



If you haven't looked at steel roofs lately, it's time you did.

# REAL STEEL

**HAPPY HOMEOWNER:** Meredith Jural, a retired earthquake consultant, is pleased with the steel roof she had installed on her home. Besides seismic advantages, she said, "I've even noticed that it stays cooler in the house on a hot summer's day."

By NICK HARDER  
Photos by CHAS METIVIER  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

**O**ne tough choice almost all homeowners eventually face is what type of material to use to build or replace their roof. Popular choices are asphalt or fiberglass shingles, wood or cedar shake or shingles, clay tiles, slate, fibrous cement - and steel.

Steel roofs? Did you think they were just for commercial buildings? Isn't a steel roof just a big, clunky metal-looking roof that belongs in an industrial park?

You may not have noticed, but many homes are being roofed with steel. The reason you may not notice is because newer steel roofs are coated to look like conventional shingles, slate or tile. They even come in a variety of colors.

Why are people selecting steel roofs over other materials, even though they often cost more? For a number of reasons, starting with safety.

"For me it was a question first of earthquake safety," said a very serious Meredith Jural. "I studied many aspects



**MANY CHOICES:** Metal roofs come in styles and colors, below and are lightweight, durable and wind-resistant.

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## STEEL-ROOF BASICS

Here are the basics of a modern, stone-coated steel roof system.

\* **Material:** Steel finished with a stone coating.

\* **Weight:** 2 pounds per square foot installed.

\* **Wind resistance:** Class-A rating (highest).

\* **Earthquake resistance:** Weight and strength help homes survive the lateral and vertical forces of an earthquake.

\* **Hail resistance:** Warranted to withstand golf-ball-size hailstones.

\* **Thermal properties:** Dissipates heat well to keep home cooler.

\* **Longevity:** 50-year warranty.

### Sources:

Metal Roof Alliance, 4142 E. State Route 302, Belfair, Wash. 98528, (360) 275-6164. Web site:

[www.metalroofing.com](http://www.metalroofing.com)

Metro Roof Products, Oceanside. (760) 435-9842. Web site:

[www.smartroofs.com](http://www.smartroofs.com)

# STEEL: Roofs cost more, last longer

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of why some homes were left standing when others crumbled after earthquakes. I found that many of them had steel roofs."

Jural, a retired earthquake consultant, knows about seismic safety, and she put her expertise to good use when she had her Mission Viejo home re-roofed with steel.

"I did my homework first, though," she said. "I looked at other kinds of roofing, compared prices, warranties, the styles of different materials, and then chose steel."

Jural's roof has a dark shingle look to match her home's somewhat traditional Eastern architectural design.

"It took them about three days to peel off the old wood shake roof and install the new steel roof," she said. "It went on cleanly and neatly and quickly; I was impressed."

Does she like it?

"Oh, yes, very much," she said.

Not only does Jural like her new steel roof, many of the neighbors within sight of her home liked it so much that they had their homes re-roofed with steel. There are at least five styles and colors of steel roofs within a stone's throw of Jural's home.

Besides its seismic advantages, Jural said, her steel roof also has another benefit.

"I've even noticed that it stays cooler in the house on a hot summer's day," she said.

Fire-safety benefits were what sold Kim Raddatz, fire chief for the city of Coronado in San Diego County, when he installed a steel roof on his El Cajon home in October.



**ROOF READY:** Meredith Jural holds a sample section of the lightweight steel roofing she had installed on her Mission Viejo home.

CHAS METIVIER, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

"From a strictly firefighting standpoint," he said, "steel roofing makes a home a lot easier to protect from fires. Steel roofs are lightweight, very durable, wind-resistant, they have a good fire rating and a proven track record." Mark and Cindy Seyler in Lake Forest had their home

The Seylers chose steel "because you can actually walk on it. With other types of roofing you often can't," she said. "I also liked it because it doesn't come in individual shakes or shingles but in long strips. That makes it really difficult for wind to pick it up."

**"I like the look of course, and I don't ever have to worry about it."**

CINDY SEYLER  
LAKE FOREST HOMEOWNER

re-roofed with steel about two years ago. Cindy said: "I still love it." But why? "I like the look, of course," she said, "and I don't ever have to worry about it."

Another reason Seyler liked steel, despite the somewhat higher price, was the warranty. "It's got a 50-year warranty. That's hard to beat. By the time you figure in how long it will last, the fact that we wouldn't have to re-roof, it wasn't that much more than other types of roofing."

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## COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT STEEL ROOFS

By NICK HARDER  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Here are some basics about steel roofing:

**Q: How did steel roofing come about?**

A: Stone-coated steel roofing was developed during World War II. After the war, the product was commercialized.

**Q: Will a steel roof heat up a home?**

A: Actually, just the opposite. If a steel roof is properly vented, air moves well between the shingles and underlying decking. Heated air is allowed to dissipate through a ridgeline as cooler air is drawn through eave vents.

**Q: Can you walk on a steel roof?**

A: Yes, but care must be taken. It's better to walk on the battens (the long wood strips to which the steel sections are attached).

**Q: Is a steel roof noisier in the rain than other roofing material?**

A: A little noisier, but many homeowners say it's not unpleasant.

**Q: How about wind resistance?**

A: Some steel roofing systems will withstand wind speeds up to 120 mph.

**Q: Will a steel roof rust?**

A: Modern steel roofing systems have advanced coatings to prevent rust.

**Q: Will the steel roof's color fade?**

A: Very little if at all. A good way to prevent it is to occasionally wash the roof with a garden hose to wash off contaminants.

**Q: How about fire protection?**

A: A steel roof has a class-A, top rating.

**Q: Would a metal roof be too heavy for certain types of homes?**

A: A metal roof is, on average, 50 percent lighter than an asphalt shingle roof and 75 percent lighter than concrete tile, fiber-cement shakes and slate.

**Q: Doesn't a steel roof cost more?**

A: Initially, yes. Though prices vary substantially, you might compare price per 100 square feet to fiberglass (\$35-\$85); slate (\$850); tile (\$825); and steel (\$255). But, when you figure in longevity and the fact that you may have to re-roof with some other types of roofing material, the extra cost may be a lot less.

**Q: How long does it take to install a steel roof on an average home?**

A: Usually just a few days if the roofing structure of a home is not complex.