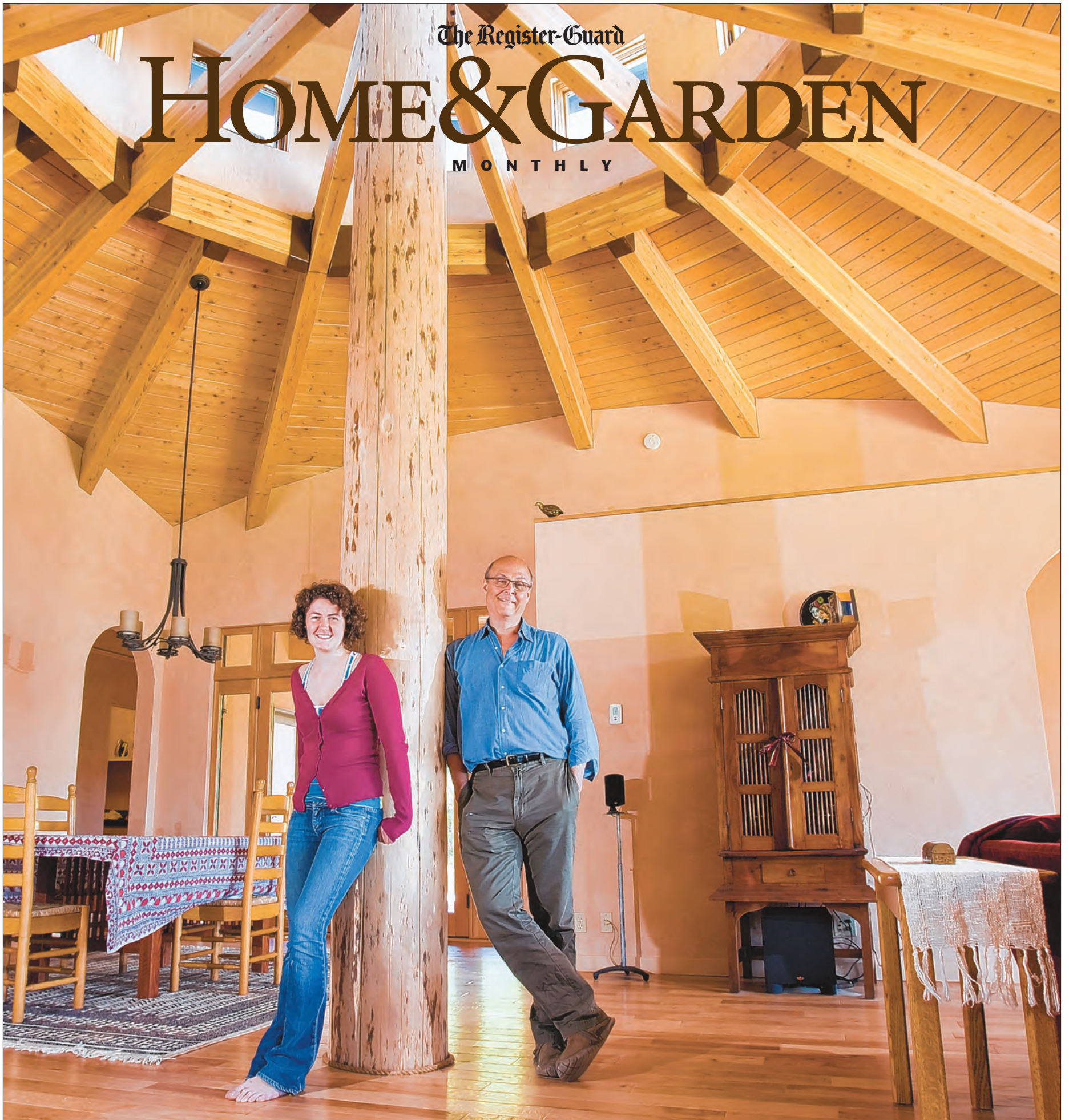


The Register-Guard

HOME & GARDEN

M O N T H L Y



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T H U R S D A Y , M A Y 2 8 , 2 0 0 9



The Mohawk Valley home and detached studio of Barry Rogers (who is pictured on the cover with his daughter, Elle) feature distinctive circular designs and eco-friendly construction.

All around bright and cozy

Mohawk Valley resident goes globular for a novel home built to tough LEED standards.

