



# *green*lightenment

Moving into a celebrated eco-friendly home inspired a Seattle couple to raise their environmental consciousness

WRITTEN BY CRAI S. BOWER PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL SHOPENN



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**K**eith Rea and Dana Martin didn't realize the influence moving into their new home would have on them. The early 40s couple already recycled and ate organic foods, but environmentally friendly paint and sustainability weren't part of their lifestyle when they purchased a three-story house in Fremont in 2004.

They were aware of the house's reputation: A celebrated "green" remodel by the previous owners led to a significant buzz in the home-building community and the house quickly had become known as the "Dumpster-Free Remodel." Architect George Ostrow of Velocipede Architects used eco-friendly materials whenever possible, while expanding the living spaces and improving the appearance of the home.

Rea and Martin appreciated the home's history, but other factors led to their purchase. They were enticed by the structure's simple beauty and its combination of urban chic design and outstanding views of the Ship Canal and Olympic Mountains.

"We entertain all the time," Martin says with a smile. "So we looked for a contemporary house that presented great entertainment areas, and this house has them."

The main floor's open plan, expansive deck and hexagonally shaped, commodious kitchen provide a perfect environment for social gatherings. The house's vertical layout means the action, and even late-night conversations, takes place high above neighbors—another factor the couple appreciates.

During the earlier remodel, Ostrow added a 675-square-foot Attached Dwelling Unit (ADU). The apartment added value to the property, as well as much needed visual balance to the original structure, which Ostrow says appeared ungainly and isolated on the hillside. A breezeway connects the two buildings.

The 1,700-square-foot main home is designed with all rooms facing west, so they're bathed in afternoon light. A thermostatically controlled fan on the third floor moves air throughout the house, conserving energy.

Conscientious details and the intelligent use of resources such as



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## design details

### Architect

Velocipede Architects, George Ostrow,  
(206) 529-9356, [velocipede.net](http://velocipede.net)

### Contractor

Stonewood Construction, (206) 297-3996

For resource information, see page 110.





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salvaged granite in the kitchen, reused cabinetry in the bedrooms and the carport's sod roof, inspired the creative couple, who designed the interior, to become greener.

"We weren't environmentally insensitive," Martin explains. "But as we came to understand the legacy of this house, we realized, while not going overboard, living even more efficiently and intentionally felt satisfying."

The garden, populated exclusively with native plants, is another cause for the couple's "greenlightenment."

"It's completely maintenance- and pesticide free, [and] because the plants are native they tolerate everything," Martin says. "Water

collects in rain barrels, runs through the breezeway and is distributed. We'll hear the water trickling through the rocks and occasionally see flowing water."

Another bonus is in the blooming cycles. "We first viewed them as weeds, but the plants have beautiful flowers," Rea says. "We have blooming plants for much of the year, as different indigenous plants flower at different times."

"The end result," Rea says, "is that living conscientiously not only improved our lifestyle, it saved money. Still, we don't sweat a million little things, [we] just try to make good decisions." ■