

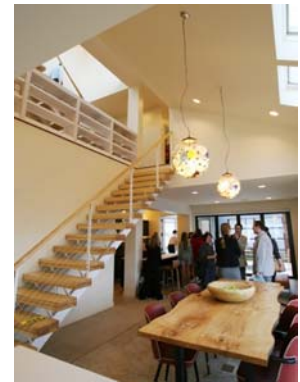
May 8, 2008

CHI House Tour: Michelle Kaufmann's Smart Home



Yesterday, we trekked down to the Museum of Science and Industry to do the press tour of architect Michelle Kaufmann's MK Solaire, which officially opens today. It was stormy, but we wouldn't have missed it - we are very familiar with Michelle's homes from photos, but spending time in one of them was a surprise and a treat. Even on a rainy, grey day, the light and air pouring in through the many strategically placed windows was wonderful.

Meeting Michelle was also wonderful – she was running around in bare feet, busy with press appointments and the workers who were still putting the finishing touches on the house, but was completely unruffled and full of good energy. As she talked with me, it was her enthusiasm for what was great about the house that came shining through - instead of focusing on what this house "did without" due to its eco-friendly nature, she was all about what it DID have - natural light, air flow, beautiful finishes, healthy materials. She kept shutting off lights as we walked through the place – enjoying the natural light ambience really is the way to go in a structure like this, with all the skylights and walls of windows.



So many good ideas to take away from a tour like this - here are just some of them:
Windows - window walls that open up with folding and pocket doors to completely merge the indoors and outdoors, simple solar shades that raise and lower automatically, a gorgeous wooden slatted "door" that can be moved and locked into place over one of the window walls to allow for air flow at all times while maintaining security.

Resources - dual flush toilets, low flow faucets, leds and cfls, solar panels (that were providing more energy than the house was using, even with all the lights on for the tour on a VERY unsunny morning), a bike powered charger for the game system, a green roof (gorgeous!) and smart window placement to allow for less heating and cooling system usage.

Materials - no VOC's (they were still finishing up the painting when we arrived and wet paint signs were everywhere....but NO paint odor at all - amazing!), certified

wood, organic fabrics, tiles made from old chardonnay bottles and corian-type countertops made from wood pulp obtained from demolition sites.

Decor: Reuse! Vintage pieces, reupholstered sofas, beautiful pendant lights filled with old incandescent bulbs (great looking!).

Garden and Outdoor: nearly every room has access to outside space, whether the large deck to the side of the main space, an outdoor dining area (this was one of our favorite "rooms" of the house) in between the kitchen and garage, tiny balconies off of the bedrooms or the spacious roof deck. Gardens (including the green roof) make use of native plants, permeable pavements and rain gardens. Rain Barrels, Composting and Earth Boxes for growing food round out the gardening.



Materials Resources:

Flooring:

Terra Green Ceramic Floor Tile made with 55% recycled glass content

Carpet runners and tiles: FLOR

Bamboo flooring: Synergy Prefinished from Teragren and All Tile

Wall Tile: Blazestone from Bedrock Industries



Windows:

Glass Walls: Nana Walls

Shades: Graber Lightweaves, low VOC shade material from Springs Window Fashions

Shade Motors: Sonesse from Somfy System

Paint:

Yolo Colorhouse

Outdoor:

Green Roof: Green Grid system by Weston

Porous Pavers: Unilock

Earthboxes: Growing Connection.org

Outdoor Furniture: Crate and Barrel

Roof deck: Made from reclaimed plastic and scrap wood by Trex

Ipe wood tiles and deck supports: from Bison Deck Supports





Furniture and Decor Resources:

Dining Room:

Ash Dining Table by Terry Kardowicz

Mid C Dining Chairs from Verde Design Studio

Cement Bowl by Concrete Age Artworks

Pendants: Filled with recycled light bulbs Ted Harris/Edison Twins

Tea Trolley: Celia Greiner

Bone Lamps: Materious

Living Room:

Meyer Chairs: Verde Design Studio and Pollack Associates

Tuxedo Sofa: Old C&B sofa, purchased from a retail shop and covered with Brentano fabrics

Hyde Park Coffee Table: 2 Point Perspective Design

Artwork: Brian Andreas

Fireplace: EcoSmart Vision vent free, burns ethanol, from Casamonte

Kitchen:

Cabinets: Crestwood FSC certified wood, no VOC or formaldehyde, from McNulty Design Group

Countertops: Eco Top bio composite, made from recycled wood fiber from demo sites from Eco Top

Barstools: YHF stools from S2 Designs, certified wood, no voc finish

Composter: Nature Mill Tabletop composter



Lounge:

T Sofa: Verde Design Studio and Soliloquy Textiles

Accent Pillows: Verde Design Studio and Pollack Associates

To see the Smart Home in person, visit the Museum of Science and Industry's Green + Wired exhibition, open through January 4, 2009.

