

Making a House a *Green Home*

ONE LEBANON COUNTY HOME RENOVATION HAS SET A LOCAL EXAMPLE FOR **GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING.**

BY ERICA STREISFELD

Just a few turns off Route 422 in Lebanon County, down the road from the fairways of Lebanon County Club and practically in Swiss Premium Dairy's backyard, you'll find a California-style home with the organic feel of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. It's a residence that hardly resembles the neighboring homes.

Is it a coincidence that "Walden" is not only the title of Thoreau's literary masterpiece but also the road on which this house resides? At Rick and Cindy Scott's home, it's clear that nature has been carefully considered and preserved to create a sustainable and spiritual environment. Given that Cindy is a Reiki ("ray-key") practitioner who works from the house, this all makes complete sense. Reiki is a Japanese technique that

works with energy to promote relaxation and healing.

"Part of the whole thing to be accomplished with this house was the idea that when you walk inside, we want you to immediately become calm and feel peace," explained Rick Scott. "And that's part of the reason it fits with the green aspect."

In March 2009, Rick Scott and Rick Frescatore co-founded Fresco Green Building Supplies in Lancaster, with the intent of providing sustainable "green" materials and services to Central Pennsylvania. Its grand opening was in January 2010.

Prior to embarking on the Fresco Green venture, Scott was co-owner of Brandywine Recyclers Inc. of Lebanon. He is also currently chairman of the Francis J. Dixon Foundation.

It's only natural that Scott would practice a sustainable philosophy in his own home. While he's lived there for 15 years, the green renovations started about two years ago, and some projects, such as the solar panel installation, are still being completed. To orchestrate this vision in green, he recruited Kip Kelly, AIA, president of Nest Architecture Inc. in Lebanon.

It would be a severe understatement to say that Kelly has done his job well. Even just standing in the front yard, the infinity waterfall's reassuring cascade and the self-circulating stream underneath it lure you into the symphony that awaits inside.

Massive slabs of red sandstone, previously sitting idle in Cornwall, were granted a second life as front steps, with the

