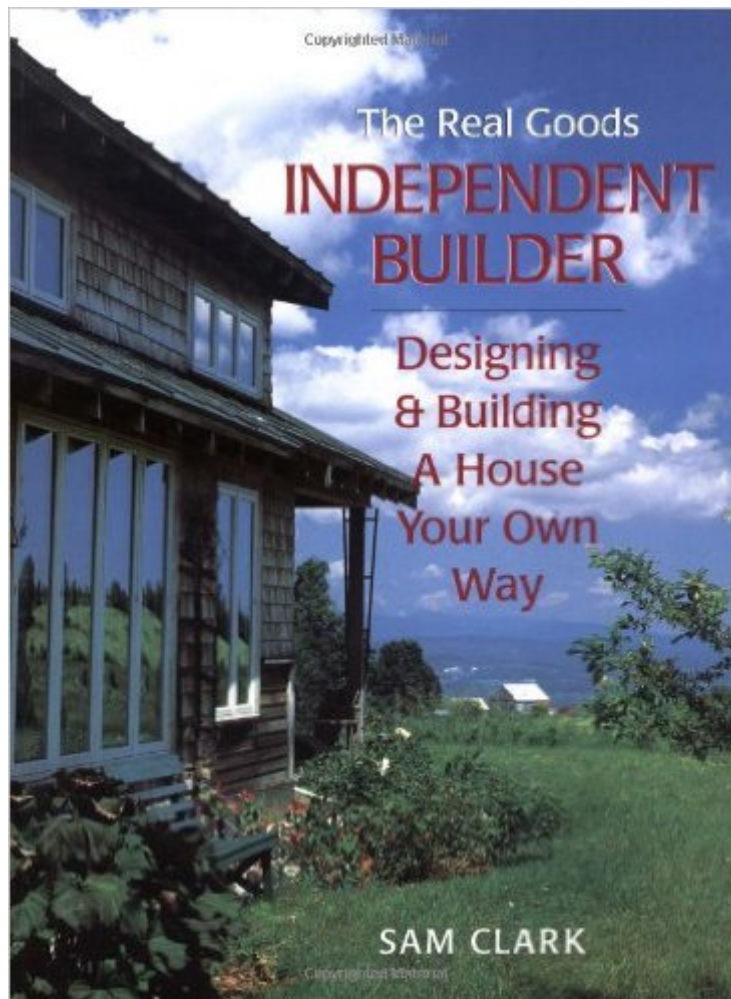


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# The Real Goods Independent Builder: Designing & Building A House Your Own Way (Real Goods Independent Living Books)



## Synopsis

This is a comprehensive manual of design and building methods for owner-builders as well as professional builders and their clients. In addition to presenting specific building techniques, the book explains the design principles and planning processes that underlie all good building, so that readers can develop their own exceptional designs, independently. Independent Builder develops subjects not covered thoroughly in other books, but critical to success: Designing small houses that seem big Understanding innovation Estimating and controlling costs Incorporating ergonomics and accessibility Doing drawings and scale models Making contracts that work

## Book Information

Series: Real Goods Independent Living Books

Paperback: 528 pages

Publisher: Chelsea Green Publishing; Revised second edition edition (October 1, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0930031857

ISBN-13: 978-0930031855

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (21 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #419,010 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #68 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Contracting](#) #130 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > House Plans](#) #1053 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Design & Construction](#)

## Customer Reviews

Sam Clark uses up half the book before he gets into the nitty-gritty of construction methods. This really IS a book about house DESIGN as well as construction. As such, it's an EXCELLENT book for someone who's starting from scratch to create their own house. The approach is extremely methodical, treating mindsets and goals as elements of the design process equal in importance to elevation drawings. The illustrations bear particular attention. The (black and white) photographs are well composed, and have high contrast to clearly delineate the features that are supposed to be of interest. The line drawings are rather funky looking (in part because Clark appears not to own a ruler), but nevertheless do a very good job of illustrating what the text is talking about. This is the

case for three reasons: (1) they were created by the author, who knew EXACTLY what part of the text needed visual aids; (2) their rulerless nature means that Clark can emphasize particular features rather than focus on strict scale drawings; and (3) each one is sized independently to take up as much space as is required to depict the subject matter, without worrying about "wasting" some page area. The end result is that the text and illustrations fit together well to make a unified whole. For more detail on the Building part of creating a house, I'd recommend "Do-It-Yourself HOUSEBUILDING" by George Nash. But because Nash's book doesn't come close to Clark's for clarity, I'd first read Clark's book cover-to-cover. Then I'd keep Sam Clark's book open to the same subject area so that you can step back and get a clear overview as you get confused in the details of the Nash book.

Clark does a great job of taking into consideration the needs of people who want to build a good quality home in the most economical way possible. Unlike most homebuilding books I've read, he manages to explain things thoroughly without talking down to the reader or covering only the most obvious things. He assumes that the reader is interested in energy efficiency and environmental issues along with aesthetics, ergonomics, and accessibility. An extremely helpful and realistic book. Includes useful charts and cross-sections of building systems.

After offering our course in owner-building at Heartwood for over twenty years, we've found Sam Clark's book to be the ideal textbook. It's not just a carpentry book, not just a design book, not just an engineering book. It's the most concise yet comprehensive guide to all the systems and decisions that go into a home and its creation. In this age of a super-heated economy and opulent excess in trophy homes, it's refreshing to find a resource for building a truly economical and liveable house.

This book covers everything you need to build a house! It's especially useful for country homes and has many practical tips on energy efficiency. The drawings and descriptions are very friendly, letting you enjoy doing one of the most fulfilling things you can do: build your own home! My sister's professor gave it the highest marks by ordering several for his classroom.

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This tells you how to design a house for you. Not just a house out of a book, but one that takes your living patterns into account. Don't want a formal living room? Don't put one in! Also reminds you if you want to live in the house a long time, to make room for handicapped access that may be needed later. Design your kitchen and baths the way you live! Have fun! ;-)

I have been researching owner building for almost a year now and this is the first and only book I've found that both had all the information I needed, and presented it in a way that a layman could understand. Five thumbs up.

This is the first book I've found that actually addresses living patterns in home design. The book describes the fact that people can be uncomfortable sitting in a huge living space and actually crave the need for smaller spaces like alcoves. Social behaviours and traffic patterns while entertaining are studied and factually explains what makes a room feel comfortable or homey. With traffic patterns and accessibility as the basis for the design half of the book, Clark provides a solid foundation for design fundamentals and the why behind it. The second half of the book covers home building. As a complete novice in this area, I can't vouch for the accuracy of the information, but it does seem quite comprehensive in its description, demystifying the building process, and empowering owners to monitor their contractors with an informed eye, while giving insight to the bigger picture and mindset of contractors. I think this understanding will help communication between owners and contractors and make homebuilding a smoother process. Of particular interest, I found the load calculations for foundations fascinating as it wasn't something I had ever considered in home building as it is something the architect waves his magic pencil to produce. The book is written in a familiar tone the layperson will relate and understand, and while it doesn't shirk the industry jargon, explanations are forthcoming, making it easy to understand and simple to follow. I've read quite a few books on home building and have done extensive research on the internet. This book covers design principles and the why not found elsewhere. I highly recommend this book as the foundation to anyone planning and building their own home.

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