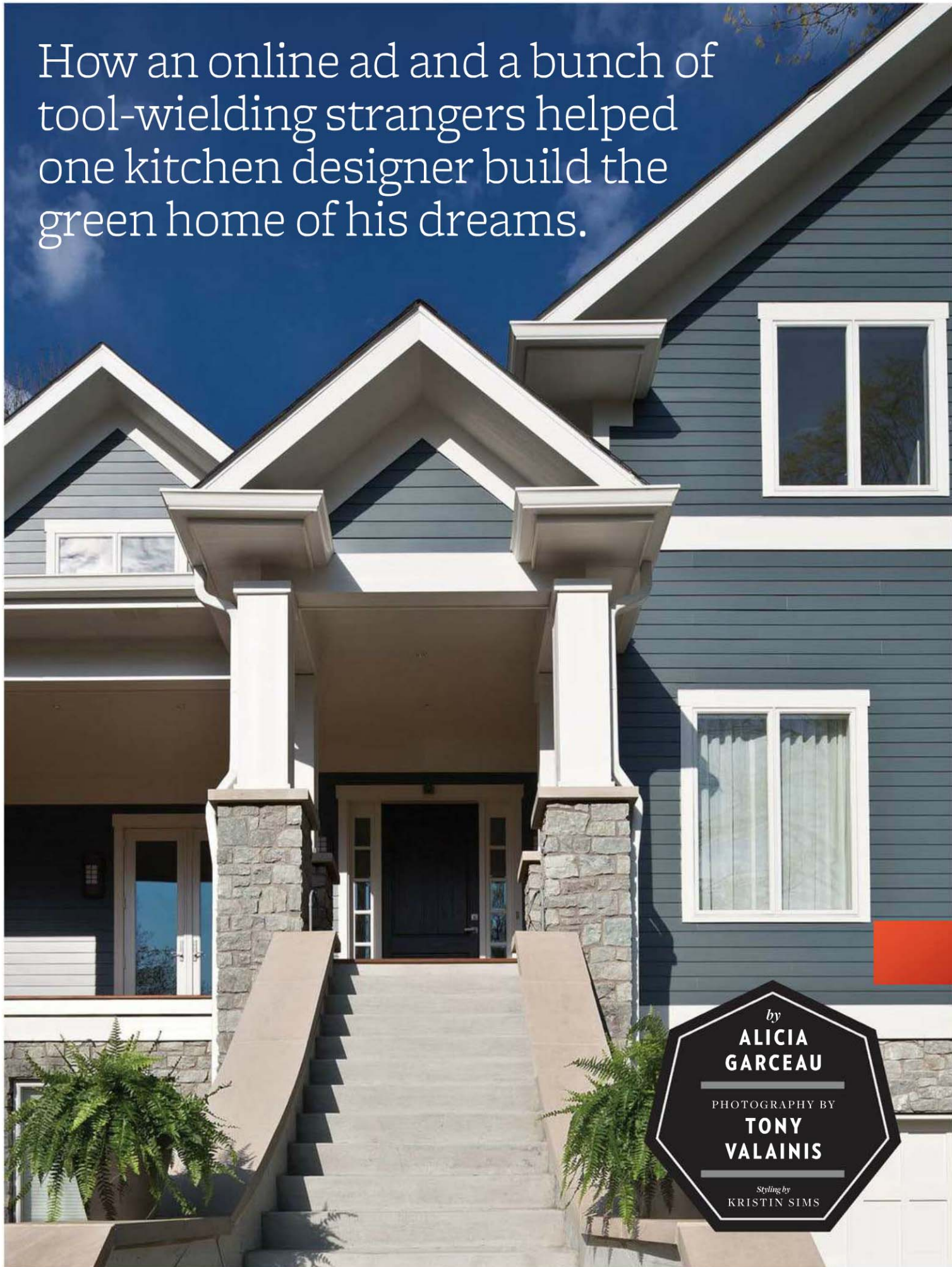


How an online ad and a bunch of
tool-wielding strangers helped
one kitchen designer build the
green home of his dreams.



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WHEN KITCHEN designer Adam Gibson and his wife bought a 1956 limestone ranch set on a deep lot in the historic Forest Hills neighborhood in 2003, they envisioned transforming it into a two-story house consistent with the neighborhood's style, using eco-friendly materials. But a surprise awaited the couple—one that led to strangers taking apart the ranch, nail by nail.

