

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 1 - TUESDAY, FEB. 7, 2012

Business Insider

An **Idaho Statesman** weekly magazine

BEHIND THE CASTLE GATE

How a woodworking company and other local contractors helped build Tim Barber's house. **PAGE 20**

TINY TOWN'S WOES: How the economy threatens Fairfield's future **PAGE 10**
AN ANTI-FEDERAL CASE: St. Luke's CEO on insurance exchanges **PAGE 9**

COVER STORY



Small gargoyles are found throughout the house. Tim Barber and his contractor say they were left by the stone mason who brought them to work each day to protect the home and workers.



Barber bought these antique keys from an art dealer in Utah.



Barber bought this dragon made of wood from an art dealer in Nevada. It's one of the centerpieces of the main room in the home.



In the entry is a knight's suit of armor. Barber bought it from an art dealer in New Hampshire.

THE MAKING OF A UNIQUE BOISE HOME

Idaho businesses hired to finish this new Warm Springs Avenue home turned to local sources.

STORY BY HARRISON BERRY Special to Business Insider • PHOTOS BY CHRIS BUTLER cbutler@idahostatesman.com

Tim Barber conducted the nickel tour of his home, the "Warm Springs Castle," in jeans and white socks. He says that tapping geothermal energy from the hot water that runs through the rock under his property (and his floorboards) saves him about 80 percent on his electricity bill.

"And I love having the warm floor," he says.

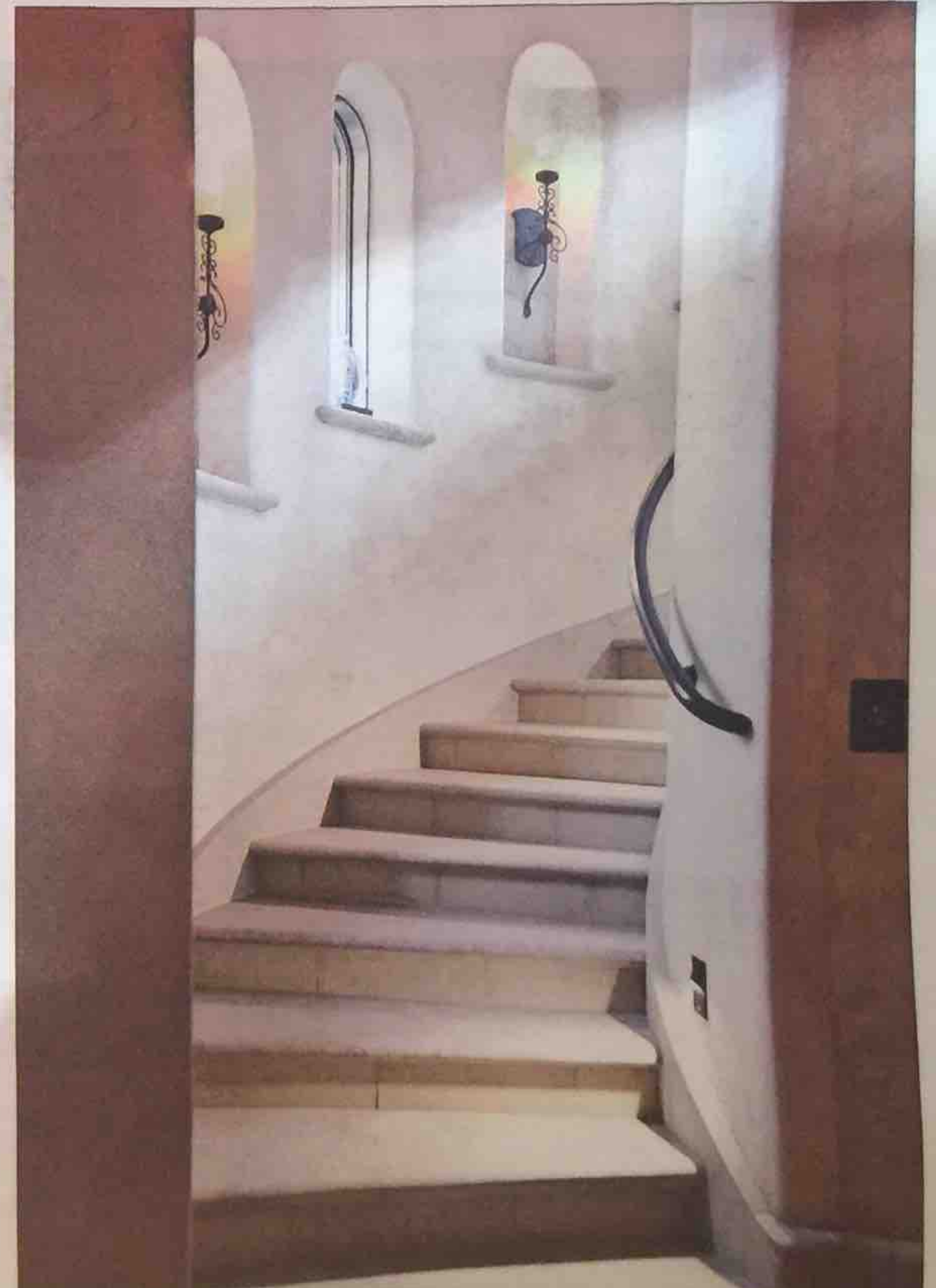
The castle squats like the Alamo at the end of a long string of historic homes. Critics say it's out of touch with its surroundings. But what it lacks in aesthetic solidarity with its neighbors, it makes up for in use of energy-saving, local and recycled construction products.

Barber co-founded ClickBank, a retailer of digital products, and is

director of Machine Cognition at 2AI, an applied-cognition research company. 2AI is developing filtered light sources and eyeglasses that magnify human emotional cues, like flushing of the skin.

