

ASIAN...

MARK SAPIRO

Each issue, we'll sit down with a green building professional to gain a personal insight into their motivations, inspirations and experiences. This issue, we feature Mark Sapiro.

The Torch: What motivated you to enter the sustainability industry?

Mark Sapiro: I want to be an "ambassador" to help affect change. As builders, we realize that the habits of the past (waste, consumption, and a general disregard for the natural environment) must change. We all must feel a sense of responsibility to the environment and contribute to make a difference.



But just as important as what motivated me to enter the field is what is essential for me to remain in the sustainability field. Staying ahead and on top of current market trends, new products, systems, certifications and evaluations is a must for a niche builder. It's what defines us and sets us apart. Constantly receiving education on what is new and available in the market and the world of sustainability allows us to be knowledgeable experts, which is vital as the responsible manager of our clients' projects. It also allows us to educate our clients on best practices to be used throughout the construction process and in their finished home. We empower them to be responsible homeowners.

TT: Describe your first green project. Did you encounter any hurdles on that first project? If so, how did you overcome them?

MS: I think I attended my first EEBA conference about eight years ago. I've been fascinated with building science, green building and healthy home principals for quite some time. The challenge I ran up against was integrating those principals into the culture of an established organization and industry.

We have broken ground on our first LEED certified home and very excited to be working with Green Builder Media/Magazine on the VISION House - Los Angeles (completion in 2012). These projects are our first Green homes and are in the early phases of development and construction.

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to integrate green building principals into the entire organization as well as to establish the foundation of work moving forward to a more sustainable, energy efficient and healthy built environment.

TT: What building product or technique do you think will be the next "game changer"?

MS: Products and techniques are changing every day. It's remarkable to watch and be a part of.

I really believe there is no one building product or technique that is a "game changer". A collaboration coming from every facet of this industry will produce ten fold the results of any one product or technique. I am seeing the power of many manufacturers and installers becoming educated and wanting to make a difference; from windows, insulation, roofing, vapor barriers, efficiency of appliances, technology, and connectivity to almost every aspect of the home. The "game changer" comes from committing to reduce our waste, reduce our consumption, implement building science principles, build timeless and long lasting products and constantly strive to educate ourselves, our clients and our associates.

TT: Who inspires you the most?

MS: Individuals that have made the dramatic change to refuse the norm as the standard. There have been many strong influences in my life, so it's hard to single out one person at the top. One person that has created a "game changer" company is Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia.

TT: If you had it to do over again, what profession would you choose?

MS: I have always loved the building business. It suits my strengths. It is not repetitive. Every project presents new challenges and an opportunity for growth. The standards are constantly evolving. The inspiration for design, creativity, technology and resources... the possibilities are endless. It is a field that anyone and everyone can relate to.

When a family moves and settles into a home that I have helped to create, there is a great sense of accomplishment. I can't think of any industry that I would rather be in.

TT: What do you enjoy the most when you're not at work?

MS: First and foremost, I enjoy spending time with my wife of 29 years and my children; Aaron (24) and Nicole (22), as well as my extended family and friends. Beyond that, I spend time skiing, hiking, biking, and working out.

TT: What's the most important piece of advice you'd like to pass along to others?

MS:

- It's time to start asking questions!
- Don't keep your head down; look up and ahead.
- Learn everyday.
- Lead change in a positive way.
- Inspiration can come from almost anywhere.
- Imagine the possibilities.