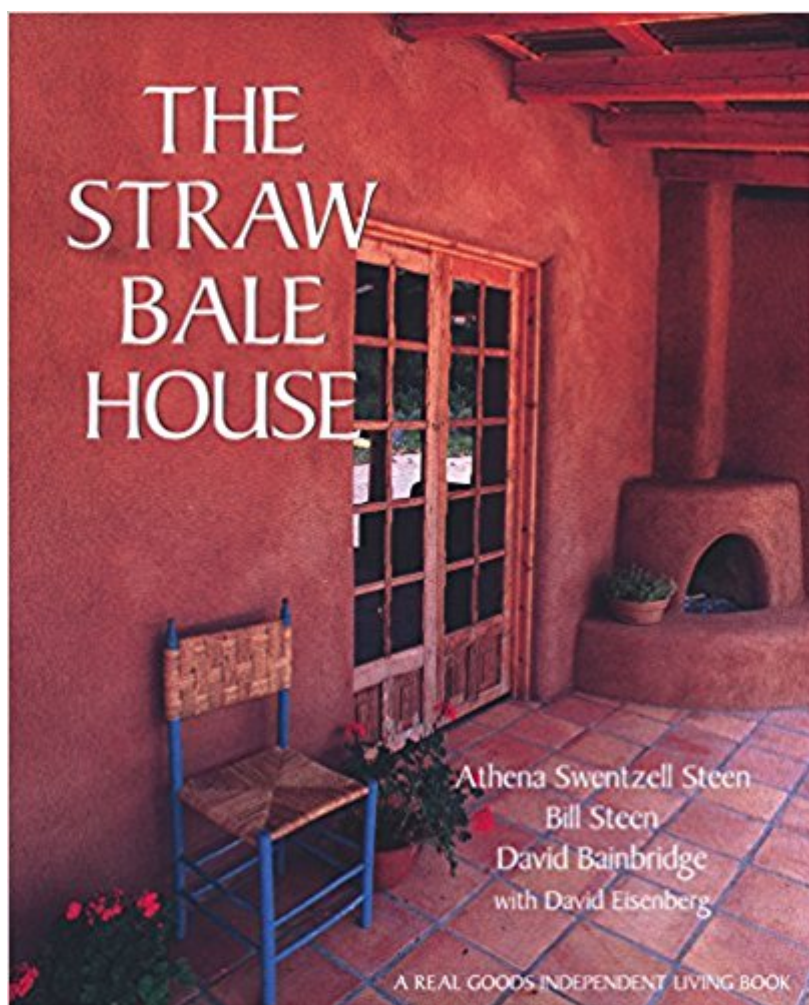


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# The Straw Bale House (A Real Goods Independent Living Book)



## Synopsis

Imagine building a house with superior seismic stability, fire resistance, and thermal insulation, using an annually renewable resource, for half the cost of a comparable conventional home. Welcome to the straw bale house! Whether you build an entire house or something more modest—a home office or studio, a retreat cabin or guest cottage—plastered straw bale construction is an exceptionally durable and inexpensive option. What's more, it's fun, because the technique is easy to learn and easy to do yourself. And the resulting living spaces are unusually quiet and comfortable. The Straw Bale House describes the many benefits of building with straw bales: super insulation, with R-values as high as R-50 good indoor air quality and noise reduction a speedy construction process construction costs as low as \$10-per-square-foot use of natural and abundant renewable resources a better solution than burning agricultural waste straw, which creates tons of air pollutants

## Book Information

Series: A Real Goods Independent Living Book

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 46 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #277,072 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #295 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Buildings > Residential](#) #323 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Do-It-Yourself](#) #673 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Home Improvement & Design > How-to & Home Improvements > Design & Construction](#)

