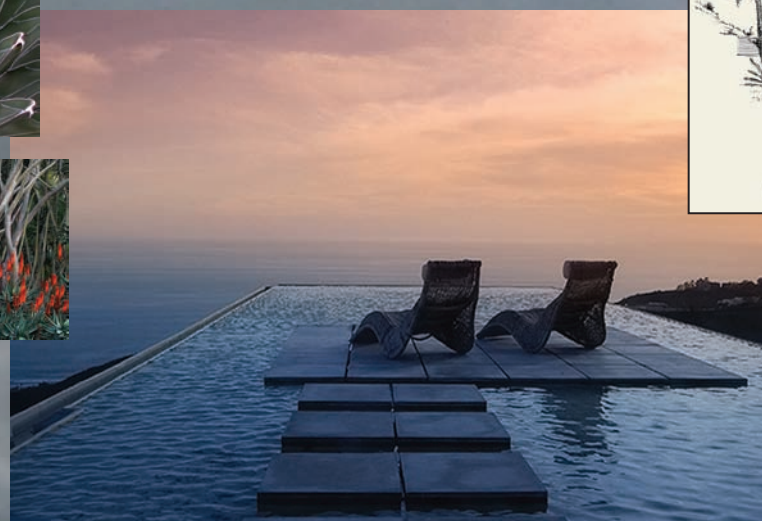
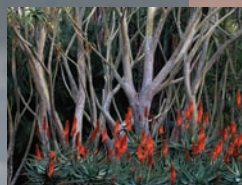
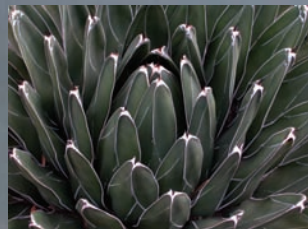


ecoPARK: A Vision in Malibu

by Nancy Gross



Doug Busch

World renowned photographer Doug Busch, inventor of the world's biggest camera which produces negatives ranging from 8" x 10" to 40" x 60," also has a large vision in his other profession as a building designer through ecoTECH. He wants to build eco-friendly communities "for the masses, not the classes," and, in order to facilitate this ongoing project, he intends to turn his own 20-acre Malibu property, including his remarkable, highly energy efficient home and studio, into a day use ecoPARK, for educational, inspirational and think-tank research retreat purposes.

Doug, whose photographs are collected in many museums, including the Smithsonian, the J. Paul Getty and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and who holds patents on cameras and lenses he has invented and developed for the last 40 years, also had the rare opportunity to study under legendary black and white photographer, Ansel Adams.

Doug now huddles with green thinkers and pioneers, sharing trade secrets to bring about a technology "bloom." A few of his partners in ecoTECH and ecoPARK are as follows, though the entire cast of innovators is too numerous to mention in this article: Lawrence Gust, certified Building Biology Environmental Consultant and President of the Board of Directors of the International Institute for Building Biology and Ecology, and Certified Electromagnetic Radiation Safety Advisor (CERSA) through the Safe Wireless Initiative of the Science and Public Policy Institute; Tracy Huston, co-founder of Menlo Lab, and author of Inside-Out: Stories and methods for Generating the Futures we Want, who promotes urban renewal by working with leaders from businesses, government, education and non-profits to generate economically, socially, and ecologically systemic sustainable change; and Leland Walmsley, founder of everGREEN Landscape Architects, Inc., from a family of professionally renowned designers practicing landscape architecture, construction and city planning in California since 1918, and on the Board of Directors of the US Green Building Council's California Central Coast Chapter (USGBC C4), the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) approved Landscape Architect in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, and a LEED trainer who recently co-authored the Green Facilities Handbook.

Another key player is solar consultant Wayne Pendrey, who specializes in affordable housing projects, including the \$68 million WAV project in Ventura. "I am the only solar consultant in the state of California who is a trainer for the California Building Performance Contractors Association (CBPCA). What is unique about that is that I don't promote solar first, but rather efficiency first." While Wayne is always encouraging solar power usage, he explains that many solar consultants and sales people are "slapping down solar" without adequate forethought. To really optimize the green benefit, and to reduce the size (and costs) of solar installations for customers, increasing the

(continued on page 58)

Drought tolerant plants conserve precious resources at the proposed ecoPARK site (above), which overlooks the Pacific Ocean. On the property, Busch Design Studio (top) is state of the art in energy efficiency. The ecoPARK structure (rendering, right), will be a sustainability school. A water roof (bottom) harvests rainwater in this breathtaking setting.

