

Earth-friendly Environment

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY HEIDI DAHMS FOSTER



Michael Frerking's west Prescott home is not only a light-filled, inspiring piece of architecture, it is the laboratory for his designs of energy-efficient, ecologically friendly dwellings.

Frerking and his wife, Joanne, who is part owner and administrator of an art gallery in Prescott, wanted to build work and studio space into their new home. The resulting design includes an artist's studio for Joanne and a pleasant office for Michael in 1,200 square feet downstairs, and 2,400 square feet of living quarters upstairs.

Paramount in Frerking's design standards is integrating a home into the existing landscape. He designed his home to seamlessly blend with the outdoors, placing it on a lovely boulder and native plant-filled lot with a sweeping view of Prescott. The house sits just below the ridge line, saving the beauty of the mountaintop for an outdoor living space that includes a brick patio and barbecue area. The roof is oxidizing steel, which weathers to a patina almost invisible to neighbors. The house also takes full advantage of abundant sun with strategically placed large windows and photovoltaic solar panels.

A reflective roof deck directs sunlight through clerestory windows onto the ceiling, providing bright light throughout the upper story. High-mass poured earth walls serve to keep the house warm in winter and cool in summer.

Laminated, curved wood beams accent the

The Frerking's poured-earth home fits snugly into the landscape. At right, the kitchen and living areas feature laminated, curved wood beams.