The Gibsons were assured by contractor friends that the foundation of the ranch should support the addition of a second level, based on their knowledge of similar homes. But Adam, who has also worked as a general contractor, discovered otherwise when he cut a hole in the basement floor and found a much smaller footing than he expected. The Gibsons had already purchased the house, and their plans to add on were dashed. If the couple wanted a house more to their liking in Forest Hills—a prestigious address just south of Broad Ripple where the last empty lot was snapped up decades ago—they would have to tear down the ranch and build on the site. They decided to go for it.

First, they faced the task of demolishing the existing house. Adam lamented that perfectly good materials, like the home's old-growth oak flooring, would wind up in a landfill. At a neighbor's suggestion, he placed an ad on Craigslist offering the 1,500 square feet of flooring free to anyone who would remove it and leave the place in "broom-clean condition." Within hours, his inbox overflowed with replies. Five days later, the hardwood was removed, and the subfloor was left nail-free and swept clean. A DIY remodeler took the wood—worth about \$6,000, by



The "Medusa" chandelier by Nuevo Lighting hangs over a Saarinen tulip table near the kitchen (opposite page), which is outfitted with Indiana-made Pennville cabinetry, quartz countertops, and a retractable Miele island hood.

After recycling his old house piece by piece, Adam Gibson replaced it with an eco-friendly Cape Cod (opposite page). The floors are responsibly harvested bamboo. Artwork is from Evan Lurie Gallery (details on page 75).



THE CRAIGSLIST PROJECT



Adam's estimate—for a house he was fixing up. The deal cost the Gibsons nothing but a bit of time, and no waste went into the dumpster.

Buoyed by that success, Adam invoked what he calls the "Craigslist principle." Rather than pay a company to demolish the house in a day and haul away the debris, Adam listed nearly everything—the framing, gas furnace, appliances, light fixtures, windows, doors, glass block, sinks, plumbing fixtures, mantle, and deck lumber—on Craigslist. Other than appliances and windows, most of the offerings were free in exchange for the labor required to remove them.

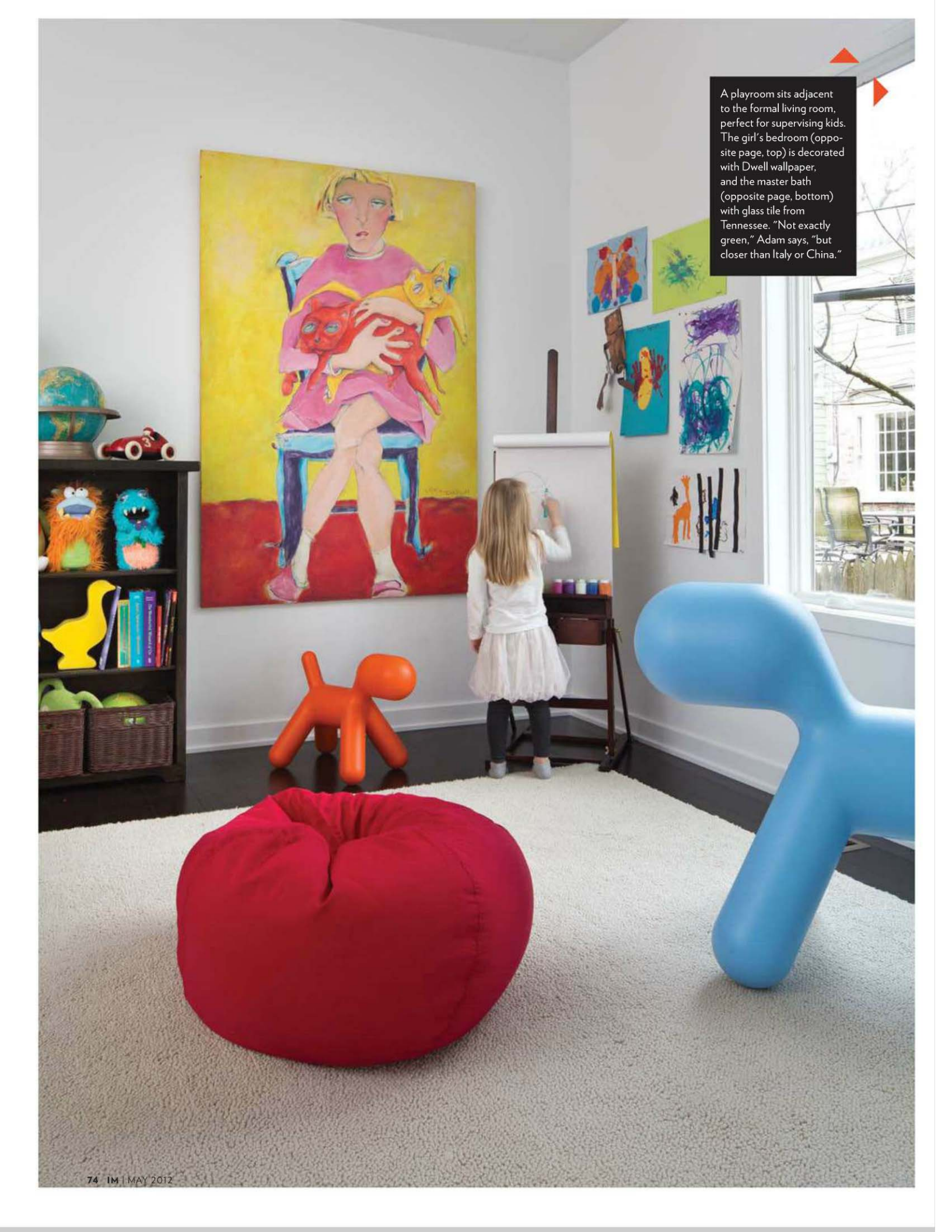
"We decided that if we had to destroy this place, at least most of it could be recycled," Adam says. "It would be well worth the extra time it would take." Even the landscaping, including two mature trees, found a second life through Craigslist. About the only material that wasn't disposed of through the website was the ranch's limestone facade, and that's because the stone mason for the new house claimed it in exchange for his labor.

