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Slideshow: What Every Builder Should Know About The New American Home

By: Dawn Reiss

Issue Date: February, 2013

What's New

There's a reason that The New American Home is always one of the biggest attractions to the International Builders' Show. This year's show in Las Vegas was no exception. The four-level ultramodern home's 6,712 square feet plus 17,261 square feet of outdoor living space encompass energy-efficiency, high-tech innovation and jaw-dropping design. Here are a few highlights.



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Photo courtesy of Blue Heron Inc.



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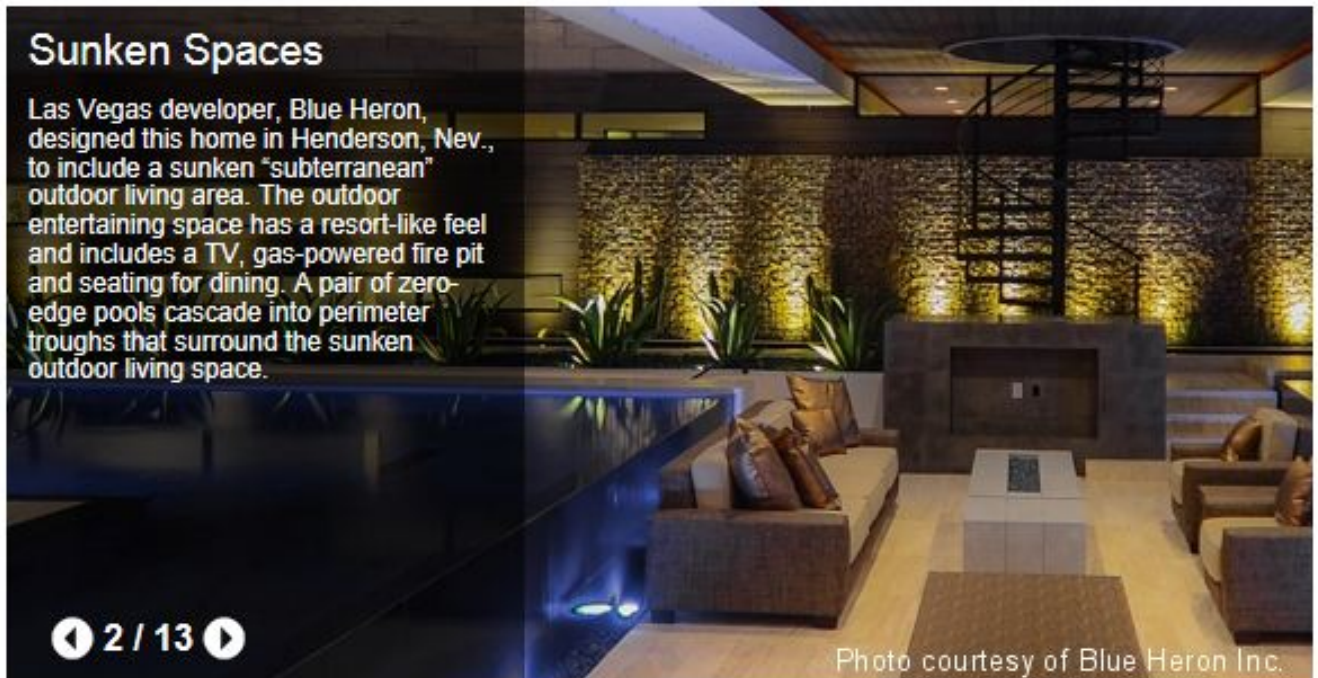
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Sunken Spaces

Las Vegas developer, Blue Heron, designed this home in Henderson, Nev., to include a sunken "subterranean" outdoor living area. The outdoor entertaining space has a resort-like feel and includes a TV, gas-powered fire pit and seating for dining. A pair of zero-edge pools cascade into perimeter troughs that surround the sunken outdoor living space.

