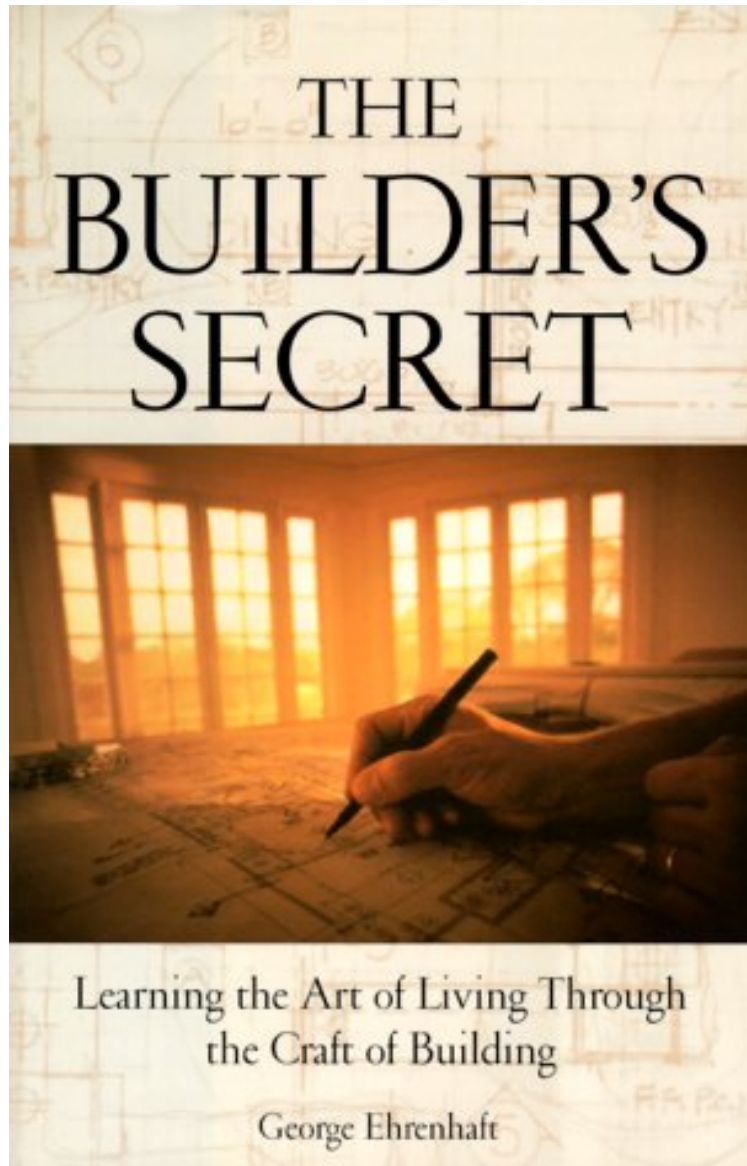


[Ebook free] The Builder's Secret: Learning the Art of Living Through the Craft of Building

The Builder's Secret: Learning the Art of Living Through the Craft of Building

George Ehrenhaft

audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#666244 in Books Prima Lifestyles 1999-05-26 1999-05-25 Original language: English PDF # 1 .90 x 5.71 x 8.75l, #File Name: 0761516077272 pages | File size: 71.Mb

George Ehrenhaft : The Builder's Secret: Learning the Art of Living Through the Craft of Building before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Builder's Secret: Learning the Art of Living Through the Craft of Building:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting attempt to get at something deeper

By Charles Hall

If by "Builder's Secret" the author means those intangible rewards that come from building your own home, then I think he has largely succeeded. As a man who built a rather large addition to his own home with no prior building skills, the author is enthralled with both the process and his own growing pride in the project. The book interviews a number of similar DIY'ers and he attempts to get a philosophical view of such work from each of them. To a large extent he succeeds. It's also interesting to see the different approaches taken by the people he interviewed, from "I'll work every weekend for 52 weeks when it will be done" to "I'll work in the summer when my symphony job is not so demanding, I may never finish". What I find a little disturbing is that some of these folks come off as jerks, like the guy who seemed to want tons of free advice from professional contractors but resented their attitude when they didn't play ball. Jeez, DIY'ers need a little tact! I was also not charmed by the woman who married a guy with tons of money so now she can build what she wants. My last gripe was with folks cutting down oak trees to do timber and beam construction who at the same time sneered at people buying kiln-dried 2x4's at Home Depot as despoiling the environment. I've got news for these folks, those 2x4's come from fast growing pine trees on a company farm. Those oaks will not grow back in two lifetimes. But overall, I liked the point the author tried to make, and the chapters are short enough that you can tough it out to see what comes next.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Thoroughly enjoyable reading for anyone. A fresh topic!

