

CENTRAL TEXAS

February/March 2010

# TRENDS

Not Just Any *Green*

## A GOLDEN GREEN

Home In Temple

Inside Out

### PATIO KITCHENS

A Reality In Central Texas

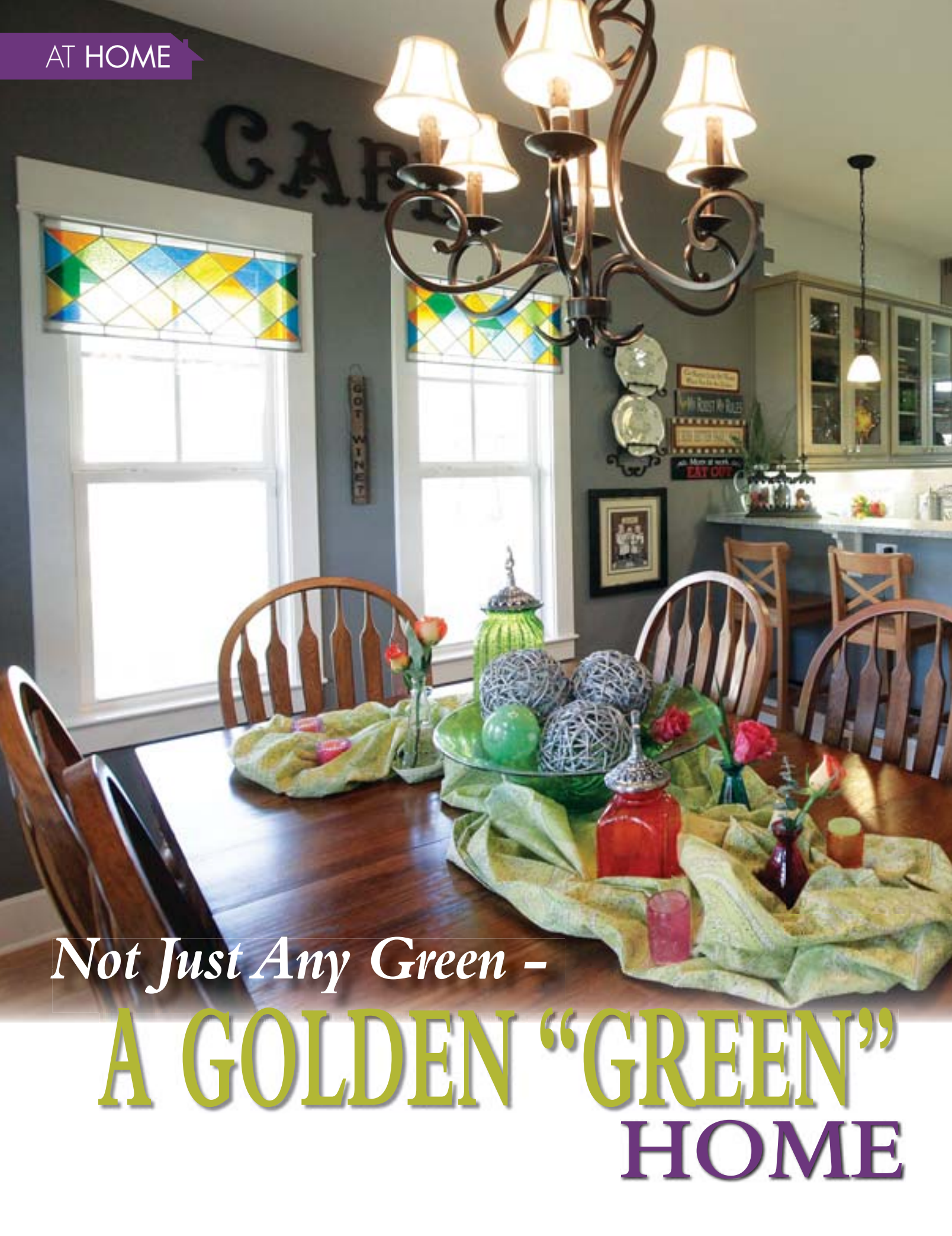
2010 Annual

### HOME & GARDEN SHOW

Bell County Expo Center

February 27 & 28

AT HOME



*Not Just Any Green -*

# A GOLDEN "GREEN" HOME



Drew and Cathy Dennison's new home isn't just "green" — it is gold green. The new home, finished last spring, is the first in the Temple area to earn the GOLD Level Green Certification by the National Association of Home Builders "Green Building Program". It was the 16th such home in Texas and only the 169th nationwide.

The highly sought-after "Green" designation comes only after NAHB evaluates the home to ensure it qualifies in the designated eco-friendly categories such as, energy, water, health and resource efficiencies.

