

Southern Hospitality

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For the past quarter century, the New American Home has been influencing residential construction across the country. This year, the program celebrates its 25th anniversary of demonstrating innovative building materials, cutting-edge design, and the latest construction techniques.

It is the official showcase house of the National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) annual International Builders' Show, held this year in Orlando. The home provides builders and buyers with an ideal example of an energy efficient, durable home, without sacrificing style. Every showcase home through the years has introduced new, yet attainable, ideas to the mainstream, inspiring builders and design professionals to apply those concepts to new projects across the country.

This year, masonry played an important role in the project. Aercon, an autoclaved aerated concrete (AAC) producer headquartered in Indianapolis, Ind., supplied AAC block for the home's walls from its nearby Haines City, Fla., facility. Although this was Aercon's first New American Home, the company has experience with multi-family and single-family housing and showcase homes. Aercon contributed to "The Perfect Home," a sustainable house in Indianapolis, in conjunction with Ecology House of Indianapolis and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful.

The 2008 New American Home is a 6725-sq-ft, Antebellum-style with modern conveniences. It is the first lakefront house built in the Water's Edge subdivision on Lake Nona, part of a private golf and country club community 15 minutes from downtown Orlando. A columned portico runs along its symmetrical front and the H-shaped, two-story floor plan opens to 2950 sq ft of covered outdoor space overlooking the lake, including a kitchen, "solana" with fireplace, pool, and spa.

On the main floor, 8-in. x 8-in. x 24-in. block insulates the family's main living space, which includes a master retreat, study, dining room, kitchen, family room, leisure room, grand salon, and guest suite. The home's exterior cladding must protect these private spots from outside elements and noise from adjacent areas. Aercon's AC6 material provides optimal sound rating throughout.

The master retreat occupies one side of the house, and a kitchen and leisure room area opens on two sides to a covered loggia along the back. Both the master and guest suites share a wall with the home's two attached garages.



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Dan Sater II, AIBD, president of The Sater Group, was the designer of this year's home. Sater, who seeks out new and creative projects, is a believer in masonry homes. "Masonry is the best way to go for sustainable construction, especially in harsh environments like coastal areas," he said.

The designer's passion for cutting edge ideas was put to the test with this year's show home materials. "Using AAC was a new experience for us," recalled Sater. "We were getting to know new products and technology as we went along. It's what building a New American Home is all about."

AAC's durability, energy efficiency, and fire and termite resistance were key factors in its selection as a sustainable material for the New American Home. Its versatility and ease of use also made it an attractive option. Cored block filled with grout and steel reinforcement add strength around windows and doors. On the second floor, AAC block fills the spaces between windows, without the weight of traditional concrete or masonry.

In areas where the design called for concentrated or torque load requirements on the walls, such as from the cantilevered concrete deck above a large, open front portico, cast-in-place concrete walls provide extra support. Traditional concrete block and poured concrete also support the extra weight in this area. Fortunately, the AAC block, concrete block, and concrete columns work seamlessly together. The compatibility of the cementitious products prevented problems that sometimes arise from combining different building materials.

The project was completed in nine months, as opposed to the two years it would normally take to build a home of this size. "It's impressive that the team was able to complete it in such a tight timeframe," said Jim Niehoff, director of residential construction programs at the Portland Cement Association, "especially considering it was working with some unfamiliar products." PCA provided financial support for the cementitious materials used in the home.

This year's home will be "Energy Star" rated and certified as environmentally-friendly under Florida Green Building Coalition standards. The home achieves high levels of efficiency with sustainable building materials, advanced HVAC equipment, insulation, air sealing, and high performance windows.

The project was directed and co-sponsored by The National Council of the Housing Industry (NCHI)/The Leading Suppliers of NAHB and BUILDER magazine, a sister publication of MASONRY CONSTRUCTION.

The New American Home 2008 will debut at the International Builders' Show, Feb. 13 – 16. Registered attendees can tour the home during exhibit hours via free shuttle buses departing from the Orange County Convention Center. For details, visit www.buildersshow.com.

For a more in-depth look at the home and its construction, [Click here](#)

Project Participants

- **Builder:** Robertson Homes Inc., St. Cloud, Fla.
- **Residential Designer:** The Sater Group Inc., Bonita Springs, Fla.
- **Masonry Suppliers:** Aercon Florida, Haines City, Fla.; Rinker Materials, Orlando, Fla.
- **Concrete Supplier:** Rinker Materials, Orlando, Fla.