

The Elegance and Durability of a Slate Roof

STAFF REPORT

Roofing can seem like a necessary evil, but some homeowners and designers are increasingly realizing the character and beauty that slate can add to a house. And the longevity of this elegant (yet durable) natural stone makes it even more appealing and a tremendous investment over the years.

Cindy Barganier is a preeminent designer in the Montgomery area, who advises homeowners on all aspects of interior decorating and renovations.

"I am at the beginning stages of design with several families who are having to make lots of decisions, including what roofing products they will use," Cindy explains. "One has already chosen to go with a standing seam metal roof for their low-country style home, which is a perfect solution." But slate is this designer's favorite roofing material.

When she and her husband bought their first home, it was "an adorable little cottage in one of the historic old neighborhoods ... it had a slate roof and a love affair was born. The house was built in 1920 and, because it was slate, this was the original roof." She cannot even imagine the same quaint home with asphalt shingles.

Cindy realizes that many homeowners steer away from using slate because of the price tag. "Obviously you have to weigh the cost, but if you are building a new house and if it is an 'inheritable house' (as the McAlpine group would say) and you factor in the fact that you will never have to replace that roof, then it becomes a little easier to swallow," she explains.

The use of slate for roofing has been documented back to the 1200s in England when it was initially used on churches and castles. By the 1800s, the quarrying process became more advanced and the use of slate became more widespread. In Europe, most slate originates from Spain, while Vermont is the primary source for slate in the U.S. today.

Cindy concurs with the facts recently published by Rachel Grace from Houzz: A slate roof is beautiful, romantic and charming.

Slate that is quarried for roofing is a dense rock; it's exceptionally tough and substantial, she explains. Slate roofs can be expensive, costing between \$15 and \$30 per square foot installed, which is at least five times more than conventional roofs. But a slate roof can last more than a century – at least five times longer than a conventional roof.

Slate is available in many sizes, as well as a variety of natural colors and thicknesses. One of Cindy's favorite attributes of slate, is that you can mix tiles of various shades to create unique, customized patterns from the earthy tones. Where the slate is quarried determines its color, which can range from dark gray to shades of purple or green.

The worst weather is no match for a slate roof, Cindy says, and the natural stone is also fireproof, which has certainly saved many charming cottages over the years.

"Slate often outlasts buildings themselves and can be recycled," the Houzz author added. Reclaimed slate is frequently used on new homes, which can reduce the cost, and is an environmentally sound option.

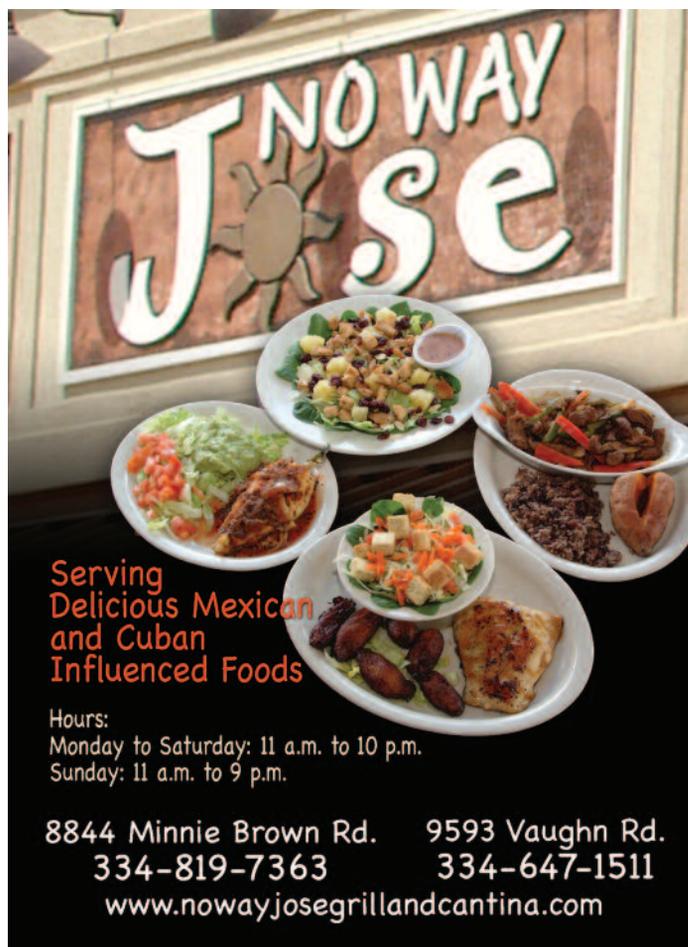
Cindy Barganier blogs about some great decorating topics at blog.cindybarganier.com. She "loves beauty in all forms, from interiors, music, dance," and she strives to add beauty wherever she can. "As a professional, I specialize in handling the 101,000 details of a building or renovation project in a way that allows the owners to say, 'That was fun!' at the end."

If you're considering a roofing project soon, and slate might be an option, Cindy would love to guide you along the way. Contact her at cindybarg@knology.net or visit www.cindybarganier.com. 



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