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## Bosom Buddies

Meryl Streep and Lindsay Lohan Emerge as Hollywood's Hottest Odd Couple

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# Easy Being Green

In California, David Hertz is refining a new architectural hybrid: the luxe eco-home.

Photograph by JOAO CANZIANI

**A**t a Santa Monica cocktail party last year, while architect David Hertz was listening to Hollywood eco-activist Laurie David expound upon the threat of global warming, he politely suggested that she do the planet a favor and commit suicide.

"If you really want to be a true ecologist, the best thing you can do is kill yourself," Hertz told her, pointing out that the environment would greatly benefit from the unused oxygen and fossil fuels that she would leave behind.

David just laughed; she and Hertz are friends, and she knew he was kidding. But the joke goes to the heart of an ongoing dilemma in Los Angeles, where left-leaning multimillionaires often struggle to balance public activism and private comfort. Although the Hollywood elite were among the first to adopt the eco-chic lifestyle—hybrid cars, hemp sandals—they've been slower to embrace sustainable, or "green," residential architecture, which, until recently at least, required major aesthetic compromises. (It's all too easy to buy a Prius and keep it parked in the driveway, but what A-list design snob is going to live in a shack made from recycled particleboard and used tires?) That's why Hertz, a former apprentice of 20th-century master John Lautner's, is becoming Southern California's go-to guy for sophisticated, luxurious, environment-friendly homes.

"Green building should not come at the expense of good design," says Hertz, a handsome, khaki-clad 45-year-old whose laid-back inflections give him the air of an unusually articulate SoCal surfer dude. "In fact, design can be improved organically by a better understanding of elements like natural light and natural materials."

Hertz's own home in Venice, a modernized take on the traditional Balinese villas he has admired on trips to Indonesia, feels like a luxe tropical retreat and serves as a kind of working lab for his ideas. Many of the walls, floors and countertops appear to be concrete but are actually a lightweight composite called Syndcrete, which Hertz developed in 1984 and has since sold to Diane Keaton, among others; its ingredients include recycled carpet fiber, vinyl records and wood chips. The decks, beams and shelving are mahogany and ipe (a Brazilian hardwood), harvested from sustainable forests. Hidden from view on the roof, in addition to solar panels that generate 70 percent of the home's electricity, is an energy-efficient parabolic system that provides hot water for laundry, showers and heated floors. High-performance window glass helps keep the house cool during the day and warm at night, and the air-conditioning comes entirely in the form of ocean breezes.

After surfing champion Kelly Slater saw Hertz's house last year, he hired the architect to design two new homes in Hawaii, one on Oahu and one on the Big Island, where he currently spends his downtime with girlfriend Gisele Bündchen. "The concept is an indigenous architecture that uses a lot of local materials," says Hertz. "We're looking at a lot of lava rock walls." But Hertz's most radical project to date is for Francie Rehwald, who recently acquired a prime 55-acre site north of Malibu that once belonged to Hollywood designer Tony Duquette (a 1993 fire destroyed the compound he'd built there). Rehwald, an environmentalist whose family founded one of the first Mercedes-Benz dealerships in Southern California, wanted to make an architectural statement without adding yet another energy-sucking megamansion to the coastline.



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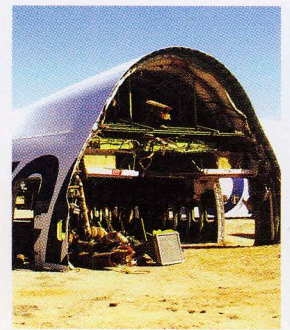
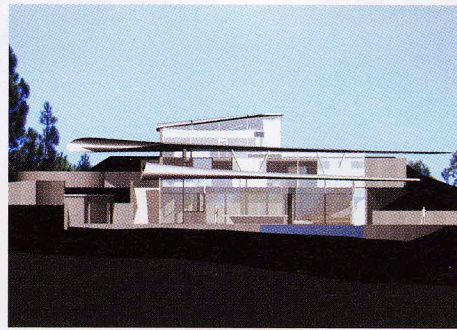
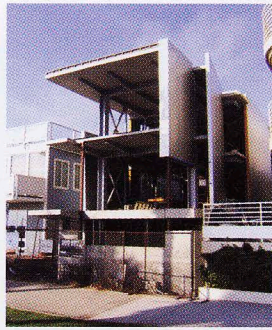
David Hertz in the courtyard of the home he designed for himself in Venice, California

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Hertz's solution: Take a decommissioned Boeing 747, cut it up and use the parts to build a solar-powered nine-building compound. The wings will serve as the roof, the first-class cabin will be a guest house, and the nose will be turned upright to shelter an indoor-outdoor meditation pavilion.

