

designing mind



Sarasota's Michael Carlson of Carlson Studio Architecture, a pioneer in the environmental design movement in Florida, went national big-time this spring as designer of the HGTV Green Home 2009, built in the community of Tradition in Port St. Lucie.

How did you get the HGTV Green Home 2009 project?

We've been doing green building since 2000, and Core Communities, the developer of Tradition, was looking for a Florida architect who knew what he was doing. Several people around the state pointed to me, mostly through my work with the U.S. Green Building Council. At the time, I had no idea it was that big or that 20 million people would sign up online to win the house. **You were pretty hush-hush about it.** They interviewed us at the end of June 2008, and we did the project in July. We had a confidentiality agreement that forced us to keep quiet until this March. **What were their aesthetic parameters?** We didn't have to follow the developer's deed restrictions to the letter of the law. The house definitely looks different—it made the developer nervous along the way—but once it was done, they loved it. The red metal roof, for example, was a compromise. It complements the red barrel tile roofs in Tradition, but we insisted on a metal roof because it collects rainwater, and we used a special paint that reflects the heat like a white roof.

Inside? HGTV dictated the program: three bedrooms and a den; three baths and 2,400 square feet. We tried to keep the square footage down; it does a lot in a small space—that was the goal of the project. **And the lot?** It's the first of 40 lots in a subdivision of Tradition that will be developed green. Luckily it faces south, so we oriented a good chunk of the house due south. It's the easiest way to deal with the Florida sun. **Why should you build green?** It's good for the planet, it's good for people and it's good for profits—the bottom line. There are actually more financial benefits for doing it. **How has HGTV changed your life?** I am getting calls from old classmates and people from around the country who've seen it on TV or on the Web site, which has been fun. And we are getting inquiries [from prospective clients]; it's a little early to tell right now. **Are you pleased with the final product?** Very. The HGTV people were great to work with; it was really fun. This was the fourth LEED platinum-certified house in Florida, and the first LEED house we built. If you think about it in a conscious way up-front, you can do a LEED home that's not crazy stuff. It's a very doable level of green.—Ilene Denton

GREENREPORT *Delicious!*

Stray Dog Designs' eye-catching Artichoke lamp was a standout in the recent, nationally broadcast HGTV Green Home 2009. The 30-inch papier-mâché lamp, hand-made from recycled materials by Haitian artisans, comes in 16 eye-catching colors—painted with low VOC paints, of course. \$625. www.straydogdesigns.com

