

advice from an architect

When Will and Phyllis Wade began to plan their dream house in Gualala, California, the couple turned to Berkeley-based Arkin Tilt Architects. Their friend and LEED-accredited (see glossary on page 86) architect David Arkin instituted his five-point design philosophy to create a green home that works well for the Wades and the environment. Sneak a peek at his strategies.

1. harmonize with the site.

Preserving trees and other natural features wins points with any green building program, so when David was faced with the challenge of building around a creek on the Wades' property, he did all he could to save it. An approved septic plan required putting the creek in a culvert, but instead of diverting the waterway underground, David designed around it. "The creek is a real amenity that would have been a shame to lose," he says. "Ecologically it wouldn't have been a smart thing to do, either."

2. build as little as possible.

This house's greenest feature, David says, is its small footprint. Inspired by the design of grain silos, he planned a two-story, split-level structure with a total of just 1,311 square feet of interior space. The inventive design not only minimizes the neighbors' sight lines into the Wades' house, but also maximizes the couple's views of the ocean. "Many people ask how they can build a house that uses less energy, and the answer is build less house," David says.

3. minimize energy dependence.

In addition to ensuring tight construction and a well-insulated structure, David installed high-quality

windows—the majority of which face south for maximum light and heat gain in winter. Radiant floors throughout the house reduce year-round heating costs, and a gas-fired stove serves as the central hearth in case of a power outage.



4. maximize resource efficiency.

Will, a builder by trade, helped David by donating his collection of salvaged and recycled wood—collected from creek beds, old work sites, and nearby Pirate's Beach—for the house's structure. They used vertical grain, old-

growth redwood Will found for exterior siding, and a salvaged wine tank to build sliding, barn-style doors.

5. demonstrate the beauty of ecological design.

"We strongly believe that for ecological design to take hold, it must be uplifting and inspire delight in the natural world," reads Arkin Tilt's Web site. From the house's far-reaching views to its eco-friendly details (such as the "grasscrete" paved driveway, which allows rainwater to seep into the ground rather than pooling next to the foundation), each element of this house enhances the building's look and function.

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