"It's 100 percent postconsumer reuse," Hertz says lackadaisically, as if he were describing a Whole Foods shopping bag. "Instead of having the airplane basically sitting in the desert, and wasting the billion dollars of research that went into the design, we're using the sculptural elements essentially as prefab components." As he worked on the concept, Hertz decided to incorporate every possible piece of the plane, even the air vents. "Why not act like an American Indian, and just think of it like a buffalo and use everything?" he says. By Malibu standards, the project is a bargain: While a new plane costs more than \$200 million, Hertz found a mothballed Tower Air jet for \$40,000—cheaper than a lot of used cars. Construction begins this summer at a budget of \$2 million.

"I wanted someone who could build green, green, green. And look—



From left: A home Hertz built from refrigeration panels in Venice, California; his design for the Rehwald project, a house made from pieces of a decommissioned 747; the body of the jet, preconstruction

we're recycling a whole damn 747," says Rehwald. "It's just amazing."

The home's site is not far from Malibu's Carbon Beach, where Hertz spent his summers as a child in the late Sixties and early Seventies, and where he first became an environmentalist. Afflicted with severe eczema, he followed doctors' orders to swim daily in the ocean. (It was at the end of that bygone era when the Santa Monica Bay was clean enough to actually cure skin conditions instead of cause them.) While surfing in the bay as a teenager, he saw the waters fill with urban runoff and industrial waste, prompting him to join Greenpeace and the Cousteau Society.

Carbon Beach was also where Hertz first developed an obsession with architecture, particularly when he saw an odd cavelike structure, with a swooping wooden roof, in the early stages of construction. The home, which Courteney Cox would one day purchase for \$10.5 million, was the Segel house, one of Lautner's iconic designs. "I watched that project get built over maybe seven years, and used to sneak onto the site, really fascinated," Hertz recalls. When Hertz turned 17, Lautner took him on as an apprentice, and later, while he was enrolled at the Southern California Institute of Architecture, he joined Frank Gehry's firm as an intern. After collaborating on gallery installations for Jean-Michel Basquiat and other artists, Hertz started his own business in 1984, at just 24. His first celebrity client was Julia Louis-Dreyfus, whose Montecito beach house he remodeled with a motorized sunroof and a chemical-free hot tub. Hertz ended up getting married on the grass-covered roof of the Segel house, to Stacy Fong, a fellow architect who now manages Hertz's business. They have two sons and a daughter, ages nine to 13, which explains the drum sets, Lego collections and boogie boards that litter their house.

Lately Hertz has been spending time in Costa Rica, where Belgian artist and heiress Cati Van Vilders has asked him to design a cluster of low-impact buildings on a lot that adjoins her hundreds of acres of preserved rainforest. On Venice's Ocean Front Walk, a few blocks from his house, another client is about to move into a house that Hertz built out of prefabricated refrigeration panels. Hertz sees his thriving business as evidence that desire for green homes is finally expanding beyond California's inner circle of tree huggers. There are still multiple obstacles, he believes, including inflexible local bureaucracies and a construction industry mired in the past. ("If your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail," he says.) And while the average homeowner is still reluctant to pay an extra \$2,000 for insulated glass even if it will save much more in the long run, Hertz sees a huge shift in the consume-at-all-costs mentality that has dominated America for decades.

"For a long time it was, 'My Hummer! My mansion! Bigger is better!'" he says. "But now that's not necessarily something to brag about." And with energy supplies dwindling and oil prices spiking, he adds, even Exxon executives are joining the call for conservation. "The party is about to end," says Hertz. "More and more people are looking for alternatives—whether out of guilt or good intentions, or just common sense." —CHRISTOPHER BAGLEY

