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Eco-friendly home in Edgewood wows with sustainable, cool features

Posted: 12:00 a.m. Saturday, May 24, 2014

By Lori Johnston - For the AJC

An eco-friendly overhaul on an Atlanta home finally caused Jessie Weintraub to stop looking for a house, after viewing about 200 properties.

Energy-efficient updates to the three-bedroom, three-bath home with a finished basement included: Energy Star Samsung appliances; Icynene foam insulation; windows that exceeded EnergyStar specifications; a high-efficiency zoned HVAC; and new wiring and plumbing. Plus, the thermostat could be controlled via Wi-Fi.



CHRISTOPHER OQUENDO

01052013:Jessie Weintraub(cq)(female) and Jesse Hodges(cq) (male) relax in front of their home in the Atlanta's Edgewood neighborhood. (Christopher Oquendo Photography)

The home, renovated by Joe Thomas of Elemental Green, received a Platinum EarthCraft certification for his renovation. Inside, he used recycled glass kitchen countertops manufactured by Vetrazzo in Tate, high-efficiency lighting, and cabinets by Wellborn, an Alabama company. The hardwood floors were salvaged and refinished, and other sustainable sourced wood was used. The walls have zero- and low-VOC paint, and the Delta faucets and Kohler fixtures have earned the WaterSense label, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

program. The home was priced at \$299,000 and listed by Clarke Weeks with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage.

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Weintraub, assistant director of university events management at Georgia State University, and Jesse Hodges, a Realtor with Re/Max Around Atlanta, got engaged 15 days after closing on the home. The couple chatted about the mid-century ranch in the Edgewood neighborhood.

Q: Overall, what were you finding as you looked at homes?



CHRISTOPHER OQUENDO

01052013:Jessie Weintraub(cq)(female) and Jesse Hodges(cq) (male) Atlanta,GA home. The kitchen has recycled glass countertops.(Christopher Oquendo Photography)

Weintraub: A lot of houses were flipped. I felt like the people that had flipped them had picked out the least expensive cabinets and fixtures. They didn't do anything to the layout, and the layout of older homes can be non-functional for the way people live today. When we found this house, I could tell Joe definitely put attention to detail in this house. He paid close attention to how the space would function, how aesthetically pleasing things would be. It's functional; it's beautiful.

Q: Why did the environmentally friendly features appeal to you?

Weintraub: Before Georgia State, I worked for an eco-friendly event planning company in Atlanta. I feel like it's everyone's responsibility to pay attention to our environment and our impact on it, and especially after working for eventologie, I could really see everyday ways to help the environment.



CHRISTOPHER OQUENDO

01052013:Jessie Weintraub(cq)(female) and Jesse Hodges(cq) (male) Atlanta,GA home. The kitchen has recycled glass countertops.(Christopher Oquendo Photography)

Q: Which features appealed to you?

Weintraub: The cabinets come from sustainable wood. All of the insulation is the spray foam, which is much more expensive but also more effective in heating and cooling your home. He installed a couple of skylights (using Solatubes daylighting units in the kitchen and hallway). We don't have to turn the lights on until much later than we normally would. We can control the thermostat from our cell phones. We can set it when we are not even at home.

Q: Did it look any different from other homes?

Weintraub: I didn't come in and say, "Oh, it's an environmentally friendly home." I realized it after we had seen it and liked it. I realized the fact that it was environmentally friendly would help my utility bills with water, heating/cooling, electricity. I really couldn't believe I could afford a house in this neighborhood that was so beautiful and was also environmentally friendly.

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CHRISTOPHER OQUENDO

01052013:Jessie Weintraub(cq)(female) and Jesse Hodges(cq) (male) Atlanta,GA home. (Christopher Oquendo Photography)

Q: What questions do you suggest people ask a builder who says the home is eco-friendly?

Weintraub: The first question I would ask is: How so? Is it certified? Is there a list of features that are environmentally sustainable? If not, ask about insulation and things they did to save on energy. Are the toilets low flow? Are the showers low flow? We have two rain barrels outside also. We use the greywater (collected in the rain barrels) for washing the cars, watering the lawn.

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