



The Frerkings use part of their deck to grow plants — edible as well as ornamental.

Michael said he was motivated to think about a roof when he started planning construction of their home four years ago. The hillside lot presented challenges. Michael chose to incorporate the house into the hill rather than on top of it, and the roof decks were a natural extension.

“Getting double use out of a roof and using it as deck makes a lot of monetary sense,” he said. The additional cost for the Frerkings was for lightweight pavers, some structural upgrade for the roof and a railing. “I estimate the pavers will double or triple the life of the roof membrane because they protect it from the sun.”

An added bonus is that the roof garden is protected from ground critters. The Frerkings grow vegetables as well as flowers in cattle troughs decorated with corrugated metal. The railings surrounding the deck are as artistic as they are functional.

Roof decks offer lots of added value, especially for people who are concerned

about building costs, Michael said. “Of course, the view is the primary plus, especially if the home didn’t have a view.”

Another major benefit is that a roof deck adds space so that the home under the roof can be smaller. “This way, the outside and the inside are linked, and the home feels larger than it is.” Even a less accessible roof deck can provide a place for stargazing or spending a cool summer evening.

His advice for remodeling a home to incorporate a roof deck is the same that he offers for those starting with new construction. “Do your homework. Lots of factors need to be considered whether you do it yourself or hire a contractor.”

Here are some questions Michael recommends answering before you start: When and where do you want sun and shade and how can the building create shade? What are the wind patterns and how can the building block or catch the wind on a daily and seasonal basis? What are the best views and how can

you capitalize on them? How and when do you intend to use your roof space? He advises to think about longevity in the materials you select for construction and consider metal and masonry over wood.

With a new rooftop room, you may find that, like the Frerkings, you spend most of your time outside. ▼

## RESOURCES

### Architecture:

Living Systems Sustainable  
Architecture  
Prescott, 928-717-2755  
[www.michaelfrerking.com](http://www.michaelfrerking.com)

### Metal work:

Cosmic Steel  
Royce Carlson  
Prescott, 928-445-8665