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Waterscaping

Welcome to aquatic paradise. There's a waterfall that reflects its appearance onto a still pool using a projector and a koi pond. The most stunning element is a floating sanctuary, a canopied outdoor lounge area with a bed and fireplace surrounded by a zero-edge pool that includes a swim-up bar. It's not all for show. The integrated water features help to humidify and cool the dry desert air, thus keeping the home more comfortable.



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Selective Plant Palette

Native and drought-tolerant plants were used for their minimal water usage and maintenance requirements. That also meant not using real grass in the home, which takes a lot of water to maintain.



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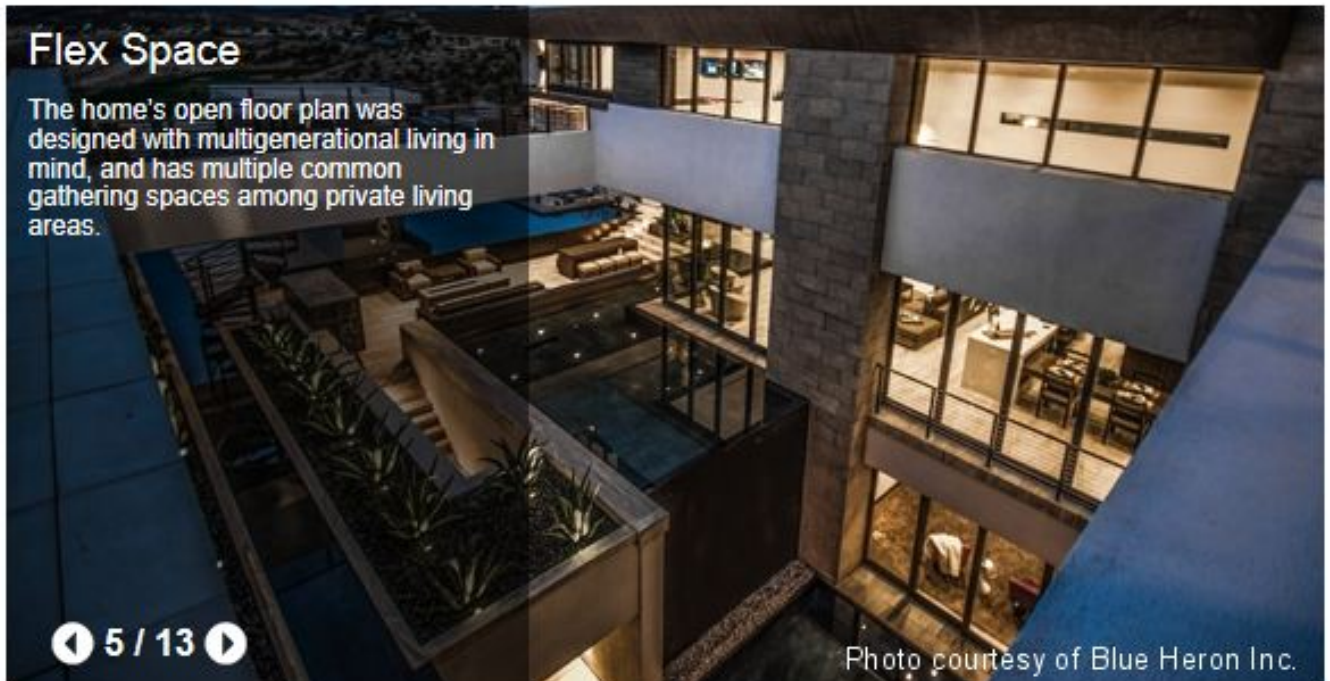
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Flex Space

The home's open floor plan was designed with multigenerational living in mind, and has multiple common gathering spaces among private living areas.

