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SECTION **E**

## GOING GREEN

# The New American Home is here

*Blue Heron  
creates home  
of the future*

By **JAMIE MCKEE**  
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**B**lue Heron of Las Vegas is putting the finishing touches on The New American Home to be featured at the National Association of Home Builders' International Builders' Show Jan. 20-23 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The NAHB's New American Home always features the latest in new technology and this year is no exception.

The theme this year is green and the builder has found a way to incorporate green technology into the home's design.

"This is a certified Green Building Project," according to Tucker Bernard, executive director of the New American Home. "It surpasses all of the

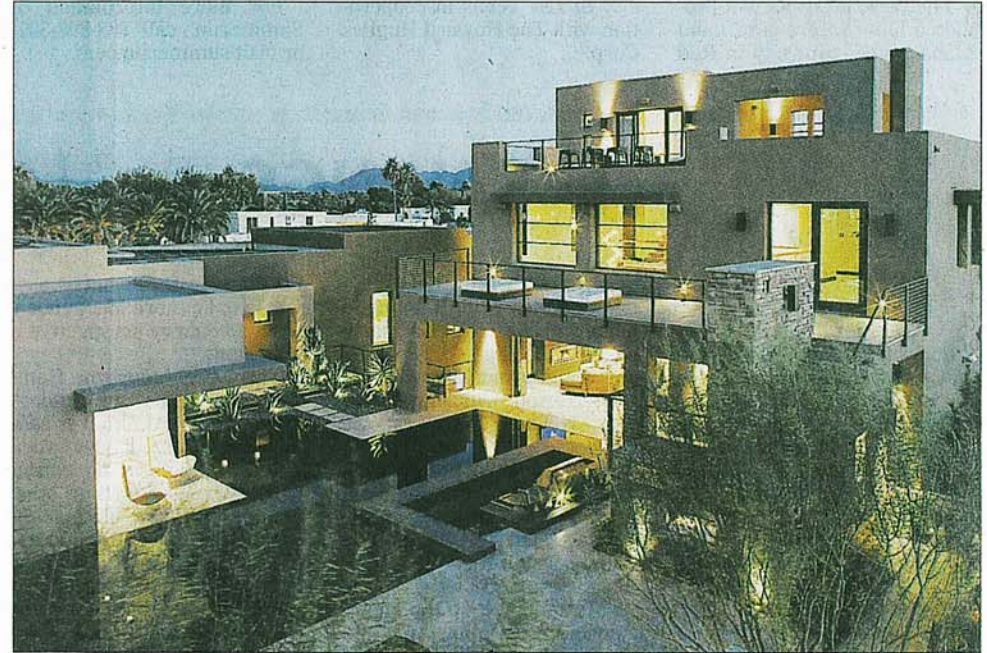


Tyler Jones, one of the principals of Blue Heron of Las Vegas, represents the younger side of the company.

green building guidelines. It will save about 75 percent of heating and cooling costs compared to a similar house built in

the Las Vegas marketplace."

This year's home is in The Marquis Las Vegas community, a luxury semi-custom home



This year's New American Home is in The Marquis Las Vegas community, a luxury semi-custom home development in southeastern Las Vegas.

development in southeastern Las Vegas on Tomiyasu Lane between Sunset and Warm Springs roads. The area was home to some of Las Vegas'

most famous residents, such as Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, boxers Mike Tyson and Thomas "Hit Man" Hearn and the Sultan of Brunei. The New

American Home is located across the street from the 51-

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Builder utilizes green technology

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acre ranch owned by Wayne Newton. One of its other sides backs up to Sunset Park.

The community consists of 14 half-acre lots. Models range from 4,600 square feet to more than 10,000 square feet and from one to four stories. Prices range from \$1.1 million to \$5 million.

Though Jones won't disclose the selling price of the New American Home, which is no longer on the market, he estimates the home's value at \$4 million.

The home has water-efficient landscaping and plumbing and a cistern that stores water underground that is later reused for landscaping.

But the features that make it most green are insulated concrete walls and photovoltaic solar panels, which actually allow the house to create more energy than it uses, making it a Net Zero home.

The home's 56 solar panels

generate 12 kilowatts of electricity, which is more than the home will consume on a yearly basis, according to Tyler Jones, one of the principal owners of Blue Heron. An agreement with Nevada Power allows the home to pull power from the grid and push power back, so it can receive credits it can draw on when necessary.

Jones said it's the home's unique design that allows it to be so energy efficient.

"Most of the HOAs (homeowners associations) for luxury communities in Las Vegas don't allow solar panels. We're using these green elements as a part of our architectural style. Creating these little boutique communities is a way for us to encourage these green-building practices.

"The most tangible benefit is energy efficiency," Jones said. "Also, the peace of mind that you're living in a home that's not at odds with the environment is important to a lot of people. And it leads to a higher air quality in indoor spaces.

Finally, for the country as a whole to be more independent from an energy perspective is important."

The New American Home has always been "the builder's risk and reward," Tucker said, but suppliers display their latest products at no charge to get exposure from other builders. "What offsets the cost is receiving the donated product."

The show was previously held in Las Vegas in 2004 and the association used Blue Heron, then known as Merlin Contracting.

In 2004, Stephen Jones was operating Merlin Contracting, a company he established in 1989. He changed names and added his son, Tyler, Michael Murphy and Tommy Isola as principals in the company.

Tyler Jones and Isola, 30 and 31, respectively, represent the younger side of the company. They attended a Las Vegas grade school together and are best friends.

Isola, who has a business

degree, handles the financial matters and Tyler Jones, who studied architecture at the University of Colorado at Boulder, brings creativity to the mix.

"There's a lot of tenacity on the young side, a lot of interest in pushing the limits," Jones said. "It's really a good balance between a steady hand and youth and exuberance."

Jones' architectural background also brings a different point of view to the company.

"Growing up in a construction company, there's usually a disconnect between the architects and the builders," Jones said. "A really talented architect will be able to put together a set of plans that's going to look great, but has also been well-planned and well thought out. That's how you avoid problems in the field — you have a comprehensive understanding of the building side."

Blue Heron did the groundwork for The New American home with its first project, Stone Canyon, a community of loft-style homes built off Buf-

falo Road between Sahara Avenue and Charleston Boulevard. Blue Heron likes to build on infill properties in established neighborhoods, to do its part to reduce suburban sprawl and decrease its residents' drive times. In fact, the first phase of Stone Canyon was sold out before the developer had a chance to finish the model.

Other projects by Blue Heron include 22 Parkside at Laredo Street and Cimarron Road and Sky Terrace in the foothills of Henderson.

The Marquis Las Vegas development builds on similar concepts. The 9,000-square-foot New American Home has 22-foot-high ceilings, floor-to-ceiling retractable windows, outdoor fireplaces and lofts with their own decks on each floor. The staircases are made of structural steel and the floors are polished concrete. There's even a rejuvenation room off the pool, a courtyard in the basement with a wet bar and an elevator with a sky deck. "What we think makes

a great home is an open floor plan," Jones said. "Big, high ceilings and open loft rooms that look back into other spaces. We try to build a home that leads to a different type of lifestyle, one that is very open, yet private."

Tucker commends Blue Heron for being "professional and great to work with."

Typically, a home the size of the New American Home would take between two to 2½ years to build, he said, and Blue Heron had only 10 months from start to finish.

Although the home falls into the luxury market, Tucker points out that many of its design aspects as well as individual products would work in a less expensive development.

"It doesn't matter what your market niche is," he said. "You can take certain aspects and design concepts and use them in your own house."

More information on The New American Home and the International Builders Show is available at [nabh.org](http://nabh.org).