



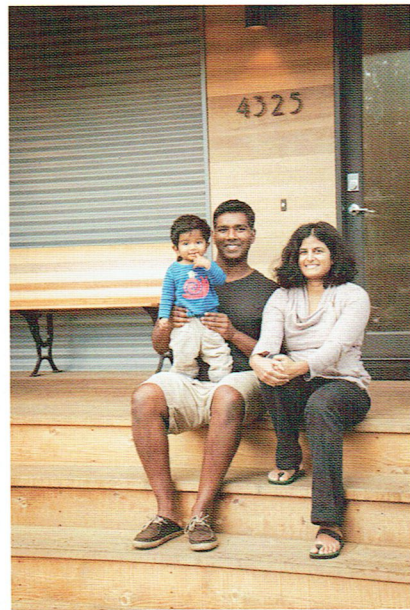
Starting Over the Right Way

written by
Melissa Dalton

Two families prioritize health and salvaging in rebuilds.

Creating a “healthy home” is all about choices. These might include making minor upgrades like buying non-toxic paint, testing for radon or installing a window with views to the garden. Or they might entail starting from scratch, like the following two Oregon families did. Either way, inspiration abounds for making our homes a little easier to live in.





PORTLAND: AN ECO HOMECOMING

photos courtesy Cellar Ridge

After living as apartment dwellers in New York City for ten years, there was one thing that Kartik Royapet and Rupa Raman wanted—a backyard of their own. “We wanted an environment where our family could breathe fresh air and a yard for our child to play in,” Royapet said of the couple’s decision to move. In 2012, they returned to their native Pacific Northwest to set up house—and yard. After six months of searching, they found the perfect double lot in Southeast Portland. But the 1950s factory-built cottage that it came with was less appealing. “It had fallen into disarray after being rented to multiple rock bands,” Royapet said. The couple teamed up with m.o.daby designs and Cellar Ridge Construction to transform the cottage into their eco-friendly dream home.

From the start, Royapet, an account manager at a renewable energy company, was drawn to the design-build team’s 50/10 concept. The concept was the brainchild of Cellar Ridge and designer Matthew Daby after they asked themselves how they could balance a budget with sustainability. The answer was to build houses that are 50 percent more energy efficient than code at just a 10 percent greater cost. In order to achieve this for Royapet and Raman, the design and construction team deconstructed the 720-square-foot cottage and then recycled the building materials. Next, Daby designed a new 1800-square-foot passive solar house on its foundation. The resulting home is certified Earth Advantage Platinum. It includes an extensive air sealing package, a recycled metal roof prepped for a future solar array, a heat recovery ventilator and VOC-free interior finishes for cleaner indoor air quality.

Thanks to an open-concept living area that overlooks their backyard, the family now enjoys their green space daily. “Being first-time homeowners, there’s always the ‘woulda, coulda, shouldas,’” said Royapet, “but we’re very happy with the house that we have.”



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