

EXCLUSIVELY FOR  
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PROFESSIONAL

# NEW AMERICAN LUXURY

How **David Hertz** turned a Boeing  
747 airplane into architecture



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### WINGSPAN

Situated on a hilltop in a remote area of Malibu, the Wing House repurposes a Boeing 747 airplane, with the wings serving as the roof. Learn more about this innovative project on p. 85.



**REPURPOSE IT ALL**  
Practically the entire 747 plane was repurposed to form something on the property—right down to the engine cowling, which was reconstructed to form a fire pit and water feature.



“

DAVID HERTZ

**WE CUT THE AIRPLANE IN HALF LENGTHWISE AND THEN CLOSED THREE MAJOR FREEWAYS AND TWO HIGHWAYS TO TRANSPORT THE WINGS.**

Repurposing a jetliner from one of California's aircraft graveyards also appealed to Hertz's green-design sensibility. So, after an arduous year-and-a-half government-approval process, Hertz and his client headed out into the desert to purchase the airplane that was right for the project. "We bought a 1977 Boeing 747 for \$25,000," says Hertz, who notes that the jet came with a detailed history showing every flight it had taken in its life as a TWA plane.

The next challenge was to transport the behemoth jet to the project site. "We cut the airplane in half lengthwise and then closed three major freeways and two highways to transport the wings," Hertz explains. "We brought them to the

local airport in Malibu, where they were lifted by a Chinook, the largest cargo-bearing helicopter, to the site." He adds that the transportation was done over a two-hour period, at a cost of \$13,000 an hour. A crane was used to lift the pieces in place onsite.

Some may think all of the transportation work would make this project less than eco-friendly, but Hertz quickly addresses this issue: "The idea of using a huge, abandoned, post-consumer infrastructure delivered in several big pieces represents far less use of energy in the lifecycle of whole project than transporting lots of small, prefabricated pieces," he explains.

The massive wings of the 747 were used as the roof structure for the main house, and the remainder of the fuselage was used as material for numerous other structures on the property: a barn, a caretaker's residence, an art studio, and a meditation pavilion that was made of the 747's nose cone. "Every piece of the 747 was basically recycled or totally reused," Hertz says with pride.

Other green aspects to this innovative project include: solar radiant heating; cellulose insulation; a passive-solar design; natural ventilation strategies; bamboo cabinets, doors, and millwork; and zero-VOC paints and natural plasters throughout the interior.

The result of this four-year quest for architectural innovation is at once eco-conscious, curvaceous, dramatic, and awe-inspiring. ●

**HELLO, CURVES**  
When his client requested a curvy, feminine shape for her new home, architect David Hertz chose the wings of an airplane to serve as the roof structure.



# LIVING IN A JET PLANE

Designed by eco-conscious architect **David Hertz**, the high-flying Wing House project repurposes a Boeing 747 for an innovative residence

**WORDS**

Erinn Morgan

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

Carson Leh

Laura Doss

[lauradoss.com](http://lauradoss.com)

**DESIGN FIRM**

David Hertz, FAIA, Architects Inc.  
Studio of Environmental Architecture  
2420 McKinley Ave.  
Venice, CA 90291  
310 829 9932  
[studioea.com](http://studioea.com)

**Nestled into a hilltop on a vast 55-acre property** in the remote foothills of Malibu stands a house unlike any other. Called the Wing House, this structure has found a place in architectural history. What makes it so special? The house is made out of a Boeing 747 airplane.

When planning the project, the property's owner, a woman who co-owns a Mercedes dealership, was looking for curvilinear, feminine shapes for the building. "It didn't start with the idea of an airplane," says David Hertz, principal of the award-winning Studio of Environmental Architecture and architect of the Wing House. "It started with the idea of a floating, curved roof. Airplane wings became the vehicle to achieve that."



01



02

**01 A SELF SUPPORTING ROOF**  
Hertz discovered that the wing of a Boeing 747, at just more than 2,500 square feet, has an ideal configuration to maximize views and provide a self-supporting roof (minimal additional structural support is needed).

**02-03 FLOAT ON**  
The 747 wings were positioned atop the home's structures to appear as if floating, but really sitting on concrete and rammed-earth walls cut into the hillside. Hertz and the client had to register the roof of the house with the FAA, so pilots flying overhead don't mistake the home as a downed aircraft.

**PROJECT**  
The Wing House  
Malibu, CA

**CONSTRUCTION**  
2007-2011

**SIZE**  
5,000 sq. ft.

**GENERAL CONTRACTORS**  
Ron Senso  
[ronsenso.com](http://ronsenso.com)

Rod Spector  
[rspector.com](http://rspector.com)

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER**  
C.W. Howe Partners Inc.  
[cwhose.com](http://cwhose.com)

**MECHANICAL ENGINEER**  
Monterey Energy Group  
[montereyenergygroup.com](http://montereyenergygroup.com)

**GLAZING CONTRACTOR**  
Crystal Clear Glass Inc.  
[crystalclearglassinc.com](http://crystalclearglassinc.com)

**CONCRETE/MASONRY**  
DTM Construction, Inc.  
[dtmconstruction.com](http://dtmconstruction.com)

**PLUMBING**  
Neal Lane Plumbing  
[neallanepumbing.com](http://neallanepumbing.com)



03

**THE POWER OF SUNSHINE**

Daylight was a central concept in the lighting scheme—it is maximized through both daylight monitors that control the level of powered lighting and the absorption of solar energy through the photovoltaic arrays on the roof, which work in tandem with wind turbines to power the building.

