooperation with the environment.

Inside, this artist couple's sensibility and similar aesthetic are apparent in everything from furnishings to an industrial fireplace. The lines are clean and open, with high ceilings and views of Muldoon Canyon through enormous windows.

"It's a reflection of our environment," Michelle said of the home they created. "It's not unique. We love the elements that are already here. Even though the home is contemporary, it's in the style of farms one has seen in Idaho for a hundred years."

The clean lines and muted colors provide an engaging pallet for displaying a diverse array of simple, graphic and contemporary artwork. Concrete floors in the great room and master bedroom continue the theme of a simple, modern connection to the environment. "That's our aesthetic," said Joe. "We're responsive to the environment. The large windows create a sense of indoor/outdoor living, especially in summer. In the winter, it's a whole other feel."

A balcony within the house overlooks the great room, its rebar railing extending from inside to out, encircling the house and ending

ONE HAS SEEN IN IDAHO FOR A HUNDRED YEARS."

MICHELLE CASTLE

at a balcony in front of the master bedroom. The sparse bedroom absorbs its atmosphere from the sweeping views into the often elk-filled canyon. Completing the union of indoors and out, a steel stairway leads down from their balcony into the garden (where they were married in 2008), perfect for a quick escape into the wild lands surrounding them. Only the library veers from the modern, organic theme. Filled with family photos tracing their history back one hundred years, it has its own kind of spare coziness.

During the remodel, the Castles' opted for durable materials. "We have dogs and cats, and were on a limited budget, so we wanted durability," Michelle said. "We weren't trying to make a green house, but it came out that way. We wanted minimal upkeep." Scott Scifres of Powder River Enterprises in Bellevue built the house and was willing to work with new products. He advised the couple, though, that the most important aspects would be the windows, heating system and roof, and that these shouldn't be scrimped on.

Scifres also suggested removing the large, barn-like front entry. It was headed to the scrap yard until the Castles realized it was big enough to be a shed. When added to the separate studio and garage Joe had built five years earlier, it completed the couple's very own artists' compound, a place they can create in and live a way of life that suits them both, right at the very end of a dirt road.

simplicity

by jason d.b. kauffman photos by tory taglio

a last-minute move into their dream home came just in the nick of time for the Bulls. Over the course of a year, the young family had selected the perfect lot in Hailey's Deerfield neighborhood, drawn up floor plans and watched as workers from Lloyd Construction built the structure of straight, contemporary lines.

By the end of September 2008, the family had a standout two-story home, which loudly proclaims that while you may live in a cookie-cutter neighborhood, you don't have to check your love, passion and personal sense of design at the door.

The building project wasn't the only labor of love the family met head-on during the hectic 12-month run. A month or so into the process, Karen discovered she was pregnant with their second child.

And newborn Elliot Bulls wasn't about to miss the family's move into their new home. "We got an occupancy permit 24 hours before Karen went into labor," Michael said. "So we were here just one night before she arrived. All we had were cardboard boxes and mattresses on the floor."

Michael and Karen came to the Wood River Valley for the skiing. The couple—Michael from southern Virginia and Karen from Spokane, Washington—met while living in Ketchum. Both found good jobs, Karen with ScottUSA and Michael with architects Ruscitto Latham Blanton. "It's kept me here. I thought I would only be here a year or two," Michael said.

Like so many of their new friends, who also came for the skiing but ended up staying to raise families in this mountain community, the Bulls ultimately chose to put down roots in Hailey.

While they still enjoy the outdoor amenities the valley provides, they have chosen to remain here because of Hailey's family-friendly atmosphere and the economic opportunities that allowed them to design and build the home of their dreams. "For us it was about the community and the people that we met here," Michael said. "It's a great place to raise kids."

Though juggling the tandem demands of pregnancy and overseeing the construction of their new home was certainly challenging, the Bulls have no regrets. When you create the home of your dreams, Karen said, every detail, from the doorknobs to the cabinets to the layout, is a decision you made. Experience renting in Ketchum and Michael's work as a residential architect taught the couple what they did and did not want in their new home. Most importantly, they felt the house should reflect the way they live. That meant an open floor plan.

"We wanted to do something that was laid out exactly how we wanted to live with the kids," Michael said. "We wanted a little room off to the side where we could put the toys away, have the kids go."

They also realized that by building small they could free up finances for installing the quality, durable interior finishes that reflected their personalities. Clean and uncluttered lines on the home's exterior also aided in cost savings. According to Michael, contemporary design makes cutting costs and simplifying things that much easier. "On the technical side, the structure and so on, you can simplify. Instead, if you focus on the things you use every day—the countertops you're touching every day, the handles, the faucets—you can pay a little more, because you're always using them."

