

readers' choice

BY MAUREEN FRIEDMAN

In addition to the six award-winning projects selected by the *Fine Homebuilding* editors, we also asked our readers to select their favorite homes. The 10 projects nominated for consideration are below and the following pages feature the first, second, and third place winners. For more on each project, visit FineHomebuilding.com/houses.

Straw Bale Sanctuary

Designer

Tate Locke

Photograph

Ben Lehman



Stony Creek Cottage

Architect

Campaigne Kestner Architects

Photograph

Russell Campaigne



Efficient Timber-Frame

Designers

Ben and Sanfra Weiss

Photograph

Eric Roth



Victorian Modern

Architect

Arch11, Inc.

Photograph

courtesy of Arch11



Sturgeon Bay

Architect

KEE Architecture, Inc.

Photograph

courtesy of

KEE Architecture



Modern Home in a Rural Hamlet

Architect

Wiedemann Architects, LLC

Photograph

Anice Hoachlander



Amagansett Dunes

Architect

Bates Masi + Architects

Photograph

courtesy of Bates Masi + Architects



A Cottage Reclaimed

Architect

LineSync Architecture

Photograph

Carolyn Bates and Gary Hall



The Wedge House

Architect

Fernau & Hartman Architects

Photograph

Richard Barnes Photography



1700s Era Farmhouse

Architect

Period Architecture, Ltd.

Photograph

Angle Eye Photography





1 READERS' CHOICE FIRST PLACE

Straw Bale Sanctuary

During the last housing boom, Tate Locke and his father, Bill, forged a successful partnership building a few spec homes in the Colorado Rockies. After many years of designing, building, and renovating homes for others, Locke and his wife, Julie, now owners of Cristee-Meade Building Company, decided it was time to build their own.

Locke opted to create a four-bedroom, four-bath log post-and-beam house with straw-bale walls, playing with the skills he'd garnered as a carpenter. He designed their home based on log spans and a huge Anderson window package he'd purchased from the Denver classifieds years before.

Locke's original design was for a two-story "Not So Big" house, but due to the slab-on-grade construction required for this lot, a walkout basement was added. The young family soon realized the benefits of living on the three distinct levels of the home.

Sunken into the surrounding forest, the lower level is now a professional studio space with a full bath where Julie teaches yoga classes. The main level features a sunny kitchen, a see-through fireplace, and durable stamped concrete flooring with radiant heat. The upper floor is reached via a log staircase with a balustrade made from free-flowing willow branches.

Views from the house's uppermost level extend to the snow-capped mountains near Telluride and western Colorado's magnificent Grand Mesa. The upper level's deck space wraps around the west and south sides of the home and features cheerful synthetic grass, flower beds, and triangular sail shades.

Locke says that working with straw bale is not for the faint of heart and that incorporating it seamlessly with the rest of the unique design elements was challenging. But the result is a tight, energy-efficient house with naturally insulated thick walls finished with American Clay plaster.

Design and construction Tate Locke, Cristee-Meade Building Company, Cedaredge, Colo., cristeemeade.com

Photographs Ben Lehman, lehmanimages.com





2 READERS' CHOICE SECOND PLACE

Stony Creek Cottage

Sited beside a meandering tidal river in Connecticut, this four-bedroom, three-and-a-half-bath home has an air of understated elegance. The ceiling detail and crown molding in the living room continue through to the beautifully detailed front entry. The kitchen features custom cabinetry, black granite countertops, and stainless steel appliances. The mudroom has beadboard wainscoting for durability with ample built-in storage, a mahogany bench, and a stone floor. The living room, dining room, and kitchen are well-connected and positioned to take in the views of the shoreline.

Designed so that years from now the house will function well as the couple's retirement home, the well-appointed master suite is located on the first floor. The front entrance is one step to grade and could be converted to a ramp if necessary.

The low-maintenance exterior of white shingle siding, Ipe decking, and stainless steel cable rail reflects a classic shoreline-cottage style. Exterior rigid foam insulation and high-efficiency windows are part of a tight envelope, and the house has achieved a HERS rating of 45. A geothermal system for heating and cooling is used to meet Energy Star standards.

Architect Russell Campaigne, Mary Jo Kestner, and Meaghan Hartney, Campaigne Kestner Architects, Guilford, Conn., ck-architects.com

Builder Celebration Green Design & Build, Madison, Conn., celebrationgreen.com

Photographs Russell Campaigne, courtesy of Campaigne Kestner Architects





3 READERS' CHOICE THIRD PLACE

Efficient Timber-Frame Living

Ben and Sanfra Weiss spent two years designing their house. Ben, an amateur woodworker, built the timber frames and interior designer Sanfra outfitted their dream home. The design is based around a 20-ft. by 50-ft. timber-frame open plan that houses the kitchen, living room, and offices. A second 24-ft. by 26-ft. timber frame includes the foyer, powder room, laundry, closets, and stairs to the guest quarters above the garage. The master bedroom and bath are also on the first level. The second level includes two bedrooms and baths, plus a guest suite with a living room and kitchenette. With its wraparound deck, stone patio, and three covered porches, the house transitions from inside to outside with style.

Net-zero energy use was achieved by using SIP panels, efficient windows and doors, proper air-sealing, an HRV, solar hot water, a wood boiler with a thermal storage tank, and a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic system. Situating the guest bedrooms above the attached garage allows for minimal heat load when the rooms are vacant.

Design Ben and Sanfra Weiss, Dorset Design Build, Dorset, Vt., dorsetdesignbuild.com

Builder Ben Weiss and Big Pine Builders, Inc., Manchester, Vt., bigpinebuilders.com

Kitchen design Wendy Johnson, Designs for Living, Manchester Village, Vt., designsforlivingvt.com

Photographs Eric Roth, ericrothphoto.com



