

GREEN WITH ENVY

One of the most exclusive real estate clubs in Atlanta counts saving the environment as its most basic membership requirement.

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Among those farmers is Daron "Farmer D" Joffe, a biodynamic farmer and environmental consultant who gained local cult status for his enthusiastic approach to reclaiming lifeless land and for establishing upscale farms in neighborhoods like Serenbe and the members-only Hampton Island Preserve in Riceboro. As vice president of Georgia Organics, he constantly educates and volunteers, but founded his company, Farmer D Organics, to develop organic farms for residential and resort communities. When we catch up with him at the 13-acre Harvest Lake Farm that he stewards for the Hampton Island Preserve near Savannah, we expect to find him working in the company of his Bernese mountain dogs, Jonah and Sheva, making seasonal fresh syrup from sugar cane. Instead, he's engrossed in reading *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael GREEN WITH ENVY CONTINUED ON PAGE 145...

...GREEN WITH ENVY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 133 Pollan, and he's more passionate than ever about our food sources. He points out that Georgians spend billions importing out-of-state food, but as we start touring the 300 or so thriving, fragrant herbs in beds that Farmer D dug by hand only a year ago, we discuss the growing demand for cleaner, locally grown products.

"I foresee a crisis when the demand for organic foods will grow substantially but not the supply—because land is too expensive for small farmers," he says. One answer, he explains, is more real estate developments sponsoring CSAs that cut out the large agribusiness component, bringing the consumer closer to the food source and freeing the farmer from concern over the cost of land ownership. "CSAs are about values, community and sustainability," he says, as we make our way down a row of eggplants. "There's something luxurious about getting food right off the farm and knowing you're contributing to a healthier food system. Even some highly qualified chefs I work with aren't used to food of this quality. It changes the way we eat, shop and therefore our impact on the earth one-by-one."

While at the farm, it's impossible not to notice the farmhouse itself, built of vintage heart-pine timbers reclaimed from a 200-year-old cotton mill by Ray Goff's Watkinsville company, Legacy Wood Products. Goff is a former quarterback and head coach of the Georgia Bulldogs, and he's built a business out of his familiarity with nearby old mills and warehouses made from ancient timbers that once grew from Virginia to Texas. Now those forests are gone, and heart pine is a non-renewable resource because it takes so long to grow. "It's a part of history," Goff says. "It gives me a tremendous appreciation for the way things were. Plus, we're recycling something that is already there—and it's beautiful."