The Bulls had a base expectation for the livable space they required, around 2,000 square feet. The children's upstairs rooms are small, 10-by-10 feet. "They're no different than the bedrooms we grew up in," Karen said. "Why do we think they need giant spaces?"

Michael was convinced they could achieve a sense of openness in their home despite its modest size. Tall ceilings coupled with windows and sliding glass doors that line up with the expansive backyard make the home feel larger than it is. On the winding staircase to the top floor, open metal handrails further add to the sense of space.

Continuing the seamless connection to the outdoors, large picture windows face south on this solar-oriented home. From sunrise to sunset, streaming daylight makes artificial lighting unnecessary, adding to its green credentials. Asian-style pocket doors at the entrance to rooms work double duty, saving space and allowing in even more natural light.

Another smart and sustainable design feature is the placement of the bedrooms on the south side of the upper floor. This allows the low winter sun to naturally heat the rooms. In the summer, the long overhanging roof protects the rooms from the hot summer sun, which is higher in the sky.

Ultimately, the design considered their relationship to the indoors and outdoors and how the home flows. "We had lived together long enough to know where we would be during certain parts of the day," Michael explained.

The couple's broad smiles as they relax around the open island between the living room and kitchen, listening to the harmonious chatter of their children, Elliot and Jack, are a true testament to the success Michael and Karen have achieved in creating their own Sun Valley dream home.

learn from the bulls

Place bedrooms on the south side to take advantage of warming sunlight or on the north side if you want a cooler sleeping arrangement. Consider leaving the western side of the home window-free. Late afternoon sun makes this the hottest side.

Deciduous trees shade a home during the summer, similar to the way an overhanging roof protects against the hot summer sun yet allows the winter sun in for heating. Once the leaves have fallen, the sun warms the house.

Though it may sound like an insignificant detail, their small home office is on the north side of the structure, away from the beating sun. Presto: no annoying glare on the computer monitor.

The Bulls chose healthy, no-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints. “Both for us and the workers,” Michael said. “Most of the off-gassing occurs when the guys are putting it on.”

The radiant floor heating, enclosed in a simple concrete slab, is very efficient. The concrete floor also shows the dirt—letting you know when to clean up to keep the indoor air clean and healthy.

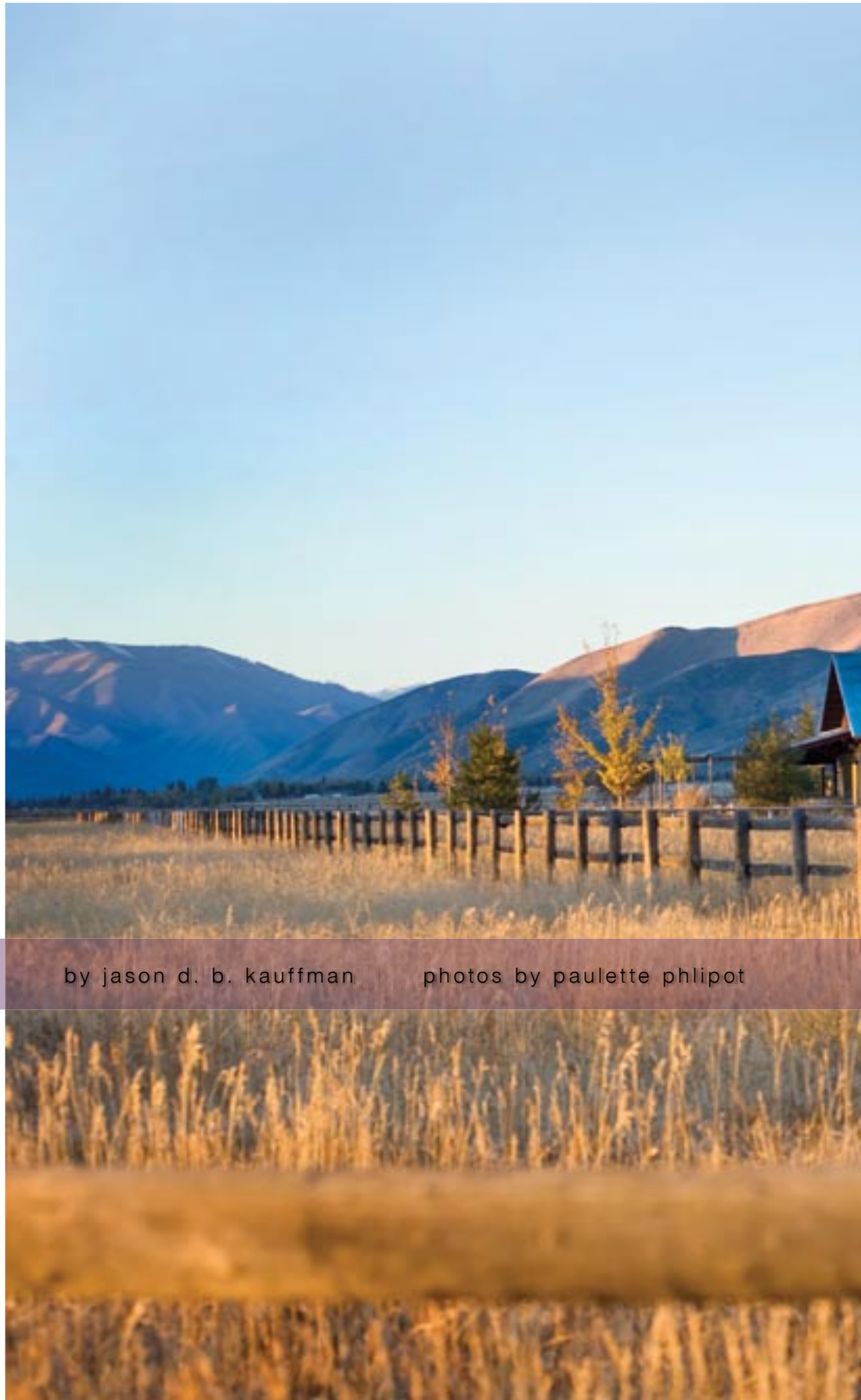
Jolyon Sawrey's Griffin Ranch house south of Bellevue reveals itself in layers. Walking into the inner sanctum of this environmentally conscious architect's home is a willfully premeditated journey from public to private space.

