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HACIENDAS — A PARADE OF HOMES

'Simple and light' and a winner

Green Star Builders wins with clean, contemporary design

By Paul Weideman
The New Mexican

The house that won the Grand Hacienda Award in this year's Haciendas — A Parade of Homes isn't the usual large, expensive place boasting fabulous views of multiple distant mountain ranges. Instead, it's a 3,000-square-foot \$538,000 abode nestled in on a Cordova Road site that's almost invisible from the busy thoroughfare. "This is as infill as it gets," said Jesse Gries, principal of Green Star Builders, which built the house for his family. "There was a dilapidated half of a basketball court here and a gazebo with a little redwood deck; we used the redwood for base plates for all of our walls."

Gries has been in Santa Fe for 15 years with his wife, Karla Heland, a 20-year resident. They included some "Santa Fe style" elements: 200-year-old sabino beams and a simple house design with soft, rounded corners. But after that, it's all clean, contemporary design featuring cabinetry by his father, Daniel, and metalwork by Gries himself: terrific railings and stairs, an entrance shade structure, canale pipes and cistern covers, and large, sculptural frame elements in the rear patio.

There's also a healthy hydroponic green wall at the top of the stairway to the lower level. "It's growing very well," he said. "It's a hobby but it also puts out a lot of oxygen into the house."

The downstairs, basically basement, rooms are brightened by light wells with ivy growing on the outside surface.

"In all the design details, Karla and I were really just satisfying ourselves, our specific tastes," Gries said.

The challenge for HVL Interiors, which the owners brought in to stage their house for the Parade of Homes, was to "make it shine," as Steffany Hollingsworth put it. Heather Van Luchene added, "It's not to upstage the house but really to put just enough furnishings in to make it read well. We wanted to connect with the handcrafted quality of Jesse's steelwork and the cabinets by his father, so the rugs and some of the chairs are handmade."

"Also, to let people imagine what they might be able to do with a house like that, and to dream: Oh, I would love to live in this kind of context, this kind of lifestyle," Hollingsworth said. "Because the house is so simple and light, we didn't want to do things that detracted from that. The furnishings and the art and the rugs that we selected all really blend so nicely with the kind of organic elements and the very soft greiges and tones that we used."

The Parade was a success for the builder. "I think we had 700 people on the first day," Gries said. "It seems like we had a good response; I have a meeting this week with someone who may be interested in a project."

It was his first Haciendas experience. For Christopher

Wheeler, Wheeler Construction & Design, 2012 was his third Parade. "I think the foot traffic was excellent. Last year, we were right in town and so it was very easy to get to, but I think we had at least that many," Wheeler said.

As in the Green Star entry, Wheeler and his wife, Yuki, who was the designer of their Parade entry on Calle San Acacia (off Tano Road), did the house for themselves.

"The two things that come to mind about that are the home offices, which are separate from the home, and that has to do with having the kids at home, so it gives us a little separation," Wheeler said. "And also the jack-and-jill bathrooms in the kids' bedroom area. If that was for a client, most likely those would have been bedrooms with their own private baths."

The contemporary house is about a thousand square feet smaller than the house he built for the family in 2006. That was intentional.

"It works much better for us," he said. "Small is the new better. The floor plan is more compact and the bedrooms are closer together, which makes for a more pleasant family life and probably will be better for heating in the winter."

The Wheeler home won the Grand Hacienda Runner-Up. "I heard that the judges were split 5-4, which makes us feel good. I was very excited to see Green Star win. Our sort-of argument for years was how can you give the Grand Hacienda to anything that's not the most expensive, biggest house in the Parade, and this year they didn't just think outside the box, they shattered the box."

Speaking of awards, Palo Santo Designs won a whopping eight prizes for its two houses on the tour. Among them were the Grand Green awards in both categories: for homes under 2,000 square feet and for homes over 2,000 square feet.

The former, located on Cresta Pequeña near Cañoncito, is a fairly modest home — 1,213 square feet and valued at \$350,000 — but with solid, earthy features including American clay wall finishes and an unfinished adobe interior wall both for separation and thermal mass. The LEED Platinum home, on Southern Crescent west of Lamy, is 2,700 heated square feet and priced at \$1 million. Cresta Pequeña has high-performance frame construction, and 2 Southern Crescent is a combination of pumice-crete and high-performance frame.

"The house on Southern Crescent is architecturally unique, designed by Justin Larson [of the firm VFLA] out of Fort Collins," said Palo Santo Designs' Mark Girogetti. "It's a state-of-the-art green home, near zero-energy, which means it's 84 percent more efficient than a code-built home."

