Contracting an adobe home and approximate costs of building an adobe home...ld you use and adobe contractor or build your own adobe home? page 3 of 5

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Using an adobe contractor versus building yourself: costs of building an adobe home - page 3 of 5

Above:

Custom

two-story

adobe in

Corrales,

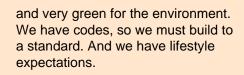
**New Mexico** 

You'll need to make decisions about: -floors (Saltillo tile, brick on sand, flagstone, stamped and dyed concrete, carpet on slab, etc.) -wall finishes (exposed sealed adobe, plastered adobe, and the type of plaster finish) -ceiling choices (exposed vigas and latillas, coved ceiling, vaulted bovédas, ordinary sheet rock, etc). -plus, many, many other decisions...

All of these decisions lead to a set of working drawings. Will you draft them yourself, farm them out to an experienced draftsperson, or hire a contractor or architect?

Once you begin, how long will it take? An adobe contractor in Albuquerque or Tucson, can complete the average turn-key, custom adobe in four months- building one house in the spring, another in the fall, or two a year. The average owner-builder, working with fewer tools, a smaller crew, and less experience, will be lucky to finish in a year. All of these questions lead to the last question, "what will it cost ?"

YOUR COST PARAMETERS..adobe and rammed earth are do-it-yourself materials, very forgiving to the novice, Below: Adobe interior by builder artist Gary Williams of Tucson, Arizona



Most who want a nice adobe or rammed earth home have higher artistic expectations. That is, we love that ornate wrought iron light fixture from Guadalajara, the beautiful red-brown Saltillo tile floor, or the handsome round vigas, with herringbone latillas above. Not to mention the high-tech, energysaving window units, the Mexican hand-carved entry door, or the adobe hand-shaped nichos or bancos. If your expectations are high, expect to pay more. If you can be happy with a smaller, economy adobe without all the bells and whistles, your cost can be lowermuch lower. Owner builders typically cut costs by 50%.

Costs for owner-built projects start at a low of \$55 per square foot, using salvaged and saved materials, a simple design and a few custom touches. As one adds features, a more realistic figure might be \$85.



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