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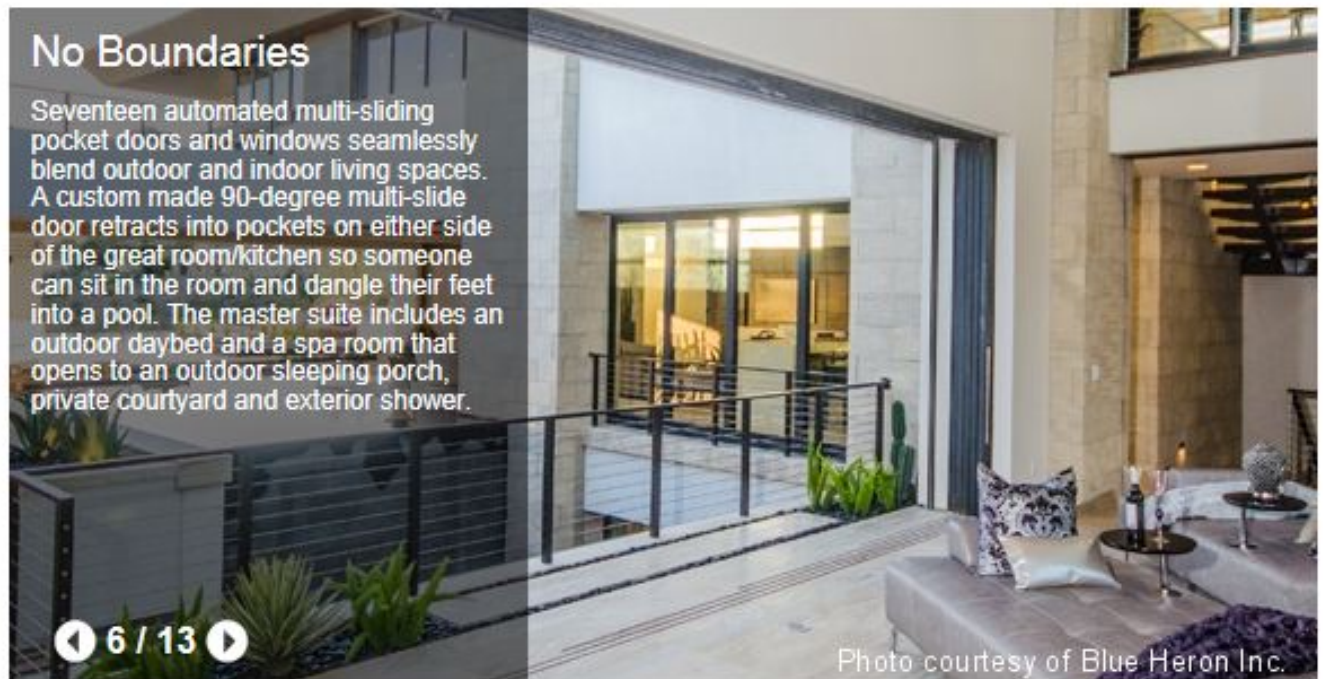
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No Boundaries

Seventeen automated multi-sliding pocket doors and windows seamlessly blend outdoor and indoor living spaces. A custom made 90-degree multi-slide door retracts into pockets on either side of the great room/kitchen so someone can sit in the room and dangle their feet into a pool. The master suite includes an outdoor daybed and a spa room that opens to an outdoor sleeping porch, private courtyard and exterior shower.

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Zen-Like

This home is all about space, light and openness. Besides the water elements, warm earth tones and natural grey colors give the home a calm, serene tone. The dining room, which showcases a bright mural of purple iris flowers, overlooks a peaceful Zen garden and has pocket doors for courtyard views.



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Solar Power

The home uses solar energy via a 14KW Photovoltaic system to power 58 percent of the home's annual energy needs. Overall, the home uses approximately 67 percent less energy for heating and 83 percent less energy for cooling than a similar home. A solar thermal system heats the water for most of the home. A pump sends water from an 80-gallon storage tank to the solar panel on the roof, the sun heats the water as it passes through the panel and then returns to the storage tank.

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Air Tight

To prevent air leakage, spray foam insulation was used on the roof deck's underside and around openings and framing. (Insulated values of R-26 and R-30 were used on the basement, and R-38 on the exterior frame walls.) Blower door testing was done to measure the air tightness and leakage of the building envelope. The home achieved 0.2 natural air changes at 50 Pa, an amount that is considered very airtight.

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Photo courtesy of Blue Heron Inc.