Entering the single-story abode, one is immediately presented with a low-slung, 8-foot-high ceiling. A warm host, Sawrey prefers to meet his guests with the shake of a hand and a friendly smile in a space that engenders closeness.

Through the entry foyer, a perpendicular wall bends the flow of the home sharply to the left or right. Here, Sawrey and his wife, Kari, guide their guests to the right, where they immediately encounter one of the home's most unique features. Called a "wabi-sabi" column, the gnarled, hand-scraped log pillar seems out of place. But that's the point. Juxtaposed against the rest of the modern home, the weathered column symbolizes the imperfections of man.

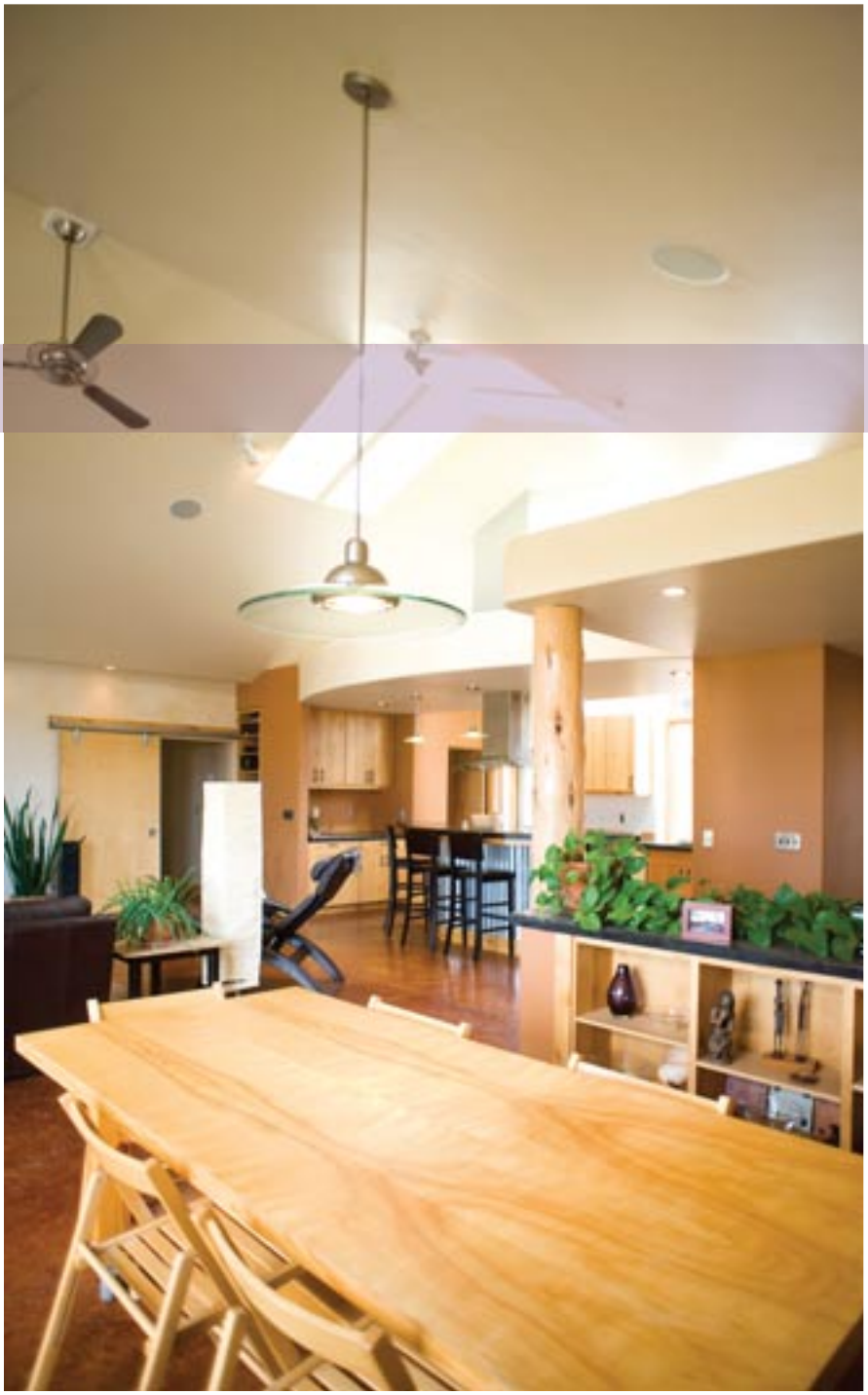
The column is just the beginning of Sawrey's use of the feng shui principle in his dream home. The wooden pillar is intended to treat the flow of energy like that of water, spreading a guest's energy out and introducing it to the private, inner half of the home. "Kind of like a rock in the river," Sawrey said.