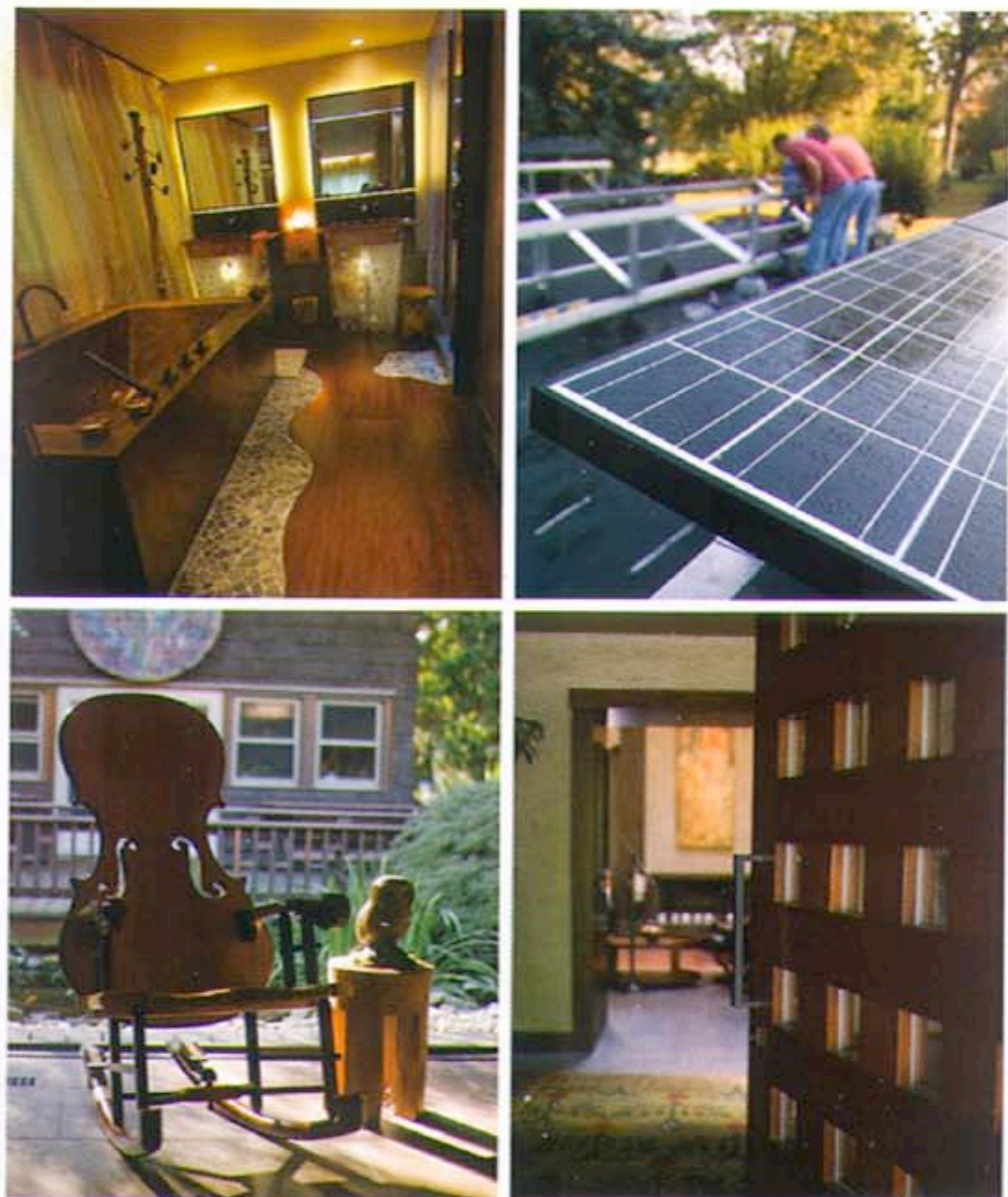
largest, an 8,000-pound piece, being the "red carpet" into the house. But first you must pass through a stately front door that is quite massive — 500 pounds, to be exact. A Lebanon craftsman created this masterpiece with reused wood and glass insets.

A sudden hush is practically obligatory as you enter the pyramid-capped foyer, which then leads to a bamboo-ceilinged atrium. Here, and in several other rooms, the American Clay plaster walls allow the home to "breathe" naturally and provide a cooling quality in summer. Underfoot, the home gets a green character with 40 percent-recycled tile, along with woven wood floors. All the home's rich doors and trim were handmade in Mechanicsburg with Forest Stewardship Council-certified timber



Pictured: Architect Kip Kelly of Nest Architecture Inc. (left) and homeowner Rick Scott of Fresco Green Building Supplies chat in the sitting room that opens to the backyard.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMY SPANGLER



Pictured above (top left): The master bathroom boasts a copper Jacuzzi tub.

(top right): Apex Renewable Energy works on the rooftop solar panel installation.

(bottom left): A rocking chair made from cello parts demonstrates sustainable furniture.

(bottom right): The massive front door is handmade from reused wood and glass.

Pictured at right: Homeowner Rick Scott offers a tour of the master bedroom.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
AMY SPANGLER

This PaperStone material feels as solid as stone, with 150 compressed layers per inch that are bound by a cashew shell-derived resin.

Even in such a relaxing abode, you still need to sleep. An organic mattress on the master bed lets you slumber closer to nature. And right alongside is something that will make your walk-in closet green with envy: a series of “floating” closets made with 3form doors. Just tug on the bamboo-stick handles to reveal closet organizers made of Dakota Burl®, a composite material created from sunflower hulls.

Have you ever showered amongst fresh green foliage? The architect has made a conscious effort to bring elements of nature to the bathrooms, or rather, make it seem as if the bathrooms are part of the outdoors. Polished river rocks below your toes and open skylights way above your head enhance that feeling. These skylights, found throughout the home, provide tons of natural light and open via remote control to let hot air escape. There’s also a Jacuzzi tub made entirely of copper, a commonly recycled material. Add in countertops made of post-consumer glass and con-

and then decoratively inlaid with 3form panels. These translucent resin panels can be customized with embedded organic materials, such as leaves and flowers.