By A Customer

I bought this book while window-shopping one day, and soon was delighted beyond my expectations. It is apparant that the author has stood on the rooftops of accomplishment, and slithered through the crawlspaces of despair, all while building as an amateur. Seeing what strong feelings came along with building one's own house led him to find the others: many comrades-in-arms that have discovered similar intensities while taking on their own building projects. The book, while particularly meaningful to amateurs who've attempted to do some home remodelling or additions, is lively, fresh and amusing enough to provide a rollicking good read for all. There are crisp renderings of interesting characters who really have nothing in common except a life-changing experience while "do-it-yourselfing". The stories are freshly written and move right along, and include lots of actual quotes, including the colloquial folkchat of the people that were interviewed, which made me feel like I'd really had a conversation with some of them. I don't have much building experience, but I learned about what kinds of virtues are necessary to build on your own. Patience, for one. In a way though, I appreciated this book being compiled so I could experience the chills and thrills of taking on a big project without getting any sawdust on my shoes. And who knows, I may just be inspired enough now to build that porch my wife and I have been imagining for years. I think Mr. Ehrenhaft deserves a big hand for this one.

Thanks.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Useful tales from the cutting edge of shelter creation

By Timothy Ritter

Americans reached a point, not so long ago, where most did nothing in the way of creating shelter for themselves. Housing became just another product to buy or sell or rent. But there remained a few for whom the atavistic urge to build was more attractive than a mere financial transaction. Now that few has swelled into a tidal wave of owner-builders of every size and shape who have poured such an ocean of cash into their projects that Home Depot has supplanted Sears among the Dow industrial pillars. It's curious that with this massive shift and the thousands of how-to construction books on the market, that a Builder's Secret type book has never been done before--telling the stories of a few people who just went out and did it. And it's also curious how a fairly mundane subject can make for such an interesting book. How-did makes for better reading than how-to. When I began my first building project a few years ago I intended to keep a journal of my progress. But of course there was not even time to get the project done on time, much less chronicle the whole thing. Builder's Secret is the closest thing I've seen to what I had in mind. It's not a journal, but a set of tales based on interviews with a varied group of owner-builders. Each is a vignette of material similar to that in Kidder's "House", with the important difference that all of these are about people who do the work, rather than paying someone to do it. It's all about work that is meaningful, that you can measure and admire at the end of the day, and live in at the end of the project. Ehrenhaft doesn't mention it, but I found myself thinking of the contrast between this sort of work and the clock-punching type. Even those who build houses for a living usually yearn to build for themselves, to do the work that has the reward embodied in the thing created rather than in a paycheck. And how many data base administrators dream of taking a few months off to structure their own database? And it is the actual doing of the work that the people of Builder's Secret seem to crave, for some of them are wealthy enough to have hired it out; others, such as an architect in a major firm would be more efficient sticking to their specialty and letting experts do the hammering, but something drove them to do it themselves, something probably not dissimilar to what drove all of Ehrenhaft's subjects: a couple schoolteachers, a pro flutist, an ex cop, and a handful of hardworking counterculture types. I think the reason this disparate set of people all embarked on building projects is akin to the reason women bear children the old way when Caesarian sections are more efficient, and why people still slave over a hot stove making dinner when they could more quickly and easily whip up a protein shake in a blender. It's fulfilling. It's what we've done since the advent of Homo Sapiens, and possibly since Homo Erectus, although erectus here would refer to back posture, not plumbed up studs. Who among us is fulfilled by the modern real estate closing, a bloodless, soulless, insipid ceremony, where the high priests and acolytes engage in a paper-shuffling without parallel, passing and consecrating with signatures hundreds of boilerplate documents like so many unleavened wafers of bread. The first thing you put in your new house

is a phonebook-sized wad of legal gibberish. How much more poignant the tradition spoken of in Builder's Secret, the nailing of a sapling to the peak of a new house. If there is a defect in this book, it's the exclusion of any discussion of financial motivations. Mr. Ehrenhaft states on p.198 that "no one made a financial killing", yet Jennifer Lee, 155 pages earlier, tripled her investment in two and a half years. I don't know about the backwoods of Massachusetts where Ms. Lee's from, but 80% a year is a killing in my neighborhood. Sure, it's a good feeling to know the roof keeping the rain off your head was put up with your own two hands, but it's also a pretty good feeling to sell your principal residence and pay not a penny of capital gains tax. It's also nice to know, as you swing the hammer, that Social Security and Medicare taxes are not taking their royal fifth. Since this book is about the spiritual motivations and rewards of builders, it's worth noting that few things in this world are as dispiriting as socialism, and few as exhilarating as a great big payoff.

