

- Home
- News ▶
- Technology ▶
- Markets ▶
- Personal Journal ▶
- Opinion ▶
- Leisure ▶
- TODAY'S NEWSPAPER
- MY ONLINE JOURNAL
- MULTIMEDIA & EXTRAS
- MARKETS DATA & TOOLS
- FIND A CAR
- FIND A JOB
- FIND A HOME

THE WEALTH REPORT
 By ROBERT FRANK



[ADD TO PERSONALIZED HOME PAGE](#)

Living Large While Being Green

Rich Buy 'Offsets' For Wasteful Ways; Noble, or Guilt Fee?
August 24, 2007; Page W2

It's not easy being green -- especially if you're rich.

With their growing fleets of yachts, jets and cars, and their sprawling estates, today's outsized wealthy have also become outsized polluters. There are now 10,000 private jets swarming American skies, all burning more than 15 times as much fuel per passenger as commercial planes. The summer seas are increasingly crowded with megayachts swallowing up to 80 gallons of fuel an hour.



Yet with the green movement in vogue, the rich are looking for ways to compensate for their carbon-dioxide generation, which is linked to global warming, without crimping their style. Some are buying carbon "offsets" for their

private-jet flights, which help fund alternate-energy technologies such as windmills, or carbon dioxide-eating greenery such as trees. Others are installing ocean-monitoring equipment on their yachts. And a few are building green-certified mansions, complete with solar-heated indoor swimming pools.

Some people say the measures are a noble effort on the part of the wealthy to improve the environment. Eric Carlson, executive director and founder of the Carbon Fund, a nonprofit that works with companies and individuals to offset emissions, says the wealthy are taking the lead in alternative-energy markets such as solar technologies just as they take the lead in consumer markets.

"Obviously these people have different lifestyles from yours or mine," Mr. Carlson says. "At the same time, they're not obligated to do anything. We praise those who are doing things. We're trying to get to a market where the superwealthy are leaders in reducing their [carbon dioxide] footprint and playing a major role in changing this market."

Others say the efforts

[EMAIL](#) [PRINT](#) [MOST POPULAR](#)

RECENT COLUMNS

- August 24
 - [Living Large While Being Green](#)
- August 17
 - [The Corn Belt Gets Rich, Quietly](#)
- [MORE](#)

SEARCH PAST COLUMNS

Search for these words:

[Display all columns](#)

WEALTH REPORT



Check daily posts on Robert Frank's blog, [The Wealth Report](#).

advertisement

Special Offer
 Subscribe to the print Journal today! [Click Here!](#)

COMPARING BOATS AND JETS		
Boats	186-Foot Yacht	20-Foot Boat 150-HP Motor
Fuel Used Per Hour at Cruise Speed	224 gallons	4 gallons
C02 Generation	2.3 tons/hour	0.04 ton/hour
Jets	Gulfstream G400	Boeing 777
Fuel Use Per Passenger Per Hour	100 gallons	6 gallons
C02 Emissions Per Hour	one ton per passenger	0.06 ton per passenger

Sources: Estimates by Carbon Fund, Boston Whaler, V1 Jets Jets.com, Carbon Fund, Boeing

are little more than window-dressing, or to ease the guilt of the wealthy or boost their status among an increasingly green elite. Environmentalists say that if the rich really wanted to help the environment, they would stop flying on private jets, live in smaller homes, and

buy kayaks instead of yachts.

"Carbon offsets and these other things are feel-good solutions," says Lester Brown, founder and president of the Earth Policy Institute. "I'm always interested in people who buy a carbon offset for their jet to fly between their four big homes. These kinds of programs postpone more meaningful action."

Either way, an increasing number of companies are launching programs designed to help the rich live large while staying green. Jets.com, a private jet service, plans to start a program in early September in partnership with the Carbon Fund. After they take a trip, customers will get a statement on their bills telling them how much carbon dioxide their flight emitted and what it would cost to buy offsets from the fund.

The offsets are a bargain compared with the flights: A round-trip private-jet flight between Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Boston costs about \$20,000. The offsets for the 13 metric tons of carbon dioxide emitted would cost about \$74, the company says.