Adam screened candidates during phone conversations and required those he selected to sign a waiver before beginning demolition. Only one minor hitch occurred, when one respondent couldn't rally enough help to tear out framing. Adam found a replacement, but it delayed the project.

Deconstruction, which took about a month, saved the couple around \$15,000—money that was better spent on the new house. Naturally, Adam focused on the kitchen. The cabinets, from Pennville Custom Cabinetry of Portland, Indiana, have



In home design, green is often unseen—as is the case with the Gibson home's soy-based foam insulation and CARB-compliant doors, made through a process that protects air quality. The formal living room (opposite page, far left) is a throwback—a kids-free zone. Adam designed the dining-room table, made by Pennville. Additional artwork and furnishings details on page 75.



A playroom sits adjacent to the formal living room, perfect for supervising kids. The girl's bedroom (opposite page, top) is decorated with Dwell wallpaper, and the master bath (opposite page, bottom) with glass tile from Tennessee. "Not exactly green," Adam says, "but closer than Italy or China."

soft-closing doors and drawers made from lyptus wood, a sustainable and renewable resource. To keep overhead cabinets to a minimum, the base cabinets are equipped with peg storage for plates and bowls, a spice drawer, built-in cutlery and tool dividers, and a coffee station with its own plumbing. Above the center island, a Miele hood can retract into the ceiling and disappear when it's time to entertain. A recycling bin slides open with the touch of a knee or foot, and the trash compactor is foot-operated, too.

The kitchen flows into the dining and living spaces on the main floor. For coziness, Adam thickened walls to provide mass and defined the spaces with aesthetic soffits, most commonly used to conceal plumbing or ventilation. The living room is a quiet, kids-free zone. From there, Adam and his wife can keep an eye on the children as they play in a nearby craft room.

Throughout the home, the Gibsons used green materials and energy-efficient options wherever possible, including a geothermal heating and cooling system. The entire home, from the foundation to the peak of the roof, is insulated with soy-based sprayfoam, and exchanges bring fresh air into the house and filter out impurities. All paint, inside and out, is nontoxic (or "no-VOC," as it's commonly labeled). The carpet is wool, a natural fiber, so it doesn't give off the fumes synthetic materials do. The hardwood flooring is bamboo. Natural illumination is maximized with skylights, and even the staircase serves a green purpose by allowing light to pass through the open treads.

Gibson would repeat his Craigslist approach without hesitation. "I would recommend to anyone to do it," he says, "if they can spend the time."



CREDITS

PAGE 69: Top of stairs, *Eden's Hours* by Dale Threlkeld. On wall, *Itinerarium Mentis* by Carlos Estevez. All artwork credited is from Evan Lurie Gallery. **PAGE 72-73:** Living room: "Wally" chairs by Kube; "Amici" metal bench by Nuevo serving as a table; and "Spencer" sofa by Gus. All from Houseworks. Jonathan Adler ceramics. Artwork, *Maras 11* diptych by Daniela Wicki. Dining room: "Autumn" sidechairs by Kube from Houseworks and Caviar Pendant Lights by Arterior. Sculpture on buffet, *Morumbi* by Brad Howe. Family room: Painting on gray wall, *Maras 25* diptych by Daniela Wicki. **PAGE 74:** Abstract Puppy sculptures through Herman Miller. Puppets on bookshelf from Mass Ave Toys. **PAGE 75:** Bathroom, *Untitled Abstract* by John La Huis.