Just off the atrium, and alongside the dining table made of an elm segment, is the perfect sitting area. Not only does it face the soothing koi-filled pond in the backyard, but it’s also next to the pièce de la résistance — a glass wall that folds up like an accordion, essentially merging indoor and outdoor living.

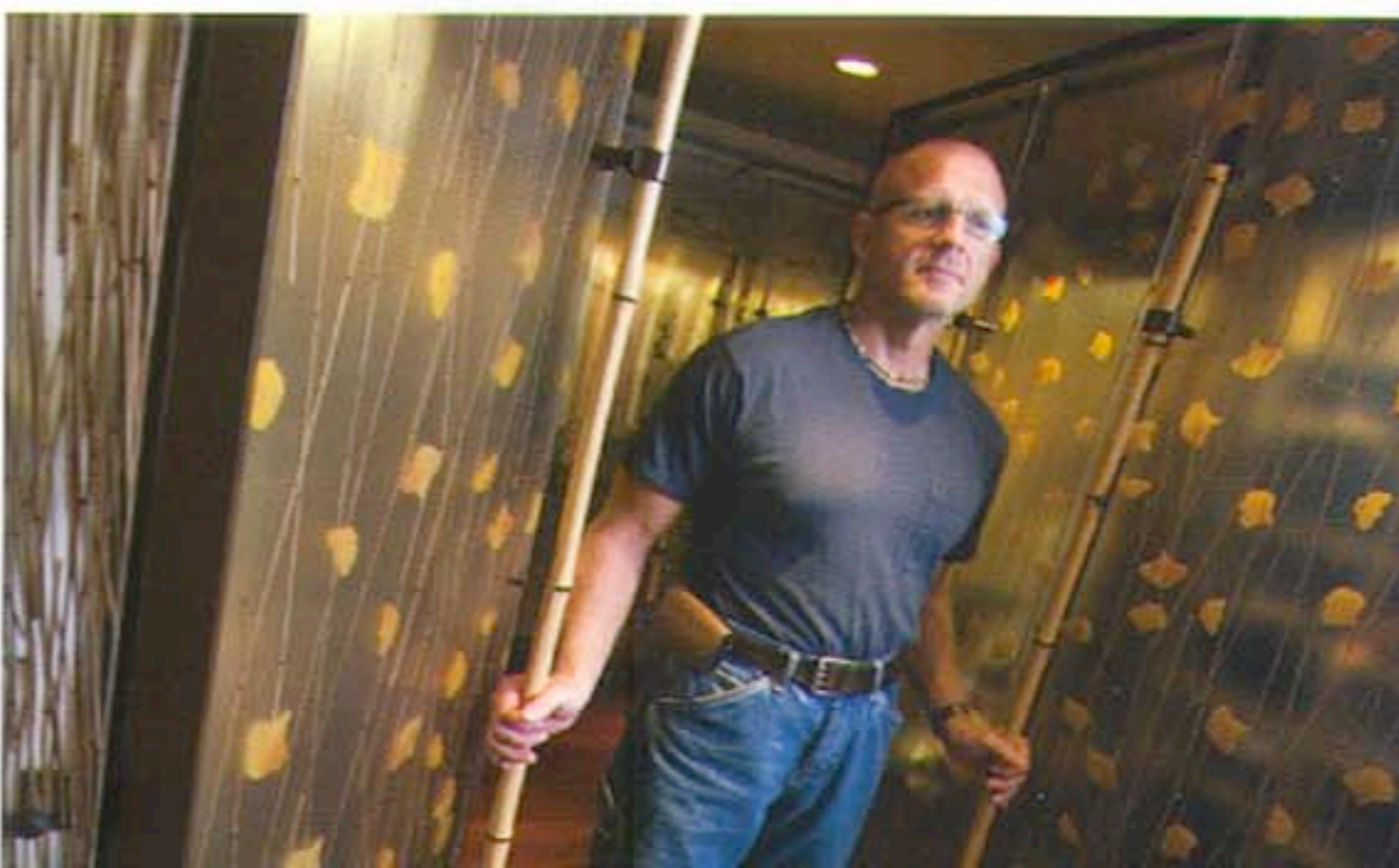
Next, enter the bright kitchen. But upon a closer look, you’ll see that what appear to be simple, round, flush-mount light fixtures are actually solar tubes that funnel in sunlight. And you’ll never believe what the countertops are made from — recycled office paper.

crete, and you can practically hear Mother Nature rejoicing.