**"We Could Take It Up a Notch"**

Drew Dennison, the Buyer and Draftsman for Omega Builders, explained that Omega is an Energy Star Partner and each home built is Energy Star Certified. "Omega has been building homes for over 40 years and has always built beyond code. By building well-insulated, energy efficient homes, Omega estimates we saved our customers a combined, \$36,634.00 in utility bills in the last year". The home

*continued on pg. 18 >*

WRITTEN BY **PAUL THOMPSON**  
 PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SCOTT GAULIN**  
 LAYOUT BY **A. POLLARD**



☞ *The eclectic island that is placed in the middle of the kitchen was hand-painted by the homeowner's mother.*



> continued from Not Just "Green" pg. 17

is currently 30% more efficient than homes built to city code. Dennison didn't set out to win awards when he began planning the home, but did realize building the home with the future in mind would provide him the ability to sell it better and faster in years to come. "We decided when we go to sell this house in 7-10 years we don't want the house to be out of date," says Dennison. "It started coming together and making the home more energy efficient just made sense. We decided we could take it up a notch."

'Up a notch' is an understatement. Consider some of the environmental features of this home:

- Special Insulation – The spray-on polyurethane insulation has cut air conditioning use by nearly half.
- HVAC – Upgraded to 16 SEER (System Efficiency Energy Ratio) – 19% more efficient than code.
- Heat Pump Water Heater – Designed like an air conditioner, it pulls heat out of the air to warm the water, unlike conventional units that generate heat by use of electricity to warm the hot water – 3 times more efficient than conventional water heater.
- Plumbing Design – Using a Manabloc System, the water is sent directly to designated areas (separate piping for

each faucet of the house), providing faster warm water, and allowing the water to be cut off in specific areas in the event of a breakdown. Most plumbing systems are "looped" with hot water having to travel around the whole house.

- Recycled Flooring – The Wilsonart laminate floors are made of 80% recycled materials and carry a 25-year warranty.
- "Clean" Paint – All interior paint is "No VOC" – no volatile organic compounds, so no toxic chemicals enter the atmosphere.
- Dual Flush Toilet – Offer a choice of buttons, with the small button reducing water usage.
- Faucets – Deliver 1.5 gallons per minute, compared to 2.2 for normal designs.
- Smart Irrigation – The Solar Sync irrigation not only detects rain fall, but detects humidity in the air, so it senses when it should be used, and will shut off if enough moisture is present.

### **Inspect, Photograph, Document**

The NAHB Green Certification is not handed out casually. "It was a lengthy and complicated process," says Dennison. There had to be inspections before the walls went up to verify proper materials, then re-inspections at various phases of construction. Plus, there was a mountain of paperwork, requiring Dennison to save invoices, receipts and correspondence. He even had to verify where he bought various materials, because part of getting the green certification is reducing the environmental footprint by purchasing locally available materials.

☞ *One of the home's few visible signs of green technology, this monitor provides real-time, household electricity data to make homeowners aware of their actual energy usage.*



### How Do You See Green?

Other than the Green Certificate that is proudly framed in the hallway, it is difficult to “see” the energy savings in the house (though Dennison says he will gladly offer his utility bills). Most of the energy efficiency comes from the design of the house and is hidden from plain sight. Rachel White from Omega Builders says a growing number of home buyers are very conscious of the environment, and she is glad that the Dennison’s open their home up to Omega clients that are interested in building green. Omega has recently completed its second “Green” home in the High Crest Subdivision. “It’s a risk,” says White, “but it is also the future. We call it ‘High Performance Green Building by Omega.’”

### A Comfortable Home to Live In

If a casual visitor isn’t likely to notice the energy savings of this house, he or she will notice a very beautiful place to live. The 2400-square-foot home has four bedrooms and two and a half baths. Built in “cottage” style, the home has a very open floor plan with lots of natural light (from numerous energy efficient windows).

The kitchen features a dominant island (hand painted by Cathy’s mother), along with Kraftmaid cabinetry with “distressed eco-friendly finishes” by Central Texas Kitchens out



of Temple, Texas.

Bright colors are very noticeable upstairs. There’s the lime green bathroom and purple bedroom, chosen by son Zachary. The bedroom features a unique bed, designed into the wall to save floor space.

### An Environmentally-Friendly Space

It is not just this house that is environmentally-friendly. The Dennison’s deliberately did not finish landscaping the entire lot. They left part of it to grow wild, abutting a nearby field and pond. The flower beds are full of native Texas shrubs which allow the Dennison’s to save on

watering during the hot months.

Walk through this house and you’re unlikely to know just how “green” it really is. But that’s fine with the Dennison’s, because what they wanted most was a beautiful place to live. The fact that it’s an award winner is just icing on the cake. ↴

#### Your HOME FILE

#### **Omega Builders**

7353 West Adams Avenue  
Temple, Texas 76502  
254-771-2296  
[www.omegabuilders.com](http://www.omegabuilders.com)