

CONSCIOUS KITCHEN

Greening the Hub

BY RANDI DONAHUE • PHOTOS BY MATT MCCOURTNEY

In the kitchen, often the central-most room of a home, the balance of beauty, function, and eco-consciousness is becoming increasingly important to homeowners. A conscious kitchen considers these elements, but most importantly meets its users' lifestyle needs. "A kitchen should be designed to make your life easier and ultimately enhance your quality of life," says Sarasota homebuilder Josh Wynne. Wynne is recognized throughout the country as a builder of custom "green" homes; he is also passionate about creativity in the kitchen.

Wynne's zest for cooking is noticeable in the kitchen design of one of his most celebrated projects, the 'Power Haus,' in Lakewood Ranch. His clients on the project happened to share his cooking enthusiasm, and worked with him to create a space boasting a functional layout, top-of-the-line appliances, and low-impact finishes that will stand the test of time. These features, according to Chef Jeremy Hammond-Chambers, are reminiscent of a professional kitchen. As a housewarming gift, Wynne hired Chambers to christen the space with a seven-course dinner party. "When you are moving about the space, especially when cooking, it is nice to be able to maneuver but only take three or four steps to get from appliance to appliance," Chambers commented, adding that the kitchen is "visually stunning."

High ceilings with exposed cypress beams connect the main living area to the kitchen, creating a central hub for cooking and entertaining. During the day, natural light pours through strategically placed glazing; at night, warm, energy-efficient LED lighting takes over. A wall of accordion-style doors open to extend the space onto the patio and pool, showcasing a view of the beautiful hardwood preserve beyond.

A large center island containing a sink with built-in cutting

board, hosts easy prep action and cleanup while also serving as a social gathering point for guests. The concrete countertops are local artisan-made and contain recycled material. The sinks were poured as part of the counter, providing an easily maintained seamless surface.

The high-end refrigerator, dishwasher, and hidden microwave drawer are Energy Star approved, and the bright orange, professional BlueStar range burns efficient natural gas.

A unique aspect of the space are the cabinets, designed by Wynne and his team to resemble furniture. Scrap pieces of exotic hardwoods from a local wood shop were panel-pressed, then placed on stainless steel boxes, creating a rich look with underlying strength and durability. The exposed upper shelving provides easy access and highlights the homeowners' beautiful serving pieces and utensils.

The Power Haus's sustainable features extend beyond the kitchen. Smart-home integration and a superlative HVAC system make the list, but most notable is the rooftop solar paneling, which at full capacity provides the home with more energy than it demands. The home is certified Florida Water Star Gold and FPL Build Smart. All finishes, including the drywall coating, sport mold resistant clay paint, are low- to no-VOC, providing clean indoor air.

Josh Wynne Construction recently won the U.S. Green Building Council's "Outstanding Single-Family Home of the Year" award for the Power Haus. The home is recognized for having the high-

est overall LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) score in a new home and the lowest HERS (Home Energy Rating Systems) score ever recorded. For Josh Wynne and the satisfied owners of the Power Haus, green never tasted so good!