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Energy Efficient

Energy-efficient highlights include: ENERGY STAR appliances, dual flush toilets, low flow showerheads and faucets, formaldehyde-free wood cabinets and paneling, automatic control home and lighting systems, low-VOC paints, stains, adhesives and sealants. Most importantly, the three-bedroom home is platinum LEED certified by the United States Green Building Council and its energy-efficient features exceed the Emerald level of the National Green Building Standard.

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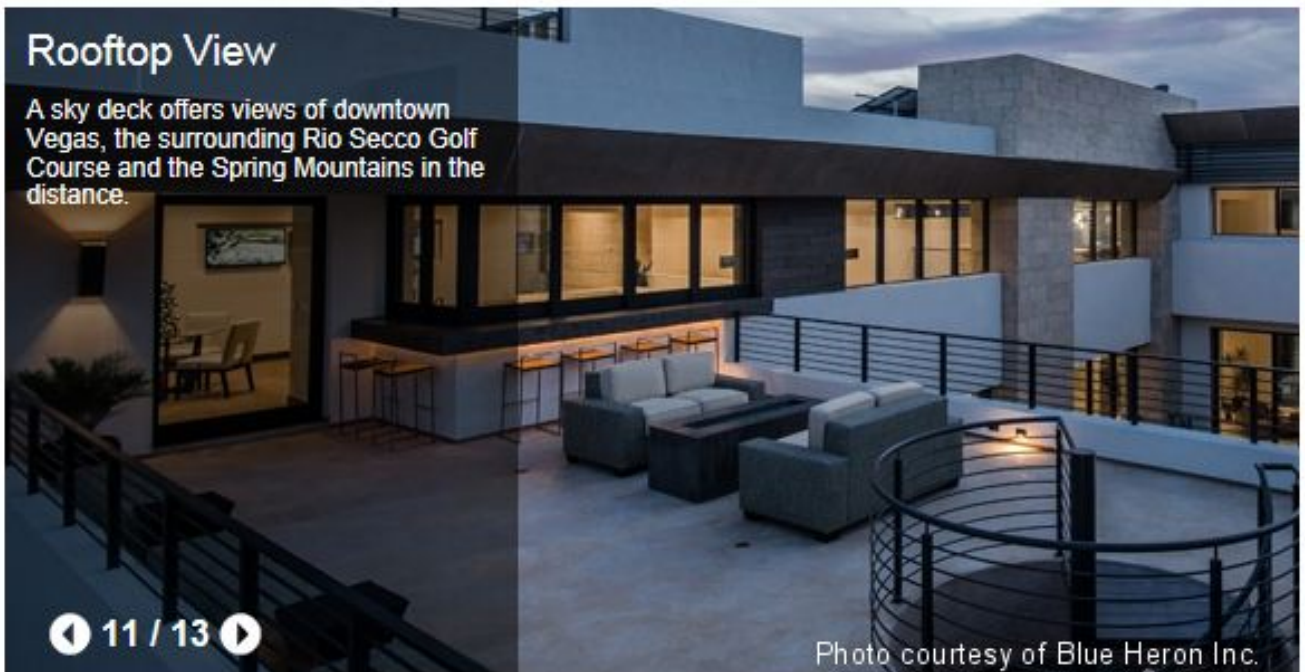
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Rooftop View

A sky deck offers views of downtown Vegas, the surrounding Rio Secco Golf Course and the Spring Mountains in the distance.



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Bar Time

The lower level showcases a nightclub-esque basement bar that could hold 40 to 50 for a party and has three flat screen TVs. A wine room on the lower level opens includes a tasting room and is completely open to the exterior courtyard. Upstairs an outdoor loft bar offers a pool table, another bar and retractable windows that overlook the Las Vegas skyline. There's even a coffee bar in the junior suite for visitors or other house members.

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High-Tech

Touch screens control the technology in each room. Wall-to-wall wireless network coverage also allows the homeowner to use smartphones to arm the security system, and adjust the lighting, shades, video, security and the HVAC system.

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