

Solar panels make \$2.1 million home above Lake Travis smart

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The house at 5000 McIntyre Circle catches the breezes that come off Lake Travis in its two screened-in porches. But that's not the only way it's tuned to nature.

John and Amber Schaeffer's home is carefully positioned on 1.85 acres for a fabulous view of the lake from its hilltop perch and also to soak in the rays of the sun in its solar panels.

The Schaeffers invested about \$113,000 to put in the solar energy system, but they are getting a return on that investment. Every year for seven years, they will get a \$7,000 rebate. And they sell back excess energy to Austin Energy.

Their energy bills on the 5,865- square-foot home, which also has a pool and spa, have been as low as 10 cents. In the scorcher that was summer 2009, their bills ranged between \$200 and \$250.

Other green features include a radiant barrier under the roof, dual-flush toilets, three tankless water heaters and blown-in insulation.

John Schaeffer, who was vice president of global security at Dell Inc., recently took the same title at Life Technologies Corp. in Carlsbad, Calif.

The couple has put the home on the market for \$2.1 million. Gay Puckett of J.B. Goodwin, Realtors, has the listing.

This is the Schaeffers' third house they built and was Amber Schaeffer's dream home.

"I'm still licking my wounds for having to leave this house," she says. "I picked every single thing out, thinking through exactly what I wanted."

Chip Buerger Custom Homes built it from a design by architect Glenn Nees.

Nees said he planned the house so that every room would have a view. He calls the style semi-Craftsman, semi-contemporary.

From the front of the stone and stucco house, the solar panels are apparent on the standing-seam metal roof. The backside of the house, which people can see from the lake, has no solar panels.

From the arched entryway, the foyer looks directly on the pool, which has been carved into the hillside and appears to float into the lake.

On one side of the foyer, the master suite unfolds. The library offers slate floors that look like bricks, tall wood bookcases and many windows looking out onto the pool.

The master bedroom, with its chandelier set inside the barrel-vaulted ceiling, flows out onto the large screened porch with an outdoor fireplace. The pool is just steps away.

The master bathroom offers a large tub along a slate brick accent wall. Built-in towel cubbies on the side of the tub are well-planned. Double vanities feature raised travertine sinks. A walk-in shower done in travertine provides built-in niches and a bench. Two walk-in closets and a washer and dryer round out the master bathroom.

On the other side of the foyer from the master suite, the grand great room features wood trusses, a wrought-iron chandelier and stacked rock on the columns and fireplace, which has a wood mantel. To one side is the dining area. Amber Schaeffer wanted to make sure this would be a used space, not set off in its own room.

A wet bar offers granite counters, a sink and a wine refrigerator.

The kitchen unfolds with a large granite-topped island providing bar seating and alder cabinets. A double-oven range is built into an alcove with a copper vent hood.

The kitchen flows to a breakfast nook with a stacked-stone fireplace and the second screened-in porch.

The large walk-in pantry has space for a refrigerator/freezer and a desk.

A utility room with multiple cabinets and a sink, a powder room and three-car garage are in a wing off the kitchen. Also on this wing are two bedrooms with their own bathrooms, walk-in closets and window seats.

Below the kitchen, a bonus room has been outfitted with a king-sized Murphy bed for guests. Stained-and-scored concrete floors make this space easily adaptable from play room to media room to exercise room. A patio is directly off the room.

Two more bedroom suites are on this level. One of the bathrooms also has access to the hallway for use by people in the bonus room.

Amber Schaeffer says her favorite room in cold weather is her study, but when the weather's nice, she spends a lot of time on the porches. There's always a breeze, and enclosing the porches has meant no bugs.

She hopes a family will buy the home and enjoy it as much as hers has.

Puckett will be holding an open house today from 2 to 4 p.m.

Courtesy of JB Goodwin