From here, the ceilings open up. Once in the expanded inner embrace of the home, liberated by the calm energy of the vaulted ceilings, a guest is encouraged to relax. The journey has breezed between public, semi-public and on finally into the home's private, inner heart. "Now you're in an even bigger space. I'm welcoming you into each one of those layers."



by jason d. b. kauffman photos by paulette phlipot

SAWREY DESIGNED HIS HOUSE IN A RURAL IDAHO, TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY, RUSTIC FARM VERNACULAR.



Sawrey is a vociferous evangelist for well-thought-out spaces. Every decision that went into designing his home has a clear reason for being. The kitchen, though connected to the living room and its tall ceilings, is intimate and cozy. "If you and I are going to gather and have a beer or cook something, now we're back under a lower drop ceiling," he explained. "Now we convene together."

As an architect Sawrey specializes in green building. His years of experience with alternative and healthy building systems provide the basis for his two businesses, Vital Ink Architecture and Vital SPEC. His home further reflects this passion for protecting the environment and being as little of a burden on the ecosystem as possible.

Sawrey designed his house in a "rural-Idaho, turn-of-the-century, rustic farm vernacular"—proving, he feels, that it's possible to have a home work in a mutually beneficial way with the processes of the natural world. In the past, features used in his home would have been considered common sense. But today, many people have forgotten these lessons.

For centuries, homes were oriented to take advantage of the warming rays of the sun. But in the modern age, that lesson has largely been lost. Sawrey oriented the garage and concrete slab in front of his home to allow the sun to naturally burn off snow. No need to constantly fire up a gassy snow blower or struggle with a snow shovel to keep the driveway clear.

In a similar way, the house jogs in and out at right angles three times on its west side. Each jut-out shades the next from the hot western afternoon sun. "You're controlling your views; you're using your form as a functional object to work with privacy and to provide an additional benefit, minimizing solar heating." Long, overhanging rooflines shade windows from the hot summer sun, but allow the low-angle sun of winter to spread its warming rays into the home.

The outdoor shade porch on the west side of the house allows the winter sun to extend 23 feet into the home, warming the concrete, thermal mass floors. Beneath the acid-stained concrete is 6 inches of volcanic pumice and no crawl space. "You've seen how pumice floats on water. That's an insulator, there's air trapped in there," Sawrey said. "Our insulation is natural."

Further combining the out-of-doors world with the indoor human space, Sawrey has added a planter in the living room. The concrete floor is cut away to expose the rich mineral soil beneath the home. "The plants are growing right into the earth."

In leaving nothing to chance, Sawrey is persistent. People are aware they shouldn't live beneath power lines. But how much is too much? Preferring not to find out, Sawrey installed a switch at the entrance to the master bedroom that shuts off all electromagnetic fields that would surround their bodies while they sleep and may have harmful effects.