(ecoPARK continued from page 11)

overall energy efficiency of the building ought to precede a solar conversion.

Wayne's resume is impressive. He is an energy consultant with 33 years experience, founding member (and chairman of the strategic partners committee) of the US Green Building Council California, Central Coast Chapter (USGBC C4), on the Board of Directors for the Ventura County Contractors Association, as chair of their Green Building Committee, to name a sample of his affiliations.

There is no shortage of brilliance or energy in the ecoTECH Design team, and the huddle has brought about a plan. The partners now seek funding so that the rest of the building of the park may commence.

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If Doug's hopes, and the hopes of his colleagues, are realized, the ecoPARK will not rely on energy from any outside source; it will be off the grid, and with a zero carbon footprint, which means not contributing any carbon emissions to Los Angeles—known for being the city of automobiles and the city of excesses—or the world. Imagine leaving the dissipating era of fossil fuels behind for a day, to encounter the emerging future in a scientifically sound and aesthetically pleasing park-like presentation.

Yet even with a photographer's commitment to beauty, a camera maker's love of cutting-edge technology, and a Malibu address, ecoTECH design studio and ecoPARK partners assert a wish for egalitarian access to these products and processes; this is not a pathway to showcase gadgets and trends for the wealthy alone. In their words, "The three tenets of ecoTECH Design's products are sustainability, aesthetics and affordability. For the past few decades the green movement has had two vital flaws: its inability to be equal to its non-green counterparts, both in style and performance, and its higher prices, which caused it to be elitist and inaccessible to the masses."

Picture a day trip to the completed Trancas Canyon Road site: You park your car in a designated lot, or along Pacific Coast Highway, and you are welcomed into ecoPARK. You will ride only in vehicles that harvest energy from the motion of the car or shuttle as it goes over a series of specially designed energy-generating speed bumps, while winding within a canyon resplendent with gorgeous scenery. Doug Busch's property is adjacent to National Forest land, and has breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean.

An electric shuttle will serve the lower elevation of the park, taking visitors on a tour of exhibits of recent innovations in green technology to include biofuels, solar panels, and wind-power capturing spindle sculptures that are not turbines, but are quiet, attractive, and designed to be used where laws protecting the beauty of coastal and other scenic zones would disallow traditional wind machines.

The road that climbs the hillsides is already lined with drought tolerant plants that are either native to the area, or have been brought from places like Australia and South Africa. The architectural art that are the energy-harvesting wind sculptures will line the road, powering lights that will illuminate the Yuccas at nightfall. Specific areas will also be further cultivated with only native plants, to teach about the ways these plant communities function, with each plant filling a different ecological niche, and saving water as plants and soils live in efficiency and harmony.

The upper elevation of the property, where Doug built his home and studio 12 years ago, will showcase green technology already in place, as well as contain new planned exhibits. One feature will be called the ecoGYM, and technologies that take advantage of the energy from a footstep to generate electricity, such as Powerleap, will be displayed at the ecoGYM. Solar cooking and alternative waste disposal will be demonstrated, as will solar photovoltaic panels, collector tubes and an energy management system with smart lithium battery storage.

Building materials that reduce off-gassing are scheduled to be on display, meeting ecoTECH's criteria and standards of being non-toxic, energy-efficient, and reusable, repurposed and /or

recycled.

There is already the capacity to capture 35,000 gallons of rain water and store it in seven collection tanks. The landscaping is already what is called zero-scaping, meaning landscaping that requires no watering, other than what the earth does on its own. A Pure Environmental Solutions, Hague Quality Water treatment system purifies the water for drinking, cooking and bathing. The property also already boasts the third largest private swimming pool in all of Los Angeles County, a 110,000 gallon salt water pool, heated by invisible solar in a system where the water is cycled under the driveway to be warmed. The property and plans have much to offer all kinds of visiting groups, sustaining about 25 participants in any given tour: schoolchildren, colligates, builders, homeowners, urban planners, underserved community members, foster children who will emancipate and need to find training, retreat participants.

