

**Quentin Branch**

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## **The Un-Hidden Connections in a Contemporary Rammed Earth Home**

No trusses, no soffits, no sheetrock, no paint. Apparently unsupported walls soaring from 8 to 16 feet.

The tri-partite home includes three visually disconnected blocks. At every step, the owner called for strict adherence to form following function.

Closets and bookcases became walls. Structural elements were exposed to become rusted-steel finishes. Where a bench might have been against a wall, a rammed earth bench became the wall, supporting French doors as windows.

And the structural supports and connections? They too are visible, and beautiful.

How did this home get through building safety review?

And how does this home achieve 100 percent passive solar heating and cooling?

Repeatedly, the answers are in its brutal and beautiful design and structure.

Over a 33-year career, Quentin Branch has built more than 200 rammed earth projects. He calls this the most spectacular yet.

At an elevation of 4,500 feet, with an annual rainfall of 18 inches, the home's desert environment does not welcome a small farm. However, a water-catchment system circling the home, twice a year catches and stores 88,000 gallons of rainwater, nourishing a connecting garden and orchard that shield the home from public view while providing fruits, vegetables and free-range chicken eggs, connecting the owners to the community.

For images, go to [www.RammedEarthHomes.com](http://www.RammedEarthHomes.com) and click on View Our Progress.