**GATED GLASS LIFT**

A repurposed pair of vintage Argentinean gates decorate the entrance to the contemporary glass elevator, surrounded by a staircase. "T.L. Shield did an absolutely fantastic job of engineering and fabricating our vision for a contemporary elevator within the context of the traditional ornamental ironwork of the period," Hertz says.

**SOFT-BOX ILLUMINATION**

Equipped with energy-efficient bulbs, the museum's light fixtures are made of a white stretched fabric, contrasting with the black walls and creating a soft-box illumination effect.

**WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION**

The Mullin Collection is the world's largest assemblage of Bugatti and French race cars of the 1930s.

Integral to this project was the general contractor, Interscape Construction. "The general contractor showed amazing versatility in being able to work with the unconventional concepts and details we produced and collaborated well with us in their execution," Hertz says.

Beyond its green and unique architectural features, the rest of the behemoth raw warehouse space was stripped—save for its large columns—then painted black. A scenic company designed the look of the open museum to mimic that of historic Parisian exhibition halls. "Stretch-fabric light fixtures, created in white to contrast with the black walls, were employed to create soft-box illumination," says Hertz. ●

**A MESSAGE FROM INTERSCAPE CONSTRUCTION INC.**

Interscape Construction Inc. has been in business for more than 25 years and is proud of its working relationship with David Hertz and the Studio of Environmental Architecture. Interscape endeavors to offer quality work performed in a professional manner. It seeks to form relationships upon which to build for the future, and David Hertz and the Studio of Environmental Architecture is clearly one of those relationships.



interscape

For over 25 years Interscape Construction has been dedicated to delivering completed projects on time and on budget. We work for the best companies and organizations in the market place and are conscientious and professional in all that we undertake.



Mullin Automotive Museum



UCLA Medical



Dimensional Fund Advisors

We specialize in general construction, tenant improvements, schools, entertainment, medical and law offices, restaurants, base building renovations and construction management.

For more information on how Interscape Construction can assist you with your construction needs, please call Stephen Russell at (818) 249-1324.

Also visit our website at:

[www.interscapeconstruction.com](http://www.interscapeconstruction.com)

## AN ECO-CONSCIOUS MUSEUM FOR ART-DECO AUTOS

**David Hertz's Studio of Environmental Architecture marries Parisian history with green modernity in the Mullin Auto Museum**

#### WORDS

Erinn Morgan

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

Carson Leh  
[studioea.com](http://studioea.com)

Laura Doss  
[lauradoss.com](http://lauradoss.com)

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► **The recently completed Mullin Auto Museum** may make you wonder: how did eco consciousness become a design priority for a museum of gas-guzzling vehicles?

"It was purely my influence," says David Hertz, principal of Studio of Environmental Architecture, the firm that designed the museum. "But Peter Mullin soon became a champion for advocating green building aspects. At one point there was a discussion about eliminating some green features for budget reasons; he said he did not see these features as a cost, but as an investment, and he was not willing to cut them out of the budget."

Located just south of Santa Barbara in Oxnard, California, the museum features dramatic luxury details, such as a grand entryway covered by repurposed automobile windshields, a lush green roof that doubles as an event space, and über-modern wind turbines vaulting off of the roof over the entrance.

The 80,000-square-foot museum houses the private collection of Peter Mullin, which hones in on the vivacious curves of French-built automobiles covering several decades (but celebrating, primarily, the Art Deco Movement). The lineup of 250 autos that rotate in exhibition includes the world's largest collection of vintage Bugattis as well as Delages, Delahayes, Talbot-Lagos, and Voisins.

While the end result is a luxe museum space, Hertz says one of the biggest trials on this project was a relatively tight budget of \$5 million to create something unique out of an existing warehouse. "It was a challenge to work with a fairly bland, tilt-up concrete building and a pretty restricted budget," he says.

He reconciled this limitation by focusing on creating a few highly dramatic and outstanding features. "We didn't need to express the entry with a giant canopy of windshields," he says. "And we could have put in a conventional elevator and not made a huge feature out of it. But we kept the basic core and shell very simple used the budget judiciously to achieve maximum architectural effect in a few areas."

One of these standout effects is a stunning pair of vintage gates from Argentina that were repurposed to create the entrance to the museum's very contemporary glass elevator, which lifts visitors up to a mezzanine, and to the green roof.

The museum also features a photovoltaic array that, along with the wind turbines (which were still going through the permitting process at presstime), will supply all of the building's energy. Energy-efficient lighting is also installed throughout the museum, controlled by an automated day-lighting system to maximize natural light.