All these well-laid plans convince Sawrey that his and his wife's health have benefited from living in this home. "Health is the mind, spirit and the body. It's all of it."

learn from jolyon

The high thermal mass walls are made from cement wood fiber block (picture below). These concrete-filled blocks come in two-foot-long, one-foot-thick sections and are highly energy efficient as well as fire and termite resistant. They also help cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

The focal wall in the master bedroom is plastered with "healthy" drywall mud (pictured top left). Some drywall mud contains antifreeze, "That's probably not something I want off-gassing in my home." Rather than paint, the plaster is tinted with organic coffee from Ketchum's Coffee Grinder.

The exterior walls are covered in natural stucco, free of paint or latex. This provides long-term weather resistance and needs little upkeep.

Surrounding the home is a 30-foot, fire-wise clear zone planted with drought-tolerant grasses (www.bcfirewise.com).

Sawrey used industrial, barn-style doors throughout. "If the door is open 80 or 90 percent of the time, why have the swing door encumber the space?"

Want to track the sun's annual path across the sky? Orient your home so that at 10 a.m. on the morning of the Spring Equinox the sun lines up with a window and streams its rays inside.

"HEALTH IS THE MIND, SPIRIT AND THE BODY. IT'S ALL OF IT."
JOLYON SAWREY

FARM TO TABLE

Do you know where your food comes from? Whether it once lived in your backyard or grew up on the farm down the street, seek sustenance with substance.

BACKYARD BIRDS TAKE FLIGHT

THE SENSE AND SENSIBILITY OF RAISING CHICKENS

By Karen Day

Photos by Paulette Phlipot

Cheryl Feucht has been raising chickens on her small Camas Prairie farm since she moved here from Ohio last year.

Canine lovers abound in the Wood River Valley, while cat and horse advocates attest theirs is the second most popular pet. However, when the Hailey City Council passed an ordinance last year allowing five live chickens per household, many locals officially added a fourth contestant, succumbing to the feathered love affair blossoming in cities across America. Poultry, however, are the only backyard pets of the four facing the probability of ending up on the dinner table.

Let me begin by admitting I'm not a "fowl" person. For most of my adult life, I've avoided serious contemplation of all things chicken, except the high risks of fried and the pox. There is good reason for my ambivalence. As a child, I spent summers on a farm, 16 dirt miles from Lavonia, Indiana, population 321. Here lived my Aunt Grace and Uncle Cedric. Their spanking-white clapboard house and well-used tornado shelter sat in the middle of 200 acres of sweet corn and resembled an idyllic Old MacDonald movie set every day but Saturday, when the barnyard became a sequel to *SAW*.

The day before Sunday was always bloody—at least for any chicken doomed as the weekly feast after our obligatory visit to Lavonia's oven-baked Presbyterian Church. I was a nervous child already, and when my aunt picked up the axe and headed toward the coop, I would invariably sob for a poultry reprieve—to no avail. This barnyard-to-plate ritual probably explains why I've suffered several fashionable but failed attempts as a vegan.

I still prefer to eat my eggs in cake. And so it was, until I stepped into the new world of chicken-mania.

"Which came first: the chicken or the egg?" This riddle sounds like a philosophical debate between Dr. Seuss and the Kentucky colonel on a bender. Google, however, offers more than 100,000 historical references to the question. Mounting proof attests that chickens are commanding national attention and enjoying a renaissance of urban dwelling. *Backyard Poultry* magazine claims a circulation of 100,000 and growing. Forty thousand members log on to Backyardchickens.com forums and 15,000 admit to watching Terry Golson's Boston-based "Hencam." (This writer too, strictly as research, was oddly absorbed in the Sisyphean trials of one showy crested Polish whose bouffant hairdo is as bold as her namesake, Tina Turner.) *USA Today*, *Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and even that literary bastion *The New Yorker* have all carried stories on the current hen-keeping craze.

Our own valley stumbled into the national spotlight when Community School students raised 16 fuzzy chicks in a highly orchestrated, experiential banquet of the food chain gone wrong. The eighth-grade project faced criticism and possible legal consequences as a Virginia-based animal protection organization accused them of animal cruelty.

No, really, it's true. And too bad the poultry advocates didn't call me first. As a humanitarian journalist, I could attest those chickens ate better and suffered less than most people I meet traveling the Third World.

What explains this resurgent interest in bringing home chickens *and* the bacon? The economy? Sustainability? Peer-poultry pressure?

