


# MALIBU TIMES

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MAGAZINE



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Architect David Hertz is at the forefront of sustainable

Green Movement  
Hits Its Stride

David Hertz's McKinley Residence surrounds a lap pool that runs down the center of a courtyard.

Photo courtesy of David Hertz AIA



# State-of-the-Art Green

development, starting with his own "green" home By Vicki Godal

A green home results from the merger of architecture and sustainable development. The philosophy of sustainability integrates the environmental credo of reduce, reuse, recycle.

Gaining national attention for his merger of architectural form with sustainable function, Santa Monica architect David Hertz's home and work has been featured in publications like *Dwell* and *Architectural Digest* magazines, the *New York Times*, HGTV and *Metropolitan Home*. Clients such as the city of Los Angeles and high-profile celebrities, like actor Julia Louis-Dreyfus and husband executive producer/writer Brad Hall, have used Hertz's talents for projects in Los Angeles, Malibu, Ventura and beyond. Living his credo, Hertz's green home, known as the McKinley Residence (named for the avenue), is viewed as a flagship of environmentally conscious design and architecture.

Last year, the forty-five-year-old father of three received the prestigious

Sustainable Living Award from the environmental Eco-Home Network for his McKinley Residence. The network sets a very high bar for awardees: Hertz is the first award winner in eight years, ending Ed Begley Jr.'s reign, who received the network's first award in 1996.

Eco-Home President and founder Julia Russell said Hertz, whose mentors include Frank Gehry and John Lautner, was selected for the award because his innovative work has advanced the state-of-the-art for sustainable design.

The modest Hertz describes his award-winning home as "definitely a work in progress." The fact that Hertz is up on top of the clear glass ceiling/roof working as we speak is evidence of this.

Hertz used traditional Bali architecture for his home, incorporating exterior space into each room and giving each a specific purpose in the home's overall design. The interior and exterior spaces flow into each other seamlessly around a central courtyard. The second floor space extends with

large wood and glass sliding panel doors that open onto balconies, with a fireplace off the master bedroom. The ground floor has several indoor/outdoor rooms and an open lap pool running down the middle of the courtyard.

The McKinley home feels expansive. Free-hanging wooden stairs against glass walls and sliding light, wood doors add to the openness. Hertz uses active solar systems, including solar hot water for hydronic heating of floors and furniture (he poured in place concrete walls, furniture and floors), natural light and ventilation to reduce energy consumption to fifty percent of what a conventional building of the same size would use. The original home sits on a forty-by-ninety-foot lot in Venice.

Automated electric skylights and windows use innovative materials and products, including natural and nontoxic interiors and finishes. Through the company he founded, Syndesis, Inc., an architectural design manufacturing firm specializing in creating sustainable strategies and



Sliding glass and wood doors open from the master bedroom onto a balcony, where in the spirit of Schindler and Neutra, Hertz takes advantage of the coastal climate by creating outdoor spaces.

PHOTO BY VICKI GODAL



PHOTOS BY VICKI GODAL



A free-hanging staircase against a glass wall and sliding wood doors adds to the openness of the McKinley home.

environmental products, Hertz developed a material he named Syndcrete, a precast lightweight concrete, which he used for his counter tops, sink basins, tubs and showers, and his fireplace. Most of the materials used in this house are recycled, like the wall light in the kitchen, which is originally from a naval submarine.

The environmental features of Hertz's architecture in his home are representative of a growing national effort by builders and environmental groups to broaden the appeal of green houses. No longer limited to specialty builders, green home building has gone mainstream as the concept that these homes lower power bills and use fewer natural resources spreads to large-scale builders and home buyers.

"An increasing number of home buyers are demanding that environmental issues become a top priority in new construction and remodeling efforts," said Ray Tonjes of the National Association of Home Builders.

According to NAHB, building a green home must offer measurable benefits such as lower utility bills. In other words, green homes must require less heating and cooling, and use less water. Durable building materials mean less maintenance and reduced upkeep. Indoors, improved environmental quality is created with paints and materials that do not give off



The hallway shows the use of natural lighting.



Hertz, who says his home is a "work in progress," cleans the glass roof.

gases and offer moisture control.

Hertz is currently working on several projects in Malibu, including a home on Point Dume equipped with fire-resistant structural concrete insulation panels and shotcrete, an eco-friendly structural system. He is also working on a home on the Encinal Canyon Bluffs, as well as an innovative home in the mountains of Malibu made from the wings and components of a 747 plane.

Growing up in Los Angeles during a time of rapid growth, Hertz, an avid outdoorsman with a love of hiking and surfing (his parents have had a condo on Carbon Beach for more than thirty years), became interested in human habitation and the juncture between the natural and built environments. "I'm interested in the impacts that people have who are responsible for the built environment and how to be more sensitive to the natural environment," Hertz said.

He began college at UCLA, where he now teaches the "Ecology of Design on Green Building Principles," and then enrolled and received his bachelor's at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, where ecological design was at the forefront.

He launched Syndesis a year after receiving his degree.

"David Hertz has devoted his life and his career to achieving the highest environmental and aesthetic standards in his work and his lifestyle choices," Eco-Home Network's Russell said. "... He is in the prime of his creative career, and I am confident that his commitment to the environment will lead him toward many more innovations." ■