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Boulder home deconstructed and green retrofitted

By Spenser Villwock

"I just wanted to do what is right. It's about honoring the planet and each other. Anybody can do what I did," says Miller Miller, carpenter, homeowner and Boulder resident.

Conservation starts here. No one knows that more about conservation than Miller, a Boulder community member for more than 15 years.

Miller has transformed his 816-square-foot condo downtown into an environmentally sound living space. His dwelling is warm and welcoming. Miller emphatically shares all the details behind his green renovation and his appreciation for sustainable living.

Low volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were used, as well as high-efficiency appliances, dense insulation, compact fluorescent lighting (CFLs) and LED lighting, recycled fixtures and water-saving faucets. And almost 75 percent of the building materials were reclaimed and acquired from the ReSource yard, the construction waste conservation program of the Center for ReSource Conservation.

"I've always been an

environmentalist," Miller stated. "I want to support the consciousness of ReSource'd materials. ReSource'd and reclaimed materials have more character, more history, and I respect the value they possess."

Miller's story starts much like many of ours in this area. He found that the kindred people and vast nature of Boulder called out for him to pack up his belongings and move to this progressive epicenter nestled up tight alongside the Rockies. A carpenter with a knack for renovating relatively small spaces and a strong ethical commitment to respect for ourselves, our neighbors and our planet, Miller set forth on his journey to create the most of his space with the least environmental impact. By deconstructing his condo, he was able to divert 100 percent of the materials that are able to be reused and recycled from the landfill. There are great environmental and economic benefits to deconstructing projects and, as Miller notes, "When you use a system of separating the materials, it's easy to do the right thing."

When it came time to redesign his space and rebuild, Miller researched for the greenest products to retrofit his home. Using locally ReSource'd and reclaimed building materials from the ReSource yard, Miller retrofitted his home sustainably, environmentally and economically. With his gained expertise in green building and green products,

Miller is now initiating a consulting service that will help educate and guide others who want to renovate their living spaces with the best, low-impact technologies.

"I have been extremely happy with the outcome," Miller remarked. "People are blown away by what I was able to do here. I believe we can get by with a lot less square footage than what we have been conditioned to think we need, if we start to think differently and utilize the space we have more efficiently."

Miller opened up dead-end walls, installed shelving and a built-in dining table to maximize space in his kitchen. In the living room, he organized his furniture (reclaimed) to best fit the

space and created an angled sliding cabinet that cleverly follows the angle of the stairwell (and fits conveniently away to appear as a decorative wall). The exterior porch has an assortment of covered cubbies that conceal gardening and outdoor equipment with a selection of ReSource'd redwood. The second floor has a variety of reclaimed materials integrated into the green remodel to utilize virtually every natural space possible and the light is accentuated with glass blocks to allow passive natural lighting into the interior rooms.

With sustainability starting in his home, Miller's influence has radiated out to effect the actions of his neighbors and community. Beyond his own condo, Miller has been an active member of his homeowner association (HOA), Maxwell Place. He has worked to get the HOA to resurface exterior walkways with permeable recycled-rubber tiles that allow water filtration. Miller and area real estate broker, Ed Borg, have also planted trees for the HOA to beautify and shade the common areas. In addition, Maxwell Place has installed tankless water heaters on some of the HOA buildings to reduce unnecessary energy consumption.

When asked what he would want to change about his green remodel if he were to do it again, Miller noted that, "I wish that I would have had a residential energy audit (REAP) prior to the project, as it would have given me recommendations on targeted areas where I could have improved insulation and other energy-saving features." Miller was sure to punctuate his explanation of the project with, "Anybody can do what I did."

If you would like to learn more about how to deconstruct your home or how to integrate reclaimed and locally ReSource'd building materials into your project like Greg Miller did, visit www.resourceyard.org. For other questions about how you can conserve water, energy, or reduce unnecessary waste, visit www.conservationcenter.org or call 303.441.4367. The Center for ReSource Conservation has the answers to your conservation questions!

