

GRIT

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The term "living off the land" has never been taken more seriously - or enjoyed more fully - than by Hoosier composer Vic Cook. For almost a decade, he has resided in a sculptured, aerodynamic, solar-powered home/studio that he built.

The Giant, as Cook calls his home, covers 7,000 square feet and is constructed from dead or dying maple, beech, ash and walnut trees that Cook found in the central Indiana forest where he lives. The artist cut the wood using only hand tools, nailing almost every board himself.

The floor is made of stones from a nearby stream.

The Giant measures 254 feet long with its highest portion standing 38 feet tall. Half of the house is underground.



photo by Susan Warren-Hess

Living with a Giant

But though Cook's home is made of the same materials as primitive log cabins, the interior contains a surprising number of modern conveniences: running water, washing machine, tele-

phone, television and power tools. Cook even has an impressive music studio with electronic equipment and a computer. Yet not one electrical power line exists around The Giant.

The energy comes from solar panels that collect, then store energy in a solar battery. When the sun doesn't shine, a small gas-powered generator charges the batteries. It costs about 30 cents per day. For example, Cook's refrigerator (left) is made from a beech tree trunk; underground air and solar power cool the interior.

"With the technology available, I believe future generations will be able to live harmoniously with nature and have luxuries they want for practically free," Cook says. - Kayleen J. Reusser