



# GREEN LIVING

For L.A. builders, designers and real estate agents, sustainable features are not merely amenities—they're necessities

WRITTEN BY WENDY BOWMAN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
KAREEM ASSASSA AND THE SUNSET TEAM

L.A. is on the forefront when it comes to eco-friendly and sustainable housing, with innovative and creative builders and designers taking green living to the next level for the city's environmentally conscious homeowners—complete with elements that blend sustainability and beauty.

"Despite the initial higher costs of building green, people are starting to recognize the long-term benefits of green homes, not just environmentally, but financially as well," says L.A. real estate developer Mayer Dahan of Prime Five Homes. "The finishes and materials you choose to use, the form and functionality of your layout, and the systems you put in place are all routes one can use to go down a greener path. From larger solutions like solar and water capture to recycled tile and reclaimed wood, there are countless opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint and elevate consciousness."

Take, for example, two of Mayer's most recent modern and eco-friendly projects in West Hollywood. A home at 849 N. Curson Avenue boasts solar panels, water-capture systems, large windows for natural light, a smart-home system for thermostat control,

low-flow toilets and weather-resistant building materials. The other, a residence at 333 N. Croft Avenue, is a prime example of not sacrificing looks for sustainability, melding traditional Spanish-style design with modern ecological systems.

As for the city's real estate agents, while price and location remain first and foremost when it comes to making a sale, ever more requests are being made of them for properties that incorporate green features.

"Buyers and sellers are more cognizant of the impact we are making on the environment," says Gina Dickerson, an agent for Douglas Elliman. "There are a number of benefits to having an eco-friendly home—they consume less energy, add monetary value and they have better air quality, owing to the materials used."

For example, one of Dickerson's current listings—a mid-century home built in the 1960s at 27159 Sea Vista Drive in Malibu—has been quite popular. Renovated last year by its sellers, not only did they add additional square footage, but it also was important for them to use materials that would not harm the environment. "When doing the renovations, they kept water conservation, recycled materials

and eco-friendly paint in mind," Dickerson says. "They even used recyclable milk bottles, instead of regular glass, to construct walls and flooring."

Adds fellow Douglas Elliman agent Heather Witt, "When I sell eco-friendly homes, I always highlight the operating costs of the home. Buyers are shocked to find that larger homes can operate for nearly half the cost of homes without green elements, such as better insulation, a buttoned-up thermal envelope and a drought-tolerant yard. This increases the affordability of a home."

The state—especially the L.A. area—definitely leads by example when it comes to the green movement. "Our homes are a reflection of our values," Witt says. "Therefore, Californians not only vote at the ballot box, we vote with the purchases we make for our families and in our homes." Go green!