Palo Santo also won a special award for best bathroom. "That was I think in part because of some unique choices by the owner, who went for a vintage, art-deco look with subway tile



The kitchen of the Green Star Builders house, winner of the Grand Hacienda Award. PHOTOS BY PAUL WEIDEMAN/THE NEW MEXICAN



Wheeler Construction + Design won the runner-up prize for this house.

Lisa Samuels on both projects.

The Lodge Trail house is accessed through a wonderfully landscaped courtyard. "We had a lot of comments on the wall-plastering job, the cabinets and on the fit of the brushed-marble floor tile, which is set in a four-piece Leon pattern," Prull said. "All three fireplaces are noteworthy; they're Ortal brand, made in Israel."

He said the houses saw more than 200 visitors on the busier days.

"The important thing for me is that the people who came this year, besides the locals and people shopping for ideas, are planning to build soon, where last year they were just saying they wanted to build someday. There are real jobs coming out of the Parade of Homes."

Kim Shanahan, executive director of the sponsoring Santa Fe Area Home Builders Association, said the organization sold more tickets than in 2011. The home-tourists this time saw an unprecedented variety. Just two or three years ago, a large percentage of the Parade houses were in the Las Campanas areas. This year, there were just two. "Also, the fact that we don't have spec homes these days means people aren't having to go safe in order to appeal to many potential buyers," Shanahan said. "It's more a matter of the owners doing what they want."

"I was encouraged that we had four entrants who I'm calling the next generation that needs to be running this association in the future."

He was talking about Jesse Gries, Mark Girogetti, Chris Wheeler and Shane and Rob Woods of Woods Design Builders. "They really represent people in their 30s and early 40s, and for them, green building is not a matter of getting over a learning curve; it's automatic. That's just what they do."

Hacienda — A Parade of Homes winners

Grand Hacienda: Green Star Builders Inc.
Grand Hacienda Runner-Up: Wheeler Construction + Design, Inc.

Category 1

Best Design: Green Star Builders Inc.
Best Kitchen: Green Star Builders Inc.
Best Outdoor Space: Homewise, Inc.
Best Craftsmanship: Green Star Builders Inc.
Best Master Suite: Borrego Construction

Category 2

Best Design: Wheeler Construction + Design, Inc.
Best Kitchen: Palo Santo Designs, LLC at 2 Southern Crescent
Best Outdoor Space: Woods Design Builders, Inc.
Best Craftsmanship: Palo Santo Designs, LLC at 2 Southern Crescent
Best Master Suite: Wheeler Construction + Design, Inc.

Category 3

Best Design: Prull Custom Builders at 56 Lodge Trail
Best Kitchen: Prull Custom Builders at 2964 Aspen View
Best Outdoor Space: Prull Custom Builders at 56 Lodge Trail
Best Craftsmanship: Prull Custom Builders at 2964 Aspen View

Best Master Suite: Prull Custom Builders at 56 Lodge Trail

Green Awards, under 2,000 square feet

Grand Green: Palo Santo Designs, LLC, 24 Cresta Pequeña
Energy Efficiency: Palo Santo Designs, LLC, 24 Cresta Pequeña
Site & Resource Efficiency: Palo Santo Designs, LLC, 24 Cresta Pequeña

Green Awards, over 2,000 square feet

Grand Green: Palo Santo Designs, LLC, 2 Southern Crescent
Energy Efficiency: Sundancer Creations, LLC
Water Efficiency: Green Star Builders Inc.
Resource Efficiency: Green Star Builders Inc.
Indoor Air Quality: Green Star Builders Inc.
Site Efficiency: Palo Santo Designs, LLC, 2 Southern Crescent

Special Awards

Most Efficient Use of Overall Space: D Maahs Construction, LLC
Best Bathroom: Palo Santo Designs, LLC, at 24 Cresta Pequeña
Outstanding Historic Restoration: Fabu-WALL-ous Solutions, LLC
Exceptional Remodel: Woods Design Builders, Inc.

and plumbing fixtures, and a freestanding clawfoot tub that has a window level with the top for great views."

The two Parade entries by Prull Custom Builders took all

five awards in the top price category. One, on Aspen View in Monte Sereno, is traditional and stately with tall stone column supports outside and a traditional, open plan all on one level.

The other Prull house, on Lodge Trail behind Bishop's Lodge, is a neat combination of angles and curves. Will Prull worked with architect Craig Hoopes and interior designer