Fairfield residents Cheryl and Richard Feucht, amidst 50 pecking hens, explain. "We like knowing where our food comes from and what it has eaten—*before* we eat it."

The Feuchts moved from a large city in Ohio to the Camas Prairie a year ago. The wide-open vistas of southwestern Idaho offered them more room for growing food and animals than they could imagine back in their Midwest county of 500,000 people. Camas County brags 1,000 residents and the town of Fairfield, 400. Cheryl and Richard's tidy ranchette nestles close to the foothills, looking on treeless horizons that bleed into an eternity of purple-and-blue shadows. With rabbits, Blue Slate turkeys, chickens and a large garden, the Fuechts are living the proverbial city-slicker's dream of moving back to the land. But who knew dreaming was such hard work?

Their chicken flock began with a trip to D&B and the purchase of 90 identical yellow chicks ($3.50 each). A picture chart assured that they were taking home two different breeds and mostly pullets (females under 1-year-old). Much like fortune telling, sexing chicks is a complicated, mystical process that demands a good deal of faith and patience from paying customers. The Feuchts, after a year of fresh drumsticks, some local bartering for red meat and a 10 percent natural death rate, now maintain a winter flock of about 50, including 14 enthusiastic roosters. Only darkness or death can stop these males from strutting their stuff. With puffed chests and crimson combs, these loud braggarts ensure the eggs are fertilized. Their sole purpose is to annoy and refurbish the flock. The closest neighbors, along with five buffalo wandering their yard, live two merciful acres away. "Dawn can be wicked," Richard said, shaking his head.

We walk among shiny Black Australorps and rare Buckeyes, all brown and fat. "Roasters and layers," as Richard calls them, these hens peck endlessly at invisible gems around our feet, their soft cooing and clucking a kind of soothing agri-white noise in the prairie's silence. The wind is uncommonly quiet. Richard notes that if the flock survives this first winter, they will earn the title of "preservationist" breeders.

"We chose Buckeyes not by coincidence," he said. "Ohio is the Buckeye State."

"I don't even like eggs," said Cheryl, stepping gingerly among the Australorps. Yet she commutes to Hailey for her day job at Power Engineers and returns home each night, looking forward to chicken chores. "I enjoy having them around. It's relaxing. And they taste so much better than store-bought chickens." The conversation is beginning to sway dangerously close to sharp objects and an ugly Aunt-Grace flashback. "I prefer fish," I add abruptly. For the record, no chickens were harmed in the writing of this article.

"The smaller the comb, the better the chicken will winter," said Richard, a third-generation farmer. This will be the first winter for the Feucht flocks, and the couple openly wonders what will happen, "as the snow drifts higher and the fence gets shorter."

The Australorps' black plumage glistens green and purple, obsidian in the sun. Originally from Australia (and named as if they were a baseball team), the breed is calm, friendly and offers dependable caches of light-brown eggs. Inspecting the nests, I feel a childish excitement finding two eggs in the straw. "Production goes up as the days get longer—and vice versa," Cheryl said. "What we don't eat, we sell or trade." When the nearest grocery store is 25 miles away, raising chickens makes egg-cellent sense.

However, the romance of turning your patio into a barnyard should not be exaggerated. Chicks are like toddlers: God made them tiny and cute so you don't kill them for demanding so much attention.

Hatchlings must be kept warm for four weeks in incubators or homemade adaptations. A bathtub works. Line it with cardboard or wood shavings, apply a heat lamp until the temperature hits 90 degrees Fahrenheit (be vigilant, or you will find a tiny meal or a bonfire in your bathroom). Feed, water, clean and repeat, repeat, repeat while adjusting the temperature down one degree each day and thinking it would be more practical to fill your bathtub with goldfish. The joy of wing clipping awaits. Twice. Next, coop and roost construction—or better yet, buy a ready-made, shipped-to-your-door plastic Eggloo.

One must also consider economics, but not too closely.

In 1948, a dozen eggs cost 55 cents. The average family earned less than $10 a day or the equivalent of 17 dozen eggs. No wonder so many housewives saw the economic genius of adopting chickens. The term "nest egg" actually originated with this homespun method of earning extra cash. Today, a dozen mass-produced eggs cost as little as $1.29. Factored for inflation, that's $7.

I didn't expect math in a chicken story, but I estimate the cost of raising your own dozen eggs could buy you a tank of gas (or cost you a home if you're inept with the heating lamp). The price of cheap food, however, isn't cheap. The carbon footprint of that drumstick you're eating may be huge. Don't forget to savor the taste of the pesticide-laden feed, growth-hormone additives and chemically injected preservatives.

CHICKS ARE LIKE

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TODDLERS: GOD MADE

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SO MUCH ATTENTION.

