

# Mason Homes: Award-Winning Green Projects

By Michael McKay

There will be no bandwagon jumping on Mason Homes' agenda when it comes to building green. The innovative and award-winning building company builds green, thinks green and educates other builders to think and do the same. Most recently, Mason Homes won the Green Builder of the Year award from the Greater Toronto Home Builders Association to go along with three other EnerQuality Builder and Leader of the Year awards they've won since they embarked on the green building crusade. They were the first builders to join EnerGuide and launch ENERGY STAR® across all their sites. From their experiences, they have gathered a lot of information to share with anyone who is willing to commit to the process.

"We started building green in 2004," says Sean Mason. "Gord (company President Gord Mason) and I were convinced that this was the way to go; the staff agreed; and we've been at it ever since."

The process of learning all the new technologies and applying them is a long one. With the "green" method of building changing so

rapidly, the staff at Mason Homes learns something new almost every day. Sean, Gord and the staff at Mason Homes, along with a small cadre of fellow green builders, hope to pass this information along to other builders so that they, too, can come over to the green side.

"Frankly, it's not really about building green; it's more about building a better house," says Sean. "It just happens to be a more efficient, more environmentally friendly model."

Mason Homes initially entered the green building market as a way to differentiate themselves from the other builders. But, as a father to be, Sean also sees it as the right thing to do for future generations.

"I've always wanted to work for a company with a corporate conscience, where the corporate culture aligns with my own beliefs and values," says Sean, "one that does the right thing because it is the right thing to do."

Being environmentally responsible is very important to Mason Homes, and it applies not only to the finished product. From the way the home is built, to the types of woods used,

to getting their workers to carpool whenever possible — it's all part of a larger environmental plan.

"Global warming is on everyone's mind," says Sean. "However, there are still many naysayers out there. I feel that if we're wrong about global warming, and it's just a blip in the weather, then at least we've built a really good, efficient house. But if the naysayers are wrong, and the planet is truly heating up, then the consequences will be devastating, and we as an industry had failed to react."

Sean is currently building a home for his own family that will incorporate a large number of technologies that are currently on the market, including solar panel heat transfer, BluWood, radiant floors, specialized, environmentally friendly concrete, water conservation systems, long-lifecycle products, increased thermal mass and a building envelope with higher insulation value.

"This home is going to be a test to see how far we can take green building, and how much of the technology we can transfer over economically into our other building projects," says Sean. "A lot of the procedures and equipment in my home are not currently economically feasible for the current production-home market. However, we're looking to see what type of LEED rating we can obtain [targeting a Gold rating], and hope to offer these technologies as options for our customers in the near future."

Sean sits on the GTHBA board, BILD, EnerQuality, and is an active speaker and advocate for the cause. He is frequently approached by other builders who want to know about the costs of building green.

"We've got to have a 'this is happening, glad to see it happening, too!' attitude, to get other builders on board. Achieving this will bring down the prices for the technology and will ultimately cut energy, waste and water costs," says Sean.

*For further information on Mason Homes, go to their website at [www.masonhomes.ca](http://www.masonhomes.ca).* ■

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Gord Mason, President of Mason Homes, and Sean Mason, outside the first ENERGY STAR occupied house in Canada.