He began building his castle in 2009 at the corner of Warm Springs Avenue and Mobley Drive, stopped work for five months in a dispute with his contractor, hired a new contractor, and completed the house in July. He wouldn't say how much his castle is worth, but Ada County has assessed the property at \$450,600.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



The components in the circular stairway were manufactured by Stonecutters, an Idaho Falls company.

COVER STORY



The wooden floor in the main room is made of reclaimed oak timbers supplied by Henderson Corp. They were collected from old barns and other buildings.



The tile work in the kitchen was done by Higby Tile Co. of Boise.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

Barber said 90 percent of the home is made of Table Rock sandstone, which stone supplier Gerhard Barbonus Landscaping quarries in Boise. Original plans to use mostly Texas sandstone were revised to save on shipping costs. The Table Rock stone "looks good, and they could cut it to order," Barber says.

If the castle's skin is its locally quarried stone exterior, and its blood is the hot water that creeps up from under Warm Springs Avenue, its fat is the foam insulation made by Energy Seal Air Barrier Systems in McCall.

Not everything is local. Henderson Corp. of Boise, which buys and stores salvaged wood for custom projects, provided the house's bones — dozens of beams and hundreds of floorboards reclaimed from old houses and barns near the East Coast.



The Castle House on Warm Springs Avenue is owned by Internet entrepreneur Tim Barber.

JayMark's castle gate illustrates company's sustainability efforts

One Boise company involved in the castle project has relied on environmental friendliness and local or reclaimed materials to cut its costs and improve its efficiency. This is its story.

Iron spikes hang like sharp black teeth from Tim Barber's castle's 150-pound gate. Known as a portcullis, the gate was fashioned by the Boise cabinetmaking and woodworking firm JayMark, which also fitted 15 of the castle's rooms with

white oak cabinets.

A portcullis is a wood or iron gate found on castles that can be raised or lowered for security, but Tim Barber's doesn't lower. "I don't need it coming down on someone," he said.

Mark Schwanz — the Mark in JayMark — worked with Barber to replicate the portcullis at the Tower of London using hand-worked recycled white oak. "We modified the design to fit his exact sce-

COVER STORY



The portcullis, which hangs above the castle's front entry, is made of reclaimed oak covered with hammered metal. Portcullises in medieval castles were designed as a last line of defense.

nario, the size, proportions," Schwanz said.

In a corner of JayMark's cavernous workshop there's a cherry-red drill with ONE ARMED BANDIT scrawled on the front. The bit has been replaced by a makeshift press, and the machine is now used to install metal sliders in cabinets. It's the oldest piece of machinery there and illustrates JayMark's commitment to reusing materials whenever it can.

JayMark reduces, reuses and recycles under a sustainability program because these practices go hand in hand with running a lean company — especially when that company works with wood. Sawdust is sold to a horse race track. Scrap wood is sold as fuel. Schwanz is considering investing in a briquette press to reduce his impact on the local landfill by as much as 65 percent and produce briquettes to sell as a solid fuel source.

Since the workshop buys only enough wood to complete a project, the small scrap pile in the back of the shop is mostly composed of long, thin shavings and odd corners. Blades for the molding grinder are cut in-house and are sharp enough to use to shave. The company's strategy is to round up every aspect of production under the workshop roof.

Even the shop vacuums that collect sawdust are part of that strategy. Two 40-horsepower engines draw sawdust into twin 96-filter storage bags, and then blow warm, dust-free air back into the shop. They're designed to reduce heating and electrical costs and save JayMark 40 percent on its heating bill.

It isn't the cachet of sustainable business practices that's keeping JayMark afloat in a tough economy: It's the common sense behind conserving materials and

saving electricity.

Efficiencies like these may be second nature to businesses, but Schwanz has noticed that his customers frequently associate environmental friendliness with high costs.

"The number of people asking for that has gone downhill because of the economy, because they expect it to cost more," he said.

He estimates that about 20 percent of his customers ask about JayMark's sustainability program — most of them hailing from Sun Valley. The irony is that many of them are choosing local timber for their cabinets anyway. About 70 percent of JayMark's lumber comes from within 500 miles of Boise.

Harrison Berry: berryh@gmail.com



Mark Schwanz is the president of Jaymark Custom Cabinets, which did some of the woodwork in the castle including the portcullises, left, in the front entry.

THE HIGH COST OF SHIPPING LUMBER

If you want a high-grade hardwood cabinetry in your house, you'll pay for it. And the farther it travels, the more you'll pay.

Mark Schwanz of Jaymark, a Boise cabinet maker and woodworking company, says the wood now in vogue locally is alder, which grows in Oregon, Washington and Canada. In recent years, demand for alder has made it hard to find "clear" (without knots) specimens of the wood. More common is "premium alder," which has small pin knots and costs \$1.25 a board foot.

In comparison, a board foot of oak costs just under \$3, and a board foot of cherry runs \$3.75 — and that's before shipping costs. Oak and cherry are hardwoods that hail from the Eastern and Southern United

States.

JayMark's supplier, Oregon-based Lumber Products, has tried to minimize the impact of shipping costs on the cost of its customers' lumber, but that has become more difficult. Bruce Backus, assistant manager at Lumber Products' Boise branch, has seen first-hand how the rising cost of gasoline and diesel has affected the cost of lumber in the form of fuel surcharges.

Backus began to see fuel surcharges on his lumber bills in 2009. He says that by the time it reaches Boise, a \$900 load of lumber from a mill in Eugene, Ore., or Centralia, Wash., can cost \$1,150. Shipping accounts for 15 to 20 percent of the cost of that lumber, amounting to \$3 to \$3.50 per mile.

"It's one of the biggest battles in the industry for us," he said.