## Customer Reviews

Get a leg up on the first Little Pig with The Straw Bale House, your guide to inexpensive, durable, earth-friendly construction that will stand up to much more than the Big Bad Wolf. Authors Athena Swentzell Steen and Bill Steen founded the Canelo Project, which promotes innovative building; David Bainbridge is a California restoration ecologist; and David Eisenberg is an

alternative-materials builder who pioneered straw bale wall testing. Between them, they have encyclopedic knowledge of their subject. The book is comprehensive, broadly covering why and how to build with straw and then focusing on the details, which are both intellectually and aesthetically delightful. Beside being cheap, clean, and lightweight, straw also provides advantages like energy efficiency and resistance to seismic stresses. For the nervous Martha Stewart types, there are scads of black-and-white and color plates of strikingly beautiful interiors and exteriors from New Mexico to southern France. Both new and experienced builders will appreciate the clear, simple instructions and diagrams, as well as practical explanations for dealing with building codes and insurers. The Straw Bale House shows us advantages so numerous and dramatic that you'll wonder why we ever moved on to sticks and bricks. --Rob Lightner

"Using plastered straw bales as building materials for a home may not sound stable or long-lasting, but these can be used for a variety of purposes from adjacent buildings to entire houses, can be used with relatively little experience, and have many attributes; from super-insulation to cheap construction. Applications are more useful for the Southwest region but ideas may transfer to other U. S. locales. The book's price tag seems high for a paperback, but this goes in great detail on a subject which is fairly understated in most construction or homeowner's guides."--Midwest Book Review

Could be the best book I've read on sustainable construction methods. The writing is excellent, and the authors' light use of narrative storytelling gives insight to their revelation of suggestions and best practices. The technical jargon is minimal and easily understood thanks to the abundance of photos that follow the process. If you have even the slightest interest in straw bale construction, this is the first book you should buy. If you already have others, it's likely this will be your last as it is so comprehensive in nature. Enjoy!

Several years ago we became interested in straw bale houses and began doing a lot of research. Almost 100% of the articles referenced this book as a guide. It covers any and all questions that could come up in the construction. There is more than one style and the book addresses each of them. A word advice, be sure and check local and state codes before you get too involved. As time goes by and more are being built there is finally some uniformity. This book is a must have if you are about to build one, or if you are just curious.

I enjoy all of Bill and Athena Steen's books on building. This one is lovely and full of personal, practical advice on various aspects of strawbale building, adobe and plastering. I especially enjoy knowing about how Athena's experience growing up has contributed so much to her involvement in these types of construction techniques. She and Bill make a great team. I find their information very inspirational.

This book would seem to be an indispensable starting point for anyone looking into the straw bale home concept. If the thought of a poorly-insulated, energy-guzzling, expensive, bland, mass-produced, contractor-built home doesn't quite appeal to you, this book is essential, for it shows that inexpensive doesn't have to mean low quality nor unattractive. In fact, bales and other "natural", low-cost building materials can yield attractively individual results in part because they are easy and fun to work with, enfranchising the future owner to be his or her own designer and builder. The inspiring photos included in the book help make the case for the aesthetic advantages. Of course, the most important function is to show how to build the straw bale home. In this respect, the book succeeds admirably, giving diagrams to illustrate the major techniques being used and showing how simple straw bale building is. Incidentally, this would make an attractive book for your coffee table even if you are just mildly interested in the subject. One warning though: even including the index and other back-of-the-book sections, there are only 297 pages, not 336!

I planned on making a straw bale garden. I ended up having a lot of straw bales unused and this gave me some great ideas.

This book is phenomenal, and the Athena and her husband are beautiful people to guide you on this journey on how we all can live in comfort, beauty, and sustainable surroundings the way it's suppose to be, so that we are kind to all of our surroundings here on earth. Thank You In The Deepest.

Liked the book, would recommend it .

This is a fast read, and I learned alot. I am trying to decide between cob and strawbale, and I appreciate the less-philosophic, more-factual information available in this book than you typically find in alternative building method instruction books.

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