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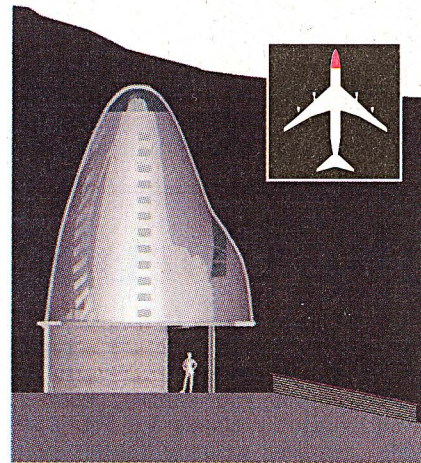
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SATURDAY/SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 - 6, 2005

## West Coast Woman To Build Crash Pad Out of an Old 747

Ms. Rehwald Asked Architect  
For Curvy, Eco-Friendly;  
Meditating in the Cockpit

By ALEX FRANGOS



A meditation chamber will be one of the buildings assembled from an old jet.

Monica. Ms. Rehwald, whose passions include yoga, organic gardening, meditation, folk art and the Cuban cocktails called mojitos, loved the adventurousness of the design, the feminine shapes and especially the environmental aspect.

"It's 100% post-consumer waste," she says. "Isn't that the coolest?"

Unusual homes are nothing new  
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## California Woman to Build Home From Old Jet

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along the coast of Southern California, long a magnet for eccentrics and free spirits. The "cyclotron house" in Malibu is shaped like an atom smasher. The "eyeball house" in Woodland Hills is a wooden silo with four giant glass eyes affixed to it. The "Chemosphere" looks like a flying saucer perched on a toothpick at the edge of a cliff in the Hollywood Hills.

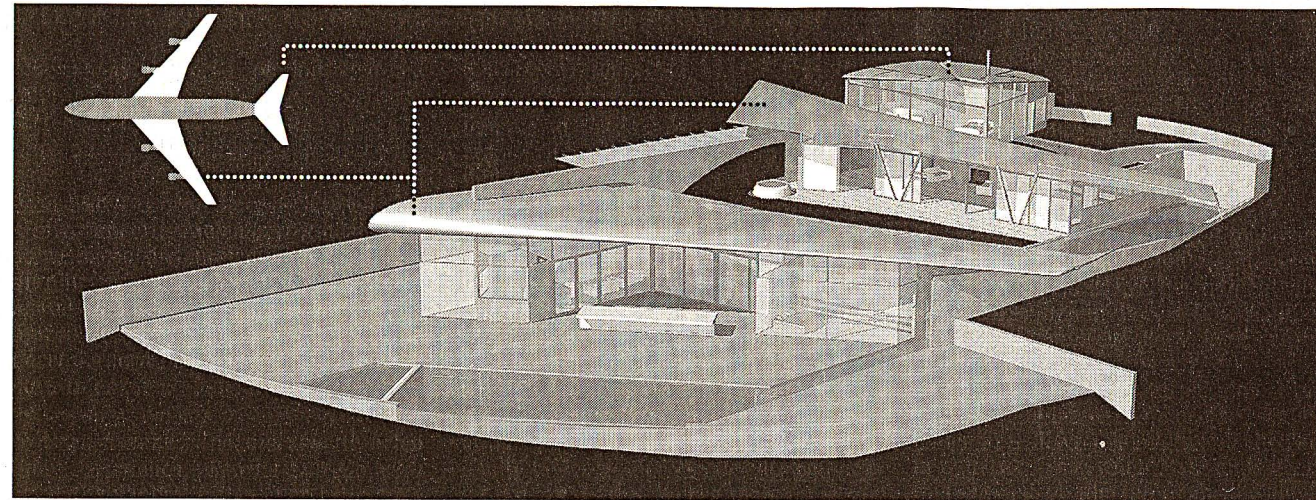
Ms. Rehwald, whose family founded the first Mercedes-Benz dealership in southern California, is intent on adding to the genre. She has reserved a junked jet to purchase, charmed local planning officials and spent \$200,000 on consultants.

"I am as much a part of this world as a bird, the frog in the creek," says Ms. Rehwald, who used to work at the family dealership, of her environmental motives. She wears a white sailor's hat perched atop her tousled blond hair, and her gold and silver bracelets jangle as she speaks. "This is my antidote to the malling of America."

