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david arkin, aia, leed ap, and anni tilt

arkin tilt architects: ecological planning and design, berkeley, calif.
www.arkintilt.com



David Arkin, AIA, LEED AP, and Anni Tilt have a hard time turning people away. Clients seek out the firm for its expertise in sustainable design, and the husband-and-wife-led team enjoys taking on a mix of residential, commercial, and community projects. The current roster includes custom houses, a biofuel station, pro bono work for Heifer International (a world hunger organization), a winery renovation, and an organic farm. Given the firm's aversion to

saying no and the growing demand for green design, the troubled economy brought about a somewhat welcome slowdown. "Frankly, we've been too busy," Tilt says, "so having projects go on hold has kind of saved us."

Arkin and Tilt fear it will get worse, however. They already maintain a low-cost personal lifestyle, thanks to a solar-powered house, electric car, kids in public schools, and biking to work. But they're planning ahead professionally to keep their team in place. "We're interviewing more and going after projects that may not be perfect for us," Arkin explains, "but we have a wonderful group of people here, and no matter what, we're going to keep everyone employed."

Arkin has given lectures since the firm's inception, and he plans to increase those talks as a way to gain exposure. The couple have discussed the idea of developing their own small-scale infill project if commissions dwindle. And they'll continue accepting a wide range of project types, as long as the client is committed to sustainable building. "Ecological design is a niche market," Tilt says, "but it applies to everything."

Sustainable architecture may be a niche market right now, but Arkin and Tilt predict that this current crisis will help promote a future full of smarter, smaller buildings.—*s.d.h.*

age of firm: 11 years
firm specialty: Sustainable residential and commercial architecture and planning
staff: 7 (2005); 8 (2008); 8 (2009, projected)
total revenue: \$574,000 (2005); \$778,000 (2008); \$830,000 (2009, projected)
completed projects: 6 (2005); 4 (2008); 8 (2009, projected)



David Arkin, AIA, LEED AP, and Anni Tilt



A Sonoma Valley organic farmhouse (top left) focuses on outdoor living. Two halves of a donated home are reconfigured to create ranger offices and public facilities at a Bay Area park (above). A portable classroom (below) in Carmel, Calif., should garner LEED for Schools certification.



Portrait: www.edwardcaldwell.com;
Model and renderings: Courtesy Arkin Tilt Architects