



## Clay and Earth Building Products

Clay is one of the oldest, most sustainable and healthiest building materials on earth. Its history goes back to pre-history and has been used by indigenous peoples for millennia all across the globe.

From the walls of Jericho, The Ziggurats of ancient Babylon, The Great Wall of China, the Coliseum, the Minarets of Islam to sophisticated modern structures the world over clay has been and continues to be the building material of choice for much of the world's population.

As recently as 100 years ago, building with clay and clay components was one of the most broadly used construction techniques in Central Europe and the American Southwest. And today clay remains the major construction material in many countries in Asia, Africa and South America.

During the late 19th century, clay construction began to fade with the rise of concrete as the material of choice, but today rising consciousness of environmental issue caused by so-called “modern” building materials have given rise to a whole new generation of clay advocates and aficionados.

According to Rudolf Reitz founder of BioShield Healthy Living Paints clay is a living, breathing building materials that actually improves the air around it, absorbing and releasing humidity relatively fast. This results in a naturally regulated level of humidity and with it a healthy room climate is achieved. In fact when relative humidity rises from 50%-80%, non-burned bricks can absorb 30 times more humidity that regular bricks with a two day period.

Due to its moisture regulating properties, clay may prevent the drying out of mucous membranes and reduce the build-up of fine dust. These qualities suggest that clay construction may help prevent many colds, respiratory problems and allergies.

The beauty of clay is legendary and when tinted with natural pigments or mica stunning nuanced and artistic surfaces can be created and enjoyed for years.

Since most of us spend up to 90% of our time indoors in a weather tight environment the materials we live with should be given great consideration. As opposed to modern materials which are often laced with binders, glues, formaldehyde and other questionable materials that outgas toxins into our inner environment, the natural properties of clay and clay plasters are as beautiful to look at as they are to live with.

Clay has also been described as an air purifier and odor reducer and it is proven that clay absorbs toxins dissolved in water vapor from the air.

Clay also stores heat in the winter and coolness in the summer. Because of that designing and building with clay will contribute considerably to energy savings. When you factor in the low energy required for the preparation of clay in its processing and usage, building with clay is very environmentally friendly. According to Rudolf, it takes only about 1% of the energy needed for making bricks or concrete.

If you're fortunate enough to travel widely or have friends in the Southwest, particularly New Mexico, you can experience the subtle natural beauty of classic adobe homes that handle the extremes of cold winters and hot summers with little variation in temperate contrast.

Friends that have visited our abode home in Santa Fe marvel at the beauty, texture and sensuous smoothness of the walls, so walls of clay plaster add visual excitement as well as environmental soundness to every structure small or grand.