While the house is teeming with stylish sustainable details, the items that Scott considers most beneficial to the environment are not immediately obvious. The solar panel display on the roof, for one, is about double what you would see in a typical residential installation. This one will actually supply 100 percent of the home’s electric needs, including the hot water heater. And about 500 square feet of the total roof is vegetative, covered with a drought-tolerant sedum plant that helps insulate the home and control water runoff.

Meanwhile, a closed-loop geothermal system, which taps into the ground’s ambient temperature for more efficient heating and cooling, provides the majority of the air conditioning and heating. Equally important is the rainwater collection system that currently holds 1,800 gallons and will soon be upgraded to a 4,000 gallon storage capacity.

“We use our rainwater for everything, including drinking, and we’re not looking to put any chemicals in it,” said Scott,



although he says water does pass through two different filters before it reaches a drinking glass.

Now step outside to the backyard, a sanctuary for flora and fauna. Much to any homeowner’s delight, Scott doesn’t believe in weed killers or mowing the lawn. “The more we let go wild here as far as the lawn goes, the more butterflies that come, the more bees that come — and I like all those things,” he said.

Instead, the area has been artfully covered with varieties of mondo grass, an alternative to turf grass that never needs to be mowed, and other ornamental groundcover. All the plants used are species that are native to the area.

The Scotts went heavy on the green side while renovating their home, but every little bit counts. “Because this is a higher-end home, I don’t want people to think that they can’t do things to their own home,” Scott said. “You don’t have to do everything that we did, but it’s the simple things, like changing out lightbulbs to LEDs.”

Fresco Green is doing its part, too. “We’re especially trying to teach children, because they’re the ones who are going to make the difference,” said Scott. “We don’t have to do things the way we do them now — we just have to think.”

This green home transformation is a living example of that change in the right direction. But Scott believes that Gandhi said it best: “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Making a Greener Upgrade

All this talk of going green might sound like a broken record, not to mention costly and time-consuming. But those are just myths. When it’s time to make some upgrades to your home, it just takes smarter choices to make your home more sustainable and green.

LIGHTING

Lightbulbs > Spiral compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) save on energy, but light emitting diode lamps (LEDs) are even safer because they don’t contain mercury.

Dimmers > Not only can a dimmer save on energy costs, but it can also help create “mood lighting.”

FLOORING

Carpet > Look for formaldehyde-free carpets that are recyclable or made with recycled materials. Or opt for carpet tiles, which don’t require any toxic carpet glue.

Tile > Many beautiful tile choices are made from 40-70 percent recycled content.

Hardwood > There are plenty of reclaimed wood options and also many varieties that are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

WALLS

Paint > When it comes time to paint your walls, opt for non-VOC and nontoxic paint, which also has very low odor.

Plaster > Rather than traditional plaster, opt for American Clay, which actually helps clean the air as nature would.

KITCHEN & BATH

Countertops > Get creative with gorgeous countertop varieties made with recycled concrete and glass, polished river stones or even pressed office paper.

Appliances > This one might seem like a no-brainer, but by all means, make sure your new appliances are ENERGY STAR rated.

Showerheads > Low-flow showerheads have come a long way. They now use aeration so that they give the feeling of the same amount of water as regular showerheads.

OUTDOOR

Decks > Rather than pressure-treated lumber, which is saturated with harmful chemicals, try boiled wood. The moisture has literally been boiled out of it to naturally resist decay.

Stains & Sealants > Consider bio-based varieties of concrete and wood stains and sealants, such as those made with a soy resin.