CHERYL FEUCHT

Nutrition alone is reason enough to eat organic and local, insists Dick Springs. He and his wife, Melinda, founded the Sustainability Center in Hailey where most of the food has traveled no more than 50 miles to get to your plate. "One fresh egg has 7 percent more beta carotene, two-thirds more vitamin A, twice the Omega 3s, three times the vitamin E, with one-third less cholesterol and one-quarter less saturated fat," said Dick. All this good news is available for about $5 a dozen (no wing-clipping required) at the Sustainability Center, Idaho's Bounty and local grocery stores.

Hailey residents Jack and Connie McCabe are not into chickens for the money or the meat. "It's an interesting and enjoyable experiment," says Jack. Comfortably retired, living two blocks from Atkinsons' grocery store, they readily admit convenience played no part in their decision to test the city of Hailey's new ordinance. "Chickens need pet-sitters," Connie said, "so we don't travel that much." Their beautifully remodeled 1920s home and immaculate landscaping offer no hint of livestock. Theirs is designer barnyard décor—as are their chickens. No ordinary roasters need apply at this address—imagine Rio's Carnival on a Paris runway.

Bubbles is a champagne-colored Buff Orpington. I fight the unadvised urge to stroke her down coat, fluffy and luxurious as light mink. La Fonda is a silver-laced Wyandotte, inspired by a character in *Napoleon Dynamite*. She is a feathered variation on Victoria's Secret in black, white and red. A Rhode Island Red is called Fifi Deux, carrying the mantle for an earlier and beloved predecessor. Another black and white, a Barred Rock, closely resembles the Wyandotte, but clearly resides at the bottom of the pecking order. Her name is Rodney King, and she suffers from mild intimidation and rejection, especially from a showy caramel-colored light Brahma rightly called Nemesis. This she-devil-hen wears feathers on her feet and acts like she's covered in diamonds.

Touring the coop, Jack points out his viewing bench. He sits here on summer evenings with a glass of good merlot, watching his chickens cluck happily around their luxury digs. The bench is now covered in snow, but I take a seat anyway.

This poultry reality show offers far more interesting fare than anything on television.

7 DAYS TO SUSTAINABLE SUSTENANCE

Trevon traded his usual pre-packaged menu for fresh, sustainable cuisine. Among many other culinary delights, he produced this succulent beef roast, baked with Idaho russet potatoes, yellow onions and organic cherry tomatoes.

Trevon Milliard, Kraft connoisseur, embarks on a week of eating sustainably.

Photos by David N. Seelig.

I'm that guy you see at Albertsons piling 10 boxes of Pasta Roni onto the conveyor belt for $10.

Weekly specials determine my week's meals, always have. I try to eat healthily, rarely succumbing to candy, chips, soda or other goodies. But my concern has never extended beyond my body and wallet to the more altruistic purpose of "sustainability." Perhaps that's what prompted my editor to suggest I not just write about "how to eat sustainably in the Wood River Valley" (as originally planned), but become the lab rat in my own experiment.

Challenge accepted. I would eat sustainably for one week.

First up: Determine the parameters of "sustainable food." Presented with my assignment, I immediately concluded that sustainable meant all-local food. My first thought was, "I'll be washing down a lot of potatoes and onions."

When I moved to Idaho in late August, I bought a five-pound bag of spuds in the spirit of donning my new Idahoan identity. A month later, I broke the bag tie to discover more sprouts than potatoes.

For a guide to my presumed sustainable suffering, I turned to John Turenne. His company, Sustainable Food Systems, has led more than 25 American schools and hospitals (including St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center) through the voluntary change of offering sustainable meals.

Turenne's first words were reassuring. Eating only locally produced food sets the bar too high. It establishes an unreasonable expectation of how to live. While it can be done for a week by eating seasonally, the question is: Can you consistently live that way? Some things, like coffee, aren't grown anywhere in the entire United States. Going by the local-only rule means you'd never drink a sip again.

According to Turenne, sustainability isn't only about sustaining the local economy; it's about sustaining a person's health, the world's environment and social well-being, too. To best achieve this, he sets out four pillars of sustainable food: economic, environmental, social and nutritional. "If your choice supports and promotes any of these you are on the right track. Just try to do as much of these as you can."`

I quickly discovered that shopping sustainably means frequenting multiple locations and buying food in its raw form. No pizza rolls or frozen dinners for me.

Going back to the coffee example, locally grown beans aren't available, but you can support a local roaster like Lizzy's Fresh Coffee in Ketchum. The beans aren't local, but by purchasing Liz Roquet's organic, fair-trade beans, you're meeting three out of the four pillars.