V1 Jets International, a jet charter company, rolled out its "Green Card" program that it says accentuates "the positive effect your flight emissions will have on the environment." The company calculates the total emissions from the trip and then buys a carbon offset from the Carbon Fund. "From a jet perspective, we have a responsibility to look after the damage that these planes do," says Andrew Zarrow, VI's president. The company also has created technologies designed to make flights more efficient by selling seats on "deadleg" trips -- flights that are returning empty from one-way trips.

Yacht companies also are getting into the act. Trinity Yachts, a Gulfport, Miss., builder, this month announced it will pay for part of the cost of installing special oceanographic and atmospheric monitoring systems in all of its new boats.



The system, called the SeaKeeper 1000, measures water temperatures and salinity, as well as air temperature and wind



www.NORDSTROM.com/Natick
Ads by Google

TODAY'S MOST POPULAR

1. 'Underpriced' at \$100 Million
2. Home Depot Talks on Unit Get Hostile
3. Bank of America Invests in Countrywide
4. Countrywide, BofA Talked for Years
5. Commentary: Another Vietnam?

[MORE](#)

PEOPLE WHO READ THIS...

Also read these stories:

- [Weddings Cheaper Than Surveys Suggest](#)
- [The King of String](#)
- [As Europeans See Us](#)
- [Informed Reader](#)
- [Doubts Raised on Whooping Cough Boom](#)

Recommendations by [loomia](#) [What's This?](#)

Personalized Home Page Setup
Put headlines on your homepage about the companies, industries and topics that interest you most.

speed. The data are sent to scientists who monitor the earth's oceans. Trinity's program is in partnership with International Sea-Keepers, a nonprofit marine conservation group founded by a group of yacht owners concerned about the environment.

"The caliber of client we have is very aware of what's going on in the environment," says William S. Smith III, vice president of Trinity Yachts. Still, the system doesn't reduce emissions from the yachts themselves, which can burn hundreds of gallons of fuel a day.

Some wealthy people are going green with their houses, too. The U.S. Green Building Council has certified at least three mansions for being leaders in environmental design, including one owned by Ted Turner's daughter, Laura Turner Seydel, and her husband, Rutherford, in Atlanta. The 7,000-square-foot-plus house, called EcoManor, is equipped with 27 photovoltaic panels on the roof, rainwater-collecting tanks for supplying toilet water, and "gray water" systems that use water from the showers and sinks for the lawn and gardens. The top of the house is insulated with a soy-based foam that is more efficient than fiberglass. The home has 40 energy monitors and a switch near the door that turns off every light in the house before the family leaves.

Mr. Seydel says the couple's energy bill is about half that of comparable homes. While he acknowledges they could have built a slightly smaller house, he said all the space is well used, between kids and visiting friends and in-laws.

"The wealthy have always been the early adapters to technology," he says. "I'm hoping that we can pave the way and show that you can have something that's luxurious that also makes a lot of sense from an energy and convenience point of view."

Write to Robert Frank at robert.frank@wsj.com

RELATED ARTICLES AND BLOGS

Related Articles from the Online Journal

- [Europe's Carbon Con Job](#)
- [Northwest Slowed by Pilot Absences](#)
- [Carbon Neutral Chic](#)
- [Surveillance Law Limits Protection For Phone Carriers](#)

Blog Posts About This Topic

- [Goodbye carbon offsets...](#) gayandright.blogspot.com
- [carbon offsetting targeted ... again](#) fairsnape.wordpress.com

[More related content](#) Powered by Sphere 

 [EMAIL THIS](#)  [FORMAT FOR PRINTING](#)  [MOST POPULAR](#)  [ORDER REPRINTS](#)



[Return To Top](#)

[Log Out](#) [Contact Us](#) [Help](#) [Email Setup](#) [My Account/Billing](#) [Customer Service: Online](#) | [Print](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) [Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use](#) [Mobile Devices](#) [RSS Feeds](#)

[News Licensing](#) [Advertising](#) [About Dow Jones](#)

Copyright © 2007 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved



