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DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE, GARDENS, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LIVING

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Alejandro D'Acosta and Claudia Turrent's  
experiments in green design

# L.A. at Home

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## Alejandro D'Acosta and Claudia Turrent's experiments in green design



### D'Acosta

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

By Barbara Thornburg

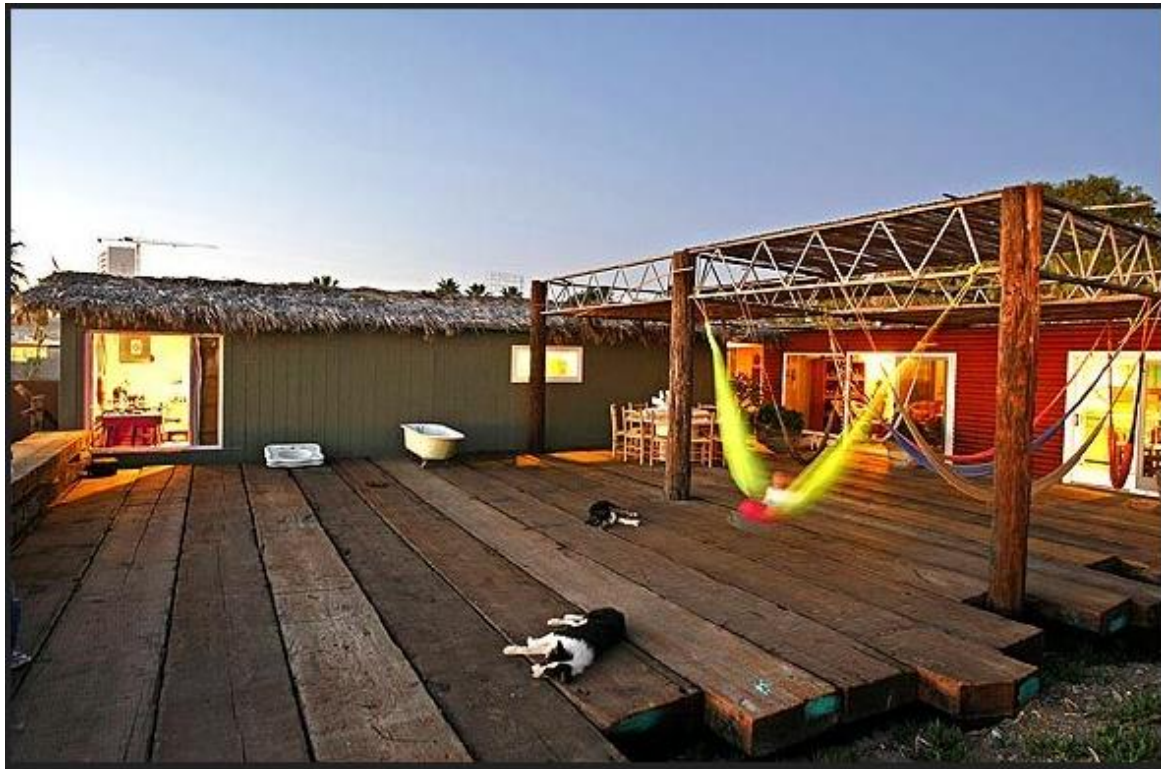
Architects Alejandro D'Acosta and Claudia Turrent are on a quest to promote a sustainable way of life for themselves and their community in the nascent *revolucion verde* just south of the Tijuana border. The Ensenada coast and nearby Valle de Guadalupe wine-making region inland are testing grounds for their experiments in green design, and though the couple's architecture can be grand, their own home is a simple trailer that lies lightly on the earth, facing the northern Baja coastline where waves break dramatically. Here, D'Acosta opens the gate adorned with a painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe. "A guy with a small stand in front of our property use to sell sunglasses here," D'Acosta says, adding that the Ray-Ban sign's numbers have become their official address.

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### **D'Acosta exterior**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

D'Acosta and Turrent joined a 1940s American mobile home with a Mexican office trailer to make a comfortable, inexpensive dwelling that seems to float on the land. Recycled aluminum doors and windows came from second-hand shops in Ensenada. An open-air aluminum-and-wood pavilion they reclaimed from an old factory is covered with *carizzo*, a cane grass, taken from their neighbors trash. Recycled telephone poles support the structure; recycled beams from an old bridge make up the deck. All vernacular architecture depends on what you have at hand," D'Acosta says. "We need to train our eyes to convert things near us into usable objects.



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### **D'Acosta and Turrent**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

Husband and wife architects D'Acosta and Turrent of TAC-Arquitectos in Ensenada, Mexico, sit in their living room, which is decorated with second-hand furnishings.

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### **D'Acosta and Turrent dining**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

Claudia Turrents fathers desk, made in the 1970s by Mexican designer Horacio Duran, serves as the family kitchen table. Colorful hand-painted chairs are from a chair shop she and D'Acosta once had in Mexico City. The wood floor practically the only thing not recycled in the trailer home is from Home Depot. We try to recycle most things but sometimes we dont to our shame, D'Acosta says with a sigh.



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### **D'Acosta and Turrent bedroom**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

The couples bedroom features unpainted drywall walls and exposed rafters. A large jaguar painting on a track slides back and forth to close off the room for privacy. All windows and doors throughout the trailer are recycled.

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### **D'Acosta and Turrent bathroom**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

The couples bathroom is filled with *santos* collected over the years.

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### **D'Acosta X-ray**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

D'Acosta poses next to an X-ray of his broken clavicle, which is used as decoration in the house.



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### **D'Acosta bathroom wall**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

Bare-bones decor: D'Acosta likes to incorporate objects from family and friends into his architecture. The X-rays of family and friends hang on the trailer's glass bathroom wall. They are now a part of the house, D'Acosta quips.

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### **D'Acosta Turrent cafe chairs**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

Three cafe chairs sit at the end of the couples redwood deck, made with wood salvaged from an old bridge. Turrent is fashioning furnishings for her condominium project, Viento, out of the same redwood beams.

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### **D'Acosta Turrent exterior panels**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

The 60-foot-long trailer has been reclad in corrugated composite panels. The kitchen doors reflect the sunset view of the coast and offshore islands.



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## **D'Acosta Turrent sunset**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

D'Acosta and Turrent sit at the end of their oceanside property at sunset.