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“‘GREEN’ TO US IS ACTUALLY THREE FACETS OF HOME CONSTRUCTION, AND FOR YEARS WE HAVE FOLLOWED THESE PRACTICES ON EVERY HOME WE BUILD.”

BUILDER STEVE WIGGINS, AS TOLD TO FREDERICK JERANT

It's had a very positive impact on us, partly because we've been ahead of the curve on many common green trends. And that means we're in an excellent position to meet our clients' needs and requests. “Green” to us is actually three facets of home construction, and for years we have followed these practices on every home we build.

We develop designs that accommodate the site. For example, we would build the lower level of a hillside home into the hill itself. That lets us take advantage of its natural insulating properties. For ranch-style homes, we first track the sun's path and then incorporate the proper shading to allow large windows that show off the magnificent views while minimizing heat gain.

We use reclaimed or recycled products wherever we can. Our construction techniques rely on sustainable materials such as bamboo, which is quick to replenish itself. For Mirabel 321, one of our showcase homes, we worked with Argent Interiors of Scottsdale, Arizona, to select flooring materials, paints, fibers, and other materials with low-VOC content. This is important because Regency homes are designed to minimize uncontrolled outside-air infiltration.

We also select Energy Star-certified appliances to minimize energy costs, use tankless water heaters, and high-SEER-rated air conditioners. Depending on the client, there will be trade-offs between saving the planet and saving money, but we'll work with them to attain their desired level of sustainability.

Mirabel 321 demonstrates all we can do to improve a home's energy efficiency while still making it a sumptuous residence. The views there are spectacular—wide mountain ranges, as well as the nearby Mirabel golf course. To capitalize on that, we installed massive, low-E, dual-pane insulated windows, including 30 feet of motorized, retractable curtain wall. The glass is specially coated to reflect the sun's heat while letting light through. And when you consider



ABOUT STEVE WIGGINS

The founder and president of Regency Custom Homes, Wiggins received a BS in construction engineering from Arizona State University in 1995. His field experience includes the supervision of all construction activity for more than 350 custom homes in the Phoenix area. After a stint as purchasing manager for one of the country's largest builders, he founded Regency, a firm that was ranked “#1 Custom Home Builder” by Ranking Arizona—The Best of Arizona Business in 2011.

that Arizona's temperature can easily reach over 115 degrees, you can imagine the heat gain that could occur with ordinary windows.

We're also constantly educating ourselves about emerging design-build techniques and energy-saving technology. In keeping with residents' preference for understated homes rather than the mansion-on-a-hill look, the exterior surfaces are in muted shades of brown and tan to blend in with the surrounding desert; plus, the neutral colors absorb less heat. We also installed substantial insulation at the roofline instead of the ceiling line. If you run the ductwork through a typically un-insulated attic, you can lose a lot of heating and cooling capacity via the ductwork.

We also use home automation to automatically dim the lights and adjust the heating and cooling system throughout the day based

on the lifestyles of the occupants. All of these measures and more have been standard procedure for us, but we're not stopping there. Right now, we're building a home that we expect to be LEED certified. ●



321 MIRABEL, A SUSTAINABLE SHOWCASE

An effective combination of green materials and ingenuity by Regency Custom Homes, this home also features superb mountain views and thoughtful consideration to the client's changing lifestyle.

Photos: Duane Darling and Thompson Photographic