

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

*Green home innovations with a futuristic twist* **BY JUSTIN PAPP**

**T** RILLIUM ARCHITECTS focuses on basic, age-old tenets of home building, while simultaneously charging forward into a future filled with new technologies and endless possibilities for energy efficient housing. Lead architect Elizabeth DiSalvo explains the philosophy as “walking forward into the past,” and it has proven wildly successful for the Ridgefield-based architecture and design firm.

Di Salvo—who describes herself as “50 percent artist and 50 percent building-technology geek”—has had a career spanning more than 30 years, over the course of which she learned to build in a variety of ways, all the while championing green residential construction. Since 2004, Trillium has merged old-school principles with new-school thinking, blazing the trail for builders looking to achieve high environmental standards and efficiency without sacrificing beauty.

The economic downturn of 2008 largely stifled what momentum green building had gained, but the economy’s recent recovery has brought

with it a resurgence of interest in the practice. The architects at Trillium believe that green building is the future, no matter the budget, no matter the aesthetic desires of the homeowner: A green home will save money, and improve the lives of those inhabiting it. It’s as simple as that.

Surprising to some people is the money that homeowners can save by going green, both up front and long term. In addition to saving money on heating and cooling, a green home—built using materials that suit the environment that the house is situated in—requires far less maintenance than a conventionally built home, and will last longer. And, contrary to popular belief, green homes can be built for the same price as, or less than, the average home. “Green does not mean expensive,” says DiSalvo.

Green homes, according to DiSalvo, also provide a healthy living environment. These homes are built in such a way that dust and moisture are kept to a minimum. In the absence of allergens, mold, mildew, and pests, owners surround themselves with clean, fresh air.

A third and maybe less recognized benefit of a green home is what DiSalvo calls “house happiness.” House happiness is the feeling homeowners get when a space has been designed to adhere to their moods, their interests, and their lifestyle. “Green design is aware of the different intimacy levels that rooms require—big open public spaces and small, intimate nooks used for reading,” says DiSalvo. Green homes are designed to establish a relationship between the home-dweller, the house, and nature. Working with the sun and landscape to optimize solar heat gain, shading, water control and collection, and natural daylight makes the land that the house is built on as important as the house itself.

These benefits, along with Trillium’s sterling reputation as purveyors of the “super sustainable, super beautiful, custom green home,” have landed DiSalvo’s firm at the forefront of a rapidly growing market for green building.

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*Trillium Architects: Employing creative designs, spaces that match the homeowner lifestyle, and best green practices, such as solar.*