A living roof for a living planet (below), in a calming labyrinth.



A boulder becomes a chair for meditation (left). A koi and turtle rescue pond (right) keeps earth's animals in view.



An uncommonly huge koi and turtle rescue pond with little islands of water lilies crosses underneath the studio Doug built; People know Doug will take their unwanted koi and turtles. Collaborator Wayne Pendrey said, "People just come up here and drop them off. Doug calls them by name." When Doug is alerted that one of the koi seems like it might be sick or even dead, kind of floating at the edge of the pond, Doug says, "Oh, he does that all the time. He just ate." Doug considers this pond to be a small but important gesture toward rescuing and restoring wildlife and he will continue to keep this active.

Additionally, Doug's team will add a sustainable hummingbird aviary in proximity to an existing Zen garden. He calls this "the perfect blend of art, horticulture and architecture," where birds will have a large flying pen and living space with a thermal chimney to cool the structure, and flowers and butterflies will enhance the scenery and complete the natural exchanges. Serene waterfalls, with evening lighting powered by solar photovoltaic panels, will contrast with the Zen rock garden's dry landscape and the dynamic plants and trees that thrive with little water.

The center wants to have salt water ponds to illustrate algae growth for biofuel technology. A part of the park is to be allocated for university research groups to use. There is also an authentic archeological site belonging to the Native American Chumash tribe, and it will be preserved for the sake of informing the public about the Chumash culture, with various organizations and university departments maintaining this exhibit with permission from the tribe.

An activity room, an eco discussion center, lecture halls and a movie theater are included in the plans for ecoPARK. Planners also want to have a demonstration of safeHAUS(es), which are low-cost, sustainable pre-fabricated houses constructed out of shipping containers. These can be used as emergency housing for people who have experienced a disaster, and can also be converted into permanent residences.

In order to take into account issues of decreasing food supplies, the ecoPARK will explore alternative methods of farming food. Organic gardens and saltwater food source demonstrations are being planned.

Boulders on the site are already used as places to sit and observe lizards, tree frogs and the sublime mountains and coast, and this will continue. When Doug first built his home, he wanted to crush and use the cleared granite for his driveway, but was obliged by law to use concrete or asphalt. He still maintained many stones on his property, amidst the thriving drought resistant plants that blend in with the

National Forest, in contrast to some bright green water-guzzling lawns on other properties in the Malibu hills.

Having to comply with some regulations that were adverse to him did not diminish Doug's resolve to do as much as he could as environment-friendly as possible, and his design incorporates numerous passive heating and cooling processes. He has one water roof that serves to collect water which runs through pipes to his seven tanks. He has several living roofs, one layed out beautifully like a meditation garden. Wayne Pendrey said that "living roofs are becoming more and more popular because you can go with a bigger building. It keeps the building temperature consistent because it is adding insulation. You are replacing part of the footprint with vegetation that creates oxygen and absorbs carbon dioxide."

There are also wood slats on Doug's home and studio that are spaced off the stucco wall to leave a ventilating space. And windows are designed to protrude from the walls at slight angles to allow for unobscured, panoramic views.

Doug said, "My main thrust—you have lots of people doing these green technologies, the hard architectural aspects. Most only deal with one part. We focus half of our attention on doing whole house technology, 200 percent over LEED. But we also focus on raising the bar in the community aspect with green job creation, organic farming, training, community light industry. We want to see workforce housing that brings in teachers and artists, a holistic sort of community housing that's not going to be had by just providing subsidies for green building."

People are relearning how to live in communities. Remaining local and cooperating are ways to work smarter, rather than work harder and commute farther away. The vision for ecoPARK is to teach about processes that work best when incorporated all together, for people who may then live, simply yet well, in strong, efficient, respectful and sustainable togetherness.

You may visit buschdesign.com, superlarge.com, ecotechdesignstudio.com, or write to info@buschdesign.com if you wish to see the property or contribute to the project through the No Strings Foundation501(c)3.

Nancy Gross lives in Ojai, where she has written for regional publications such as *The Ojai Valley News* and *Ojai Valley Visitor's Guide*. She is a UCSB graduate, a mother and a poet. Her own new magazine, *The Ojai Bubble*, made its debut in late May, and a July French-themed issue is currently for sale. Contact Nancy at theojaibubble@yahoo.com.