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## D'Acosta and Turrent, Part II: La Escuelita

Alejandro DAcosta's La Escuelita -- a wine school and olive oil factory in the Guadalupe Valley.

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### **D'Acosta/Turrent, Part II: La Escuelita**

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

*By Barbara Thornburg*

Alejandro D'Acosta and Claudia Turrent have quietly been spreading their brand of sustainable design in northern Baja, Mexico, turning trash into interesting architecture. One of D'Acosta's recent experiments is La Escuelita, a wine school and olive oil factory in the Guadalupe Valley. One building is made of *palos* discarded wood boards taken from construction sites, while the new wine tasting centers walls are composed of wine barrel staves.

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### La Escuelita

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

D'Acosta sorts through a mountain of plastic bottles at La Escuelita. They make good insulation, he says.

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### La Escuelita

( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

DAcosta used olive oil filters in a concentric circle pattern on the exterior of a building at La Escuelita in the Guadalupe Valley. Garbage can be something really beautiful, says DAcosta.

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### La Escuelita

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D'Acosta inspects a rusted box spring and thinks of its next life. The material already has a soul. When you transform it to the next step, it has its original soul and also gets a new one, so you maximize its use, explains D'Acosta.

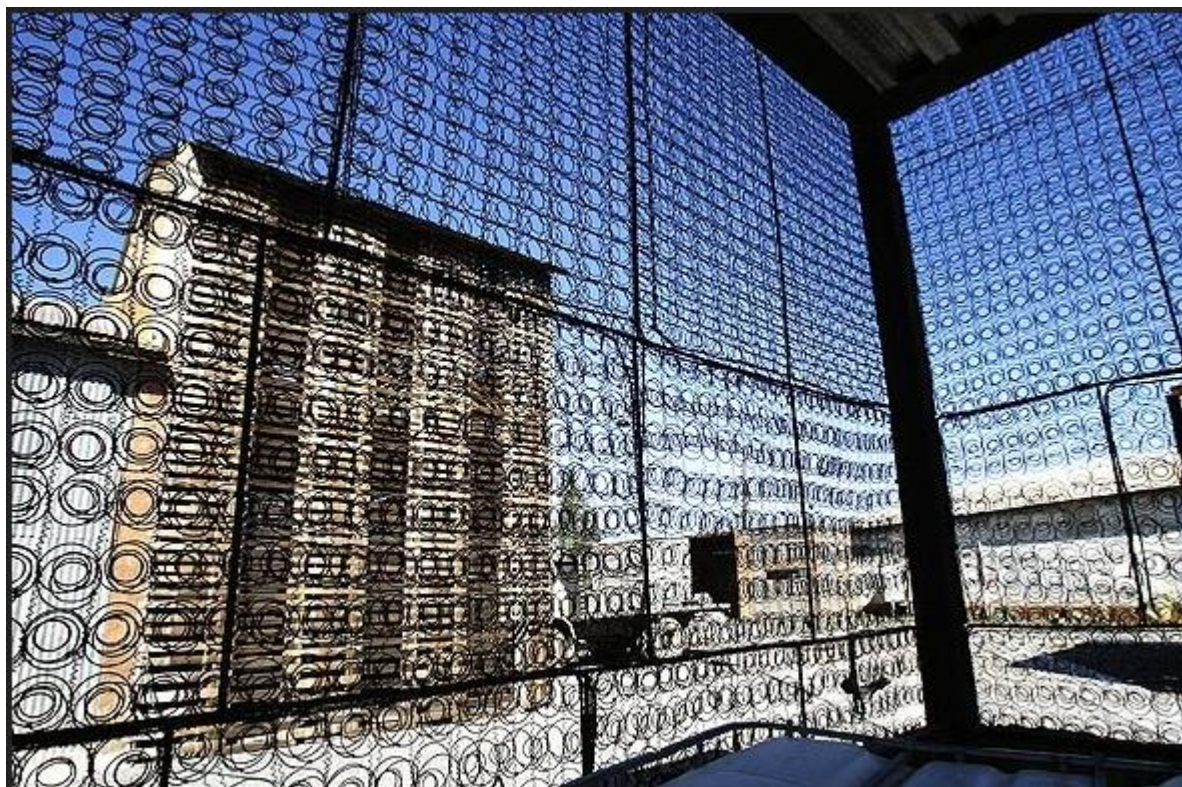
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### La Escuelita

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D'Acosta recycles rusted box springs, creating a magical open-air building where mescal is distilled at La Escuelita.

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D'Acosta used recycled barrel staves for the walls of the new wine tasting room at La Escuelita in the Guadalupe Valley. When I look at *basura* -- trash -- I see proportions ... geometry. I see its soul, he says.

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( Don Bartletti / Los Angeles Times )

Wine-making students hold a tasting to sample their latest efforts in DAcostas building, whose facade is composed entirely of old wine bottles.



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### **La Escuelita**

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Although everyone else see piles of trash, DAcosta -- like a modern-day Don Quixote -- sees only treasures. Here, he inspects a piece of discarded plastic and imagines what it will become in its second life.

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The architects signature fence of *palos* discarded pieces of wood from construction sites resembles so many pick-up sticks. The fence marks the entry to the El Viento site and models of the property.

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Architect Claudia Turrent arranges bottles in a recycled trailer on the El Viento property that showcases wines from the Guadalupe Valley. The interior of the trailer is covered -- floor, walls and ceiling -- with oriented strand board. Turrent is designing a series of trailers -- outfitted with different products from the wine valley -- in a deli market by the sea. The compact trailer store is inexpensive at \$1,500, took only one month to transform, and its recycled, says Turrent.

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In a colorful adaptive reuse, DAcosta and Turrent recycled a former hotel and brothel into their current office, Tac-Arquitectos, which overlooks the port of Ensenada. The Bar del Pacifico just below their offices is still open for business.