Armed with my four pillars, my experiment began.

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Moving beyond the freezer aisles of Albertsons and Atkinsons', I was surprised to discover an array of foods fitting my assignment, including organic options for almost everything. And you can't miss the Idaho produce. Both stores loudly and proudly promote their Idaho apples, pears,

Trevon's top 3 sustainable meals

1 **Homemade cheese pizza**
Made with whole wheat crust from Canyon Bounty Farm in Nampa, marinara sauce from Nonnas LLC in Hailey and Idaho white cheddar cheese from Ballard Family Dairy & Cheese in Gooding.

2 **Banana bread French toast**
Made with gluten-free chocolate walnut banana bread from Pastries with a Purpose in Hailey, brown eggs from Church's Backyard Farm in Banks, 2 percent milk from Cloverleaf Creamery in Buhl, nutmeg and cinnamon.

potatoes and onions, which are usually pretty cheap.

But to get locally produced staples like eggs, milk, bread, cheese, meat and whatever is available for the time of year—especially in the dead of winter when farmers' markets aren't an option—the co-ops offer a good alternative.

Dick and Melinda Springs started The Sustainability Center in Hailey last year, running it out of an old, white Forest Service building with green trim on River Street.

Walking into the center, I am greeted by a mingled mix of aromas, earthy smells reminiscent of a farm. Food here isn't hermetically sealed, but instead is strewn out in grouped displays, the smells allowed to meander freely inside the chilly building.

Behind a makeshift cashier's stand sits Dick Springs. A yellow legal pad used for jotting down sales is perched on a glass table next to a hand-held calculator. Behind Springs stand two tall freezers full of free-range, grass-fed chickens from his south-county Kelok Illahee Farm. A five-gallon jug of Vee Bee Honey from Quigley Canyon sits on another table, along with no-spray potatoes, winter squash and specialty preserves from Carey.

Most of the food comes from within 25 miles. Springs adheres to the locavore philosophy, and believes people can and should eat entirely local. "What did people do here in the 1880s?" he asked. "Would you have to give some things up? Yes. But these are things that can be done, that were done."

Local food usually meets all four of Turenne's sustainable pillars. Being naturally grown makes it environmentally friendly and nutritional. The food doesn't have to travel across the continent, making the carbon footprint a lot smaller. And local farmers largely employ socially acceptable practices. To find out for sure, Springs said, just ask. "I can give you almost every farmer's life history," he said. "I can vouch for everything. That's one thing we sell unspoken here, trust."

The longer-standing co-op of the area is Idaho's Bounty, which has a user-friendly Web site www.idahosbounty.org, for perusing all its fruits, vegetables, herbs, dairy products, meat, bread and much more. Weekly orders can be filled online and groceries picked up in either Hailey or Ketchum. The Web site also offers producers' information for every item, giving the location and even contact information.

That type of intimacy with my food was the most fulfilling aspect of this experiment. I spent about 30 percent more than usual ($99 compared to $76 for my weekly bargain items), but none of my meals were pre-prepared in frozen packages with ingredient labels reading like a foreign language. And my dinners usually lasted multiple nights because I had to prepare them from scratch in large quantities, and they were more fulfilling.

When I opened the oven that first night and peeled the aluminum foil off the edge of the 2-inch-deep pan—steam fogging my glasses—I could easily identify every ingredient that lay cooked beneath: beef, yellow onions, russet potatoes and organic cherry tomatoes, with a little salt and pepper. Nothing else. The smell leapt out of the pan, and the pool of juices within was just a coalescence from the foods, no water or preservatives added. When it came to the taste, I had never enjoyed potatoes this much—besides French fries, of course.

And this was just my Monday dinner. I had six more days to go. What would my next creation be? Banana bread French toast? Homemade pizza?

In reality, a 30 percent increase is too much for me to endure week after week. However, I went from one extreme to the other: bargain buyer to sustainable shopper. Not everyone needs to take such a giant leap. Just start with a hop.

I'm not going to boycott Totino's frozen pizza, Velveeta or my favorite box of Pasta Roni—Angel Hair Pasta with Herbs. But I'll definitely be buying some of my weekly items with sustainability in mind and, as Turenne put it, trying to do as much as I can. That food was far more enjoyable anyway.

3 Cheese hamburger and fries
Made with grass-fed ground beef from Mesquite Cattle Co. in Middleton, white cheddar from Ballard Family Dairy & Cheese in Gooding, Rosemary Whole Wheat Beer Bread from Fair Mountain Farm in Fairfield, and Idaho russet potatoes.

FARM TO TABLE MARKETPLACE

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