Mr. Hertz has designed homes for such boldface Hollywood names as Julia Louis-Dreyfus of *Seinfeld* fame. He says his aeronautical inspiration struck after a long flight from Los Angeles to Scotland. The 747, he says, "though designed in the 1960s, is still an absolutely beautiful contemporary object. It was derived from pure function."

Mr. Hertz isn't the first architect to find inspiration in aeronautics, and people have turned grounded airplanes—small ones at least—into makeshift homes before. But Mr. Hertz may well be the first to propose building a high-end home with pieces of a 747.

First, Mr. Hertz had to find a plane. New 747s start at more than \$200 million. He called Mark Thompson of Aviation Warehouse, who runs an airplane junkyard in the California desert that resembles the futuristic wasteland of "Mad Max." Mr. Thompson told him that \$70,000 to \$100,000 would buy Ms. Rehwald a decommissioned Boeing 747-200 that still carries the faded logo of defunct Tower Air.



The wings of the old 747 will rest on thick concrete walls, forming the roof of a multilevel main house. Other pieces will be used to assemble an art studio, a loft and a barn to house rare domestic animals.

Half the value was in the ailerons, the moveable parts of the wing. Mr. Hertz figured he could use them to control the awning on the patio by Ms. Rehwald's swimming pool.

Mr. Thompson met with county engineering officials to persuade them that the jet parts could withstand the strong winds that sometimes buffet Ms. Rehwald's property. "It's difficult to get a city engineer who is used to working with 2-by-4s and plaster to realize that an airplane that flies 500 miles per hour can stand up to 40-mph winds."

Nancy Francis, supervisor of the residential permits section at the Ventura County Planning Division, says she's excited such an unusual dwelling is going up in her jurisdiction. "Everyone in the department wants to go on the site visit when it's done," she says.

A winding one-lane road leads to the sunny hillside in the Santa Monica Mountains where Ms. Rehwald intends to create her architectural oddity. The 55-acre plot with views of the Pacific, now covered in aloe, agave cactus and white oleander flowers, is one hour north of L.A. It once housed dozens of buildings erected by Hollywood designer Tony Duquette, who built with found ob-

jects and industrial garbage such as old tires and radiators. A fire in 1993 destroyed most of his strange handiwork. Ms. Rehwald bought the land last year.

Mr. Hertz and his assistants have been spending time in the desert with the derelict jet, measuring it with long pieces of string and contemplating its shapes. Eventually, he and Mr. Thompson will cut it into pieces and truck it to a valley near his client's property. He figures it will take a helicopter 10 hours—at \$8,000 an hour—to ferry the metal chunks up the hillside.

There he intends to assemble a compound of buildings connected by narrow dirt paths. The jet's wings will rest on thick concrete walls, forming the roof of a multilevel main house. The nose will point to the sky, becoming a meditation chamber, with the cockpit window a skylight. The first-class cabin will be an art studio. The signature bulge on the top of the 747 will become a loft. A barn will house rare domestic animals such as the poyou donkey. A yoga studio, guest house and caretaker's cottage will round out the compound.

"We are trying to use every piece of this aircraft, much like an Indian would use a buffalo," says Mr. Hertz.

He says the eight buildings will be scattered across the terraced hillside as if it were a "crash site." As it happens, the site lies under a jet flight path into Los Angeles International Airport. That concerns the Federal Aviation Administration, which has asked Mr. Hertz to paint special numbers on the wing pieces to alert pilots that Ms. Rehwald's retreat is not a crashed jumbo jet.

In deference to neighbors such as Dick Clark and the former spouses of Bob Dylan and Olivia Newton-John, the structures will keep a low profile, blending into the land, says Mr. Hertz. He intends to "bioblast" the metal with walnut shells to remove the Tower Air paint and dull the sheen.

Ms. Rehwald says she has given Mr. Hertz a \$1.5 million budget. She promptly adds: "I'll be real fortunate if it's less than \$2 million."

He has already spent money on an archeologist to look for Chumash Indian artifacts and a biologist to tell her how best to manage the coyotes, mountain lions and rattlesnakes that traverse her land. She hopes to start construction within nine months, and to move in by 2007. Until then, when Ms. Rehwald visits the site, she stays in a Winnebago trailer borrowed from a friend.