

ROOM WITH A VIEW

TEXT BY SUSAN COFFROTH | PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARRY KANTOR



Michael and Joanne Frerking live in one of the most energy-efficient homes in the Prescott area. The home's 20-inch-thick insulated poured-earth walls ensure a cool environment in the summer and a warm abode in the winter. It's comfortable inside, but more often than not, you'll find them outside on their roof deck.

"My wife and I find that we spend more time outside than inside. In the spring, summer and fall we have almost all of our meals outside," Michael said.

An architect, Michael carefully planned his roof decks to take advantage of the sun and the shade throughout the year. In the morning and at noon, they dine on the south deck, when the house provides shade. At dinnertime, the house shades the east deck and blocks the prevailing southwest winds.

"It is very important for people to understand sun and wind patterns and design the spaces accordingly," he said. "Working with natural patterns is the key to exceptional roof gardens."

Using the roof as a deck and a garden not only changes your point of view, it's an affordable extension of the living space.

Understanding sun and wind patterns is the key to designing a comfortable roof deck.