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Lew Oliver NEST Opens at Serenbe

Lifestyle Alternatives

Economic Downturn

Residential Design

Ecological Design

New Urbanism

Roswell, GA:

Award-winning home designer and New Urbanist Lew Oliver's latest innovation is Lew Oliver Nest, efficient eco-houses that are designed to consume less. Placed in walkable communities, the homes are perfect for those interested in living more sustainably while not sacrificing comfort or style. The venture has been designated a special project by the Southface Energy Institute.

The first of the Lew Oliver Nest communities is currently being realized at Serenbe, a string of hamlets located in the Chattahoochee Hill Country of North Georgia. Recently cited as an exemplary community by *The New York Times*, *Cottage Living*, and *Metropolis*, Serenbe features eighty percent open space in the form of forest preserves and organic farms and is the nation's largest eco-community. The official opening of the Lew Oliver Nest community will take place at the end of June, and will feature the designer's new geo-thermal, solar-powered 1,000 square foot model. Guests include Sarah Susanka, author of nine best-selling books on the philosophy of the "not so big house."

Within months of conceptualization, several of the 15 homes in the inaugural community had already been spoken for. Homeowners are attracted by a compelling mixture of ecological, economic, and aesthetic

incentives as well as the prospect of living in a community of individuals who share a similar commitment to sustainability and responsible growth. Infill and green-field communities can be established on sites as small as one acre, with the ideal being three. Building sites are prepared with minimal disturbance to the environment. Houses are typically 1,000-1,600 square feet, and utilize passive solar and photovoltaic energy, advanced framing techniques, geothermal power, and water reclamation features, all with the goal of net-zero total consumption.

Resisting the one-size-fits-all philosophy of modernist prefabs, Oliver tailors designs according to the climate of the communities—an oft-forgotten if common-sense design imperative found in vernacular architecture in the last century and one the designer intends to resurrect in future Nest communities across the nation. Considerations include sun exposure, prevailing breezes, snowfall, rainfall, and temperature. “Vernacular forms are all about responding to the climate,” Oliver notes, “from the cat-slide roofs and porches of the South to the saltboxes with central chimneys of the Northeast, the glazed porches of the Pacific Northwest, and the adobes of the Southwest. The aesthetics of the design is derived entirely from concrete needs, and is particularly compelling precisely because of this fact.”

In like manner, Lew Oliver Nest communities integrate native and edible landscaping in line with a burgeoning movement that is reviving the lost but vital tradition of native plant stewardship, a cultivation practice that shapes the natural environment for human sustenance without destroying it. Trails and footpath networks make for easy pedestrian strolls to nearby amenities, which at Serenbe includes restaurants, artisan bakeries, and small shops run by members of the community. The community’s organic farm supplies residents with local, seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Oliver, a lead design consultant for international town planners Duany Plater-Zyberk, expects to expand the Nest concept across the nation. As this year’s designer of the Coastal Living Ultimate Beach House and town urbanist of many of the nation’s top-selling new towns, Oliver intends to propel the Nest brand into the national spotlight of

emerging eco-house communities. His work has won numerous awards, including three Best in American Living (BALA) Awards, the most prestigious residential design awards in the U.S., as well as the Southern Accents Show House and the New American Home for the National Association of Homebuilders.

Visuals available upon request.