

Green Right

Steve Pallrand of CarbonShack offers up small steps—including a line of products—for the journey to living carbon-free

by **ABIGAIL STONE** photography by **CRIS NOLASCO**



CarbonShack's "Bacterial Colony" tiles cover the walls of the bathroom. The hand-painted design, inspired by the microbiome around us, was created by Pallrand's wife, an artist who works at the intersection of art and science, and made by Mission Tile West, a local company.



Exterior of one of CarbonShack's first designs, framed completely from reclaimed lumber salvaged from a nearby home.



The form of CarbonShack's 3D-printed Diatom Sconce 4, which uses LED lights, is based on a type of algae that is fundamental to life on earth.

"OFTEN WHEN people think of green building and living sustainably, it feels like a compromise, like eating their vegetables," says Steve Pallrand. "We're trying to show them that it can be fun and beautiful as well." With that objective in mind, the CarbonShack founder approaches the issue like a puzzle, balancing the embodied carbon cost of constructing a home against its operational footprint. "It doesn't have to be all or nothing," he says. While he's a longtime proponent of reusing and repurposing materials for homeowners embarking on a ground-up build—"We take all

that beautiful old stuff, like tight-grain Douglas fir redwood framing, and use it to frame the new house"—existing homes can easily be modified using innovative technologies to significantly lessen their environmental impact. "People have a hard time adjusting to something new, so we try to make a space function for the way they already live," he says. Some of his current favorites: a heat pump water heater, which works by pulling existing heat from the air rather than producing it; touchless faucets in the bathroom ("We never put them in the kitchen because trying to find that sweet spot to wash a head of lettuce will make you want to rip it out of the countertop," he laughs); LED lights; and swapping out gas for induction stoves. "Once someone gets how it works, they're like 'Whoa!'" he notes. Recently, CarbonShack launched their own line of products with designs inspired by the flora and fauna of the microscopic world—including 3D-printed LED ceiling lights, locally produced tiles and hemp fabrics—as well as a collection of furniture made from salvaged woods. "We need to get away from people thinking that they have to be perfect," he says. "It's about taking baby steps."