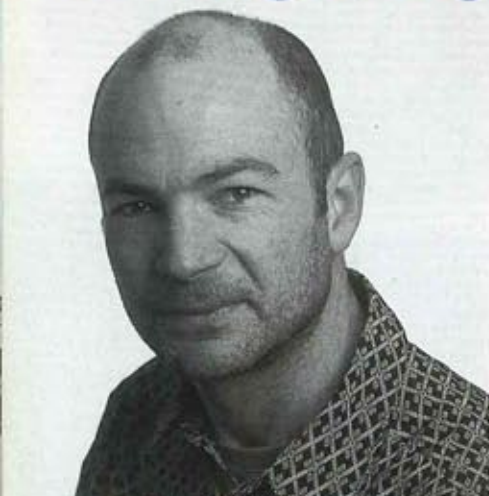




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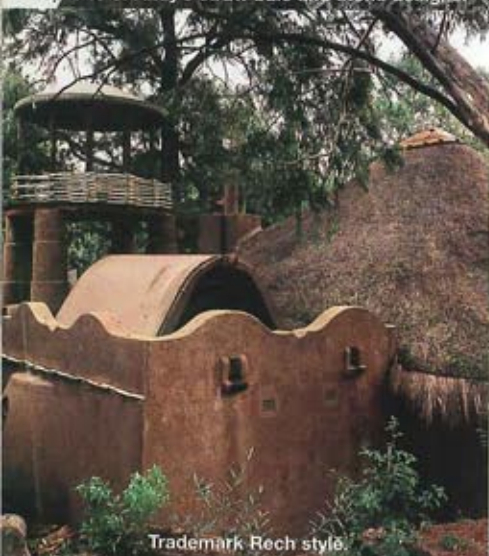
for the environment

H&L SPEAKS TO FOUR ARCHITECTS WHOSE FORWARD-THINKING VISION WE ADMIRE

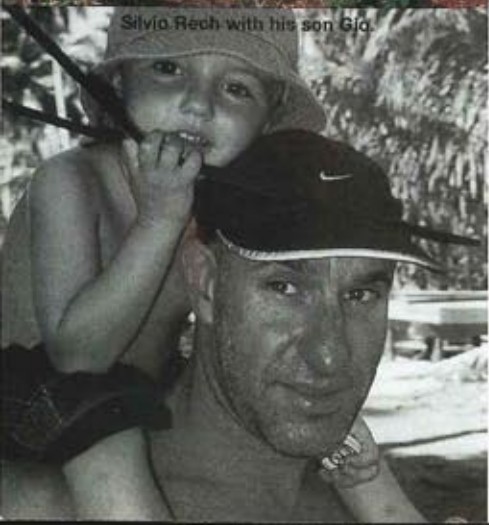


Andy Horn

Top One of Andy's straw bale and stone designs.



Trademark Rech style.



Silvio Rech with his son Gio.

ANDY HORN

This Cape Town-based company, Eco Design, specialises in buildings that are 'responsive to the environment and its resources'. Andy is known for his cost-effective, eco-friendly structures. He lectures on Sustainable Design at UCT's architecture faculty. 021-462-1614.

What's your definition of eco-architecture?

It's not a style, trend or a vernacular and neither is it new. It is a climactically, geographically and culturally appropriate way of architecture and building, combining the best of both old and modern technology. Eco-architecture treads lightly on the planet and respects and cares for the earth in a sustainable manner.

Do people want to incorporate eco-friendly features in their homes? My clients certainly do, and so will an increasing number of people when they realise the benefits, like greatly reduced operating costs for buildings and landscapes and better health and productivity of the occupants.

How will environmental concerns shape the architecture of the future? They will be of paramount importance. Eco-architecture is something like an industrial revolution that will make standard architectural practices look obsolete and unsustainable.

What will the home of the future be like?

Well-sited, firmly comfortable, generates zero waste, healthy and produces its own food.

What materials do you use in your designs?

What would you never use? As far as possible I use natural, locally sourced or recycled materials. Typically stone, clay, straw, timber and reed as well as clay-fired brick.

I try to avoid all polluting, unhealthy and non-biodegradable materials, including vinyl flooring, solvent-based paints, fibreglass and asbestos, and any toxic wood treatments and finishes, as well as most hardwoods as they're usually sourced from rainforests. See Andy's *Manifesto for Green Architecture*, www.earthlife.org.za or www.sustainable.bcn.ufl.edu/sustainable.

SILVIO RECH

Gauteng architect Silvio Rech is best known for his refined vernacular African architecture and raw, organic lodge designs. Currently, he and his wife are completing phase one of a 6-star boutique resort in the Seychelles, which includes a plan to restore the flora and fauna to its original, pristine state. 011-486-1134.

How do you define eco-architecture?

Architecture that's sensitive to the environment, utilises sustainable resources, and assists groups of disenfranchised people by employing local craftsmen and transferring skills.

Are people interested in incorporating eco-friendly features into their homes?

It depends. Sustainable, eco-friendly features can range from excruciatingly painful to sublime. Imagine a water-conserving shower rose that only trickles out a few drops of lukewarm water because it's cloudy and the solar panels aren't working? Lately, awareness has increased and the level of styling and technology is so much better. In Jo'burg landscaping circles, the catch phrase has become 'it's indigenous or it's not going in'. Koi ponds and rose gardens are being replaced by eco-friendly fish and plants. Indigenous plants bring indigenous birds, and suddenly the garden is alive. Less water is needed in an indigenous garden as well.

What are the factors affecting architecture now? What will change in the next decade?

The key factors are economic. South Africans are largely driven by what they can afford. The last decade has been about shifting of political power, not about style. But, thanks to mags like *House & Leisure* and others that are bringing style to the masses, I predict style will become more important in the next 10 years.

Any particular eco-design you admire? Any of the Wilderness Safari tented camps. They encapsulate the essence of eco-architecture. Although constructed as temporary tents and poles they are mechanisms that generate revenue to the locals, protect the land and allow humans to enjoy nature.