

## SAFE AND SOUND-PROOF

# Concrete and steel sturdy ideas for new homes



This rear view of David & Goliath Builders, Inc. Cobblestone Ranch model shows the concrete-block construction.



The house is covered with a mixture of brick and local stone, with a paved brick driveway.



The Cobblestone Ranch exterior showcases masonry with an eye-pleasing Arts & Crafts style.

BY NICHOLAS FRANK

Visitors to the Parade of Homes will be seeing two new trends in home building, though they might not notice either at first glance. One house, built by David & Goliath Builders, Inc., uses concrete block masonry construction, and another, built by Moore Designs, Inc., features a steel roof.

Concrete and steel offer durability and unparalleled strength in home construction, and, perhaps unexpected, beauty.

Referring to the concrete-block Cobblestone Ranch model, David & Goliath vice president Ann Rodrigues said, "You would never know it's concrete if you walked into the house. Outside, we used a mixture of stone and brick. It turned out gorgeous."

To blend in with the surrounding homes, the steel roof atop the Moore Designs, Inc. Heartland Manor model has been made with a dimensional shingle-look. A slate-look or tile-look are other options.

"This roof doesn't look a whole lot different from other

roofs," said Moore Designs co-owner Dave Moore, "but it won't give you the grief associated with other products. It's longer lasting, and safer."

Though both options are more expensive at the outset, they offer long-term energy savings and a reduction in homeowner's insurance.

Sandy Anson, an agent with Diversified Insurance, said that according to General Casualty, a homeowner could receive a "superior construction credit" insurance benefit of up to 15% beyond the usual 15% savings for brick construction.

#### Radiant heat

According to Rodrigues, one of the best features of the concrete-block Cobblestone Ranch model is energy efficiency. Not only is the house more resistant to extremes of heat and cold, and better able to avoid moisture, mold and insect problems, it also benefits from an in-floor radiant heating system.

At first, Rodrigues resisted her husband's desire to use radiant heating. She didn't want to spend the extra money on it, but has since found that the floor pays for itself.



PHOTO BY EROL REYAL

The Moore Designs, Inc. Heartland Manor features a durable steel roof, made to resemble nearby shingle roofs but stronger and more weather-resistant.

"There's an up-front cost," she said, "but I can tell you my heating bills are less than half of what they were at our old house."

She said she expects the house to receive the highest Energy Star rating a house can get.

In addition to comfort for the wallet, radiant heating keeps Wisconsin winters outdoors

where they belong. "There's not a cold spot in the house," Rodrigues said.

Because of concrete's sound-dampening properties, both outside and inside noise is significantly reduced.

Rodrigues said that during construction, she was down in the basement and couldn't hear the hammering of the many workers upstairs.

"And you for sure aren't going to have squeaky floors," she said with a laugh.

#### Warm house, warm look

Concrete and steel may not top everyone's list of esthetically-pleasing materials, but using them doesn't mean compromising the look of a home. The brick and regional stone exterior of the Cobblestone Ranch lends an air of beauty and solidity to the Arts and Crafts-style design.

"The house showcases craftsmanship in every way," Rodrigues said.

Inside, the padded, hollow-core Spancrete floors can be covered with carpeting, tile or hardwood. For the model's kitchen, Rodrigues chose a new porcelain tile made to look like a rustic wood floor.

Behind all the beauty is one of the sturdiest homes a buyer can build. Because of the concrete, the house is "tornado-safe, and fire-safe," according to Rodrigues. "Really, if a bad storm came, the worst thing that could happen is roof damage."

Which is where Moore Design Inc.'s steel roof comes in.

#### Roof of steel

Though Decra-brand steel roofs have been around since 1957, they are new to the midwest.

"It's like the cement siding everyone is using now," Moore said. "Five years ago nobody knew what it was."

The steel roof is bound to catch on with anyone interested in a durable, no-maintenance roof that will last much longer than the traditional wooden roofs common to most homes.

The steel roof "can't crack, curl, burn or rot," Moore said. Because there is no freezing and thawing of the surface, shingles won't suffer. A 50-year limited warranty backs up all the talk.

Though a steel roof is "a

little bit more expensive than a cedar shake roof," according to Moore, the cost is offset by the roof's longevity. If you choose a less expensive roof, "it's not going to cost any less to take the roof off later on," Moore said, also mentioning resistance to moisture, mold and other damage. Because the roof is screwed down, it can withstand 110-mile per hour winds.

#### Good looks

Moore also said that looks are reason enough to consider a steel roof. "With the roof designs we have today, a roof is a major presence of our homes. If you're going to cover that facet of the house, you might as well cover it with something worthwhile," he said.

Ann Rodrigues agreed that the roof has visual appeal. "You can't even tell that thing is steel," she said of the roof as it was being installed nearby in the Twin Creeks subdivision in Jackson. "It looks like shingles. It looks like a neat product, actually."

Moore said that if home buyers are seeking quality, the steel roof is tops. "If you're looking to upgrade your roof," he said, "this would be a great place to go."

For upgrades of any kind, the Parade of Homes is a great place to go. "That's what we try to do with the Parade," Rodrigues said. "Showcase new techniques and products to get people thinking about different ways to do things."

For more information on the Decra steel roof manufactured by Tasman Roofing Products, visit [www.decra.com](http://www.decra.com) or call Moore Designs, Inc. at 262-306-1004. For more on concrete-block home construction, call David & Goliath Builders, Inc. at 262-691-8841 or visit [www.davidgoliath.com](http://www.davidgoliath.com).

For more on the Parade of Homes, call the information hotline at 414-431-HOME (4663) or visit [www.mbaonline.org](http://www.mbaonline.org).