By Nate Traylor
FOR SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS
Photos by Collin Andrew

There's nothing square about Barry Rogers' bachelor pad. In fact, it's quite round. His 2,446-square-foot home and detached, two-story 850-square-foot studio are each circular constructs that take inspiration from the yurt — a round, tent-like structure you can rent at campgrounds up and down the Oregon Coast.

As characteristic of a yurt, Rogers' home has a conical roof and round floor plan. Enter, and the first thing that catches your eye is a 17-foot-tall trunk of Douglas fir, which serves as a sort of tent pole for bracing a series of laminated support beams.

It's a striking feature in a home that is very much in tune with its surroundings.

Natural light streams through windows in the roof hub, which is called a clerestory in architectural parlance because it implies a second story with no floor. An expanse of windows along the south-facing wall also capture light while revealing pleasing vistas of tree-choked hills.

The home has a natural ventilation system, whereby inside air can be refreshed by opening the clerestory windows with the push of a button.

With many other energy-saving devices, Rogers'

place is scoring big points with the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program. LEED evaluates residential and commercial properties based on environmentally sustainable construction.

Located in Mohawk Valley, Rogers' home currently stands to receive LEED's gold rating. A few more upgrades will push the home into the platinum category — the highest level of sustainable design



The yurt-style studio has an upstairs office with sweeping views.

recognized by LEED. It's a benchmark Rogers will eventually pursue.

"It's a pretty involved process," builder Jen Carroll says of the LEED certification. "LEED, very early on, wants you to get together with all the professionals — the landscape architect, the building architect,



A Douglas fir trunk braces beams that support the circular roof. The clerestory windows above, which open with the push of a button, allow for natural ventilation.

engineer, energy people — and get everyone on board.”

A LEED representative provided guidance throughout the duration of the project, says architect Will Dixon.

“The client (Rogers) wanted to go as green as possible,” says Dixon. “There is a sort of laundry list of things we achieved.”

Among them are super-insulated walls, ceiling and floor; low-flow water fixtures and toilets; and energy efficient appliances and light bulbs.

Lumber, hickory floors and beams are Forest Stewardship Council-certified.

A ground-source heat pump uses constant, mild temperatures from just below the earth’s topsoil to heat and cool the home at maximum efficiency for air exchange. A heat recovery ventilator removes stale air from the home in exchange for fresh air from outside without compromising the temperature inside. Solar panels on the roof generate energy for hot water.

Outside, native and drought-tolerant landscaping and a 10,000-gallon catchment help keep water on site.

The home’s eco-friendly nerve center is a utility room in the corner of the garage that stores the guts of the operation — heat pump, heat recovery ventilator and hot water tank. It’s another LEED guideline designed to keep mechanical functions removed from the living space.

Added energy efficiency is created by sensors that trigger heat on and off in certain areas of the home based on Rogers’ daily routine.

“It took me a little while to get used to when I was using different parts of the house,” Rogers says in reference to programming the system.

While utilizing the latest energy-saving technologies go a long way in scoring points with LEED, simple comforts add up as well. Immediately after enter-

ing in the house through the garage, a bench makes it easy to remove shoes.

“Tracking dirt through the house (diminishes) indoor air quality, so we added a bench,” says Carroll, owner of People’s Natural Construction in Eugene. It’s a small but important measure that won’t go unnoticed during the certification process, he adds.

Rogers’ decision to go with a round floor plan was based purely on aesthetic.

“It’s a really great use of space,” says Rogers, a 54-year-old Chicago transplant and home-based consultant. “You don’t have all those wasted corners.”

The 24-foot radius includes a living room, dining room, kitchen, entry, bath and hallway. Much of the space is wide open, save for an arched hallway that separates public space from private.

His office is in a separate, but equally impressive, yurt-style structure. The two-story structure sits half submerged in a hillside. From the office upstairs, a curved staircase leads to a guest bedroom and bath below.

Unlike the house, the detached studio is truly yurt-like because there is no interior pole supporting the roof, Carroll explains. Rather, the structure is supported by a circumvented cable.

“It’s such an Oregon kind of thing,” says Rogers of the yurt design. “And it’s such a great concept.”

“As the sun comes up and moves across, you get all that light,” he adds. “And you get that because it’s round.”

Nate Traylor is a freelance writer who lives in Eugene. He may be contacted by e-mail at sp.feedback@registerguard.com.



Visit the architect’s Web site, willardcdixon.com, for more photos and information (see “projects”).

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