Monday to Friday, they teach school, practice law, push paper, pound a keyboard, or run a company. But they start their weekends with a trip to the nearest home-improvement center. They're owner-builders, men and women just like you who know the satisfaction of doing it themselves of adding a deck, remodeling the den, or building a dream house from the ground up. The Builder's Secret will introduce you to some owner-builders who've renounced ordinary weekend pleasures in favor of lengthy, backbreaking but ultimately exhilarating home-building projects. Inside, you'll meet a Connecticut architect and his "city-girl" wife who lived in a tent for a year while constructing their dream house, a flutist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra who began renovating commercial real estate in his spare time when his country home neared completion, and a divorced mother of three who says that she built more than her house during those two years on the job she rebuilt her life, too. You'll meet others whose stories will inspire you to start that dream project of your own. A few of these owner-builders learned to build during childhood, others didn't pick up a hammer until they were grown. But all discovered that the highest reward of building was not what they got for their toil but what they became by it. "This chronicle of owner-builders is really a 'why-to' manual, revealing how tremendously satisfying it can be to sleep beneath a roof that you built yourself." Kevin Ireton, editor of Fine Homebuilding magazine "Building your own house is both frustrating and rewarding by turns. You will enjoy the stories chronicled in The Builder's Secret they have the whiff of sawdust and reality." Witold Rybczynski, professor of architecture, McGill University "Gives all those who have ever dreamed of building their own house valuable insights into the physical and spiritual process. This book reveals that the satisfaction of achieving one of life's basic goals creating your own shelter is within the reach of anyone." Will Beemer, director of The Heartwood School Read an interview with the author [/////////here](#).

.com In the world of building and how-to books, an occasional and rare thing happens: a book appears that goes beyond the hardware and advice and offers a deeper insight into what really motivates people to build, fix, and create things, and begins a conversation about what such endeavors mean to ordinary people who are drawn to and realize "do-it-yourself" lives. George Ehrenhaft has written what could only be called an affectionate book about a group of owner-builders around the country and their true tales, often in their own words, about not only what they have done and how, but also why they did it in the first place. There are stories of serious builders and weekend hobbyists--connected on an almost spiritual level by the desire to make or keep a roof over their heads--and their willingness to jump, inexperienced, into projects and learn by doing, learn by making mistakes, learn from friends, professionals, and books, from blood, sweat, toil, and tears, and finally by success itself. You'll meet, among others, the Connecticut architect and his "city-girl" wife who lived in a tent for a year while building their dream home, a flutist for the Boston Symphony who renovates commercial real estate in his spare time, and a divorced mother of three who rebuilt her life as she built her home. Their experiences, insights, observations, and perspectives are revealing and moving. Ehrenhaft's exploration is inspirational, laugh-out-loud funny in places, touching, and simply a great read as a study of a fascinating group of dedicated "weekend builders." This book is a rare gem, written in a warm, articulate, and absorbing style, a great gift for any do-it-yourselfer who also loves to read; also, for that matter, for anyone at all who enjoys a good story about human inspiration and the creative urge. --Mark A. Hetts Discover the Joys of Building From the Inside Flap Monday to Friday, they teach school, practice law, push paper, pound a keyboard, or run a company. But they start their weekends with a trip to the nearest home-improvement center. They're owner-builders, men and women just like you who know the satisfaction of doing it themselves of adding a deck, remodeling the den, or building a dream house from the ground up. The Builder's Secret will introduce you to some owner-builders who've renounced ordinary weekend pleasures in favor of lengthy, backbreaking but ultimately exhilarating home-building projects. Inside, you'll meet a Connecticut architect and his "city-girl" wife who lived in a tent for a year while constructing their dream house, a flutist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra who began renovating commercial real estate in his spare time when his country home neared completion, and a divorced mother of three who says that she built more than her house during those two years on the job she rebuilt her life, too. You'll meet others whose stories will inspire you to start that dream project of your own. A few of these owner-builders learned to build during childhood, others didn't pick up a hammer until they were grown. But all discovered that the highest reward of

building was not what they got for their toil but what they became by it."This chronicle of owner-builders is really a 'why-to' manual, revealing how tremendously satisfying it can be to sleep beneath a roof that you built yourself."?Kevin Ireton, editor of Fine Homebuilding magazine"Building your own house is both frustrating and rewarding by turns. You will enjoy the stories chronicled in The Builder's Secret?they have the whiff of sawdust and reality."?Witold Rybczynski, professor of architecture, McGill University"Gives all those who have ever dreamed of building their own house valuable insights into the physical and spiritual process. This book reveals that the satisfaction of achieving one of life's basic goals?creating your own shelter?is within the reach of anyone."?Will Beemer, director of The Heartwood SchoolRead an interview with the author [/////////here](#).