

ECO-LOGIC

EXPLORATIONS OF THE ECOVILLAGE MOVEMENT



SPRING 2021

Photos & articles by: Nicole Reese
Special Photo Credit: Villa Duendes
Copyright 2021



ECO-LOGIC

Describing the thought processes and choices that make sense for ecological health and wellness // Superior principles of sustainable and holistic design.

ECO-LOGIC SPRING 2021 THEME:
ARCHITECTURE



PORTAL XIBALBA, MEXICO



THE STORIES INSIDE



**CACTIMAR :
A BAJA PERMACULTURE RANCH**

PAGE 6



DOME SWEET HOME

PAGE 10



TIPI TIME + TREEHOUSES & TENTS

PAGE 12



**ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE:
NATURALE-MENTE**

PAGE 14

SUPERADOBE + ECOBRICKS

PAGE 18



MISCONCEPTIONS & PERSPECTIVES

PAGE 22

LA NATURALEZA PHOTO ESSAY

PAGE 26



WE LIVE IN A TIME OF REGENAISSANCE

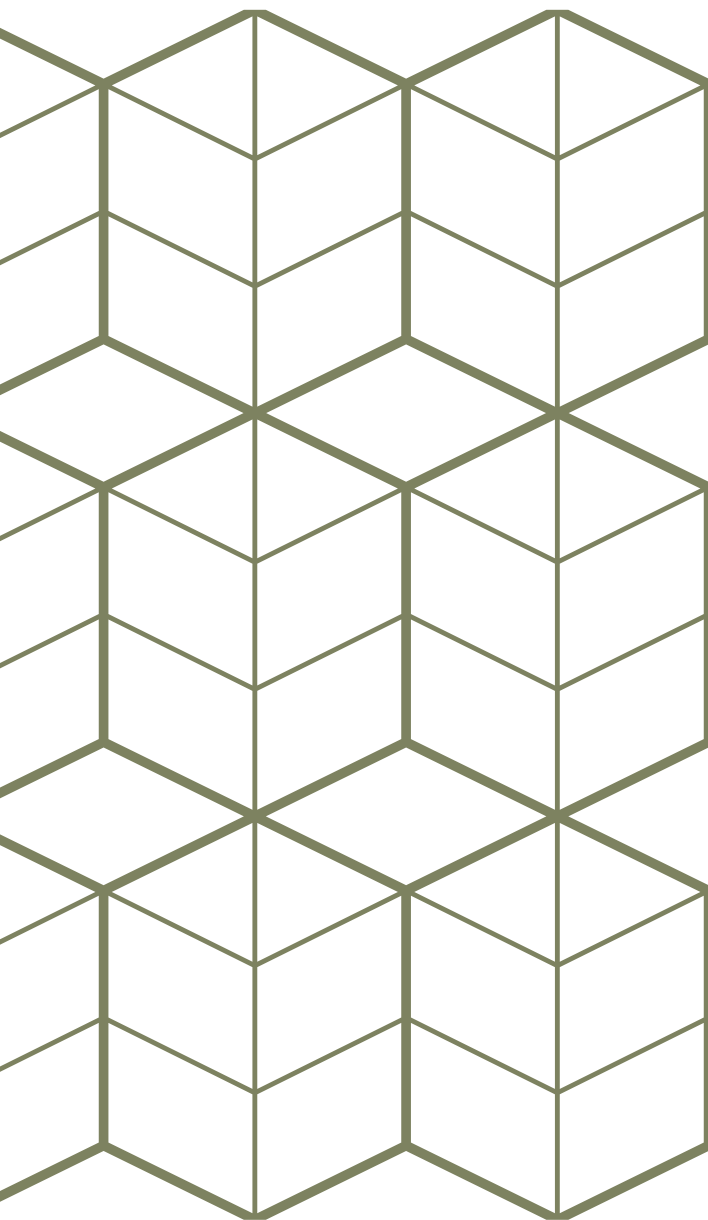
A FOREWORD

Hello and welcome! Since this is the first issue of ECO-LOGIC, there are really no rules. So here's a note about the purpose behind this magazine. I am currently traveling full-time to visit and document ecovillages in Central and South America. Armed with a camera and a desire to capture the essence of off-grid, intentional living, I decided to start with my most personal fascination -- architecture. This will be an ongoing magazine series that showcases ecovillage life in all of its aspects and works to debunk any misconceptions about ecovillages readers may have. ECO-LOGIC will have two yearly releases, with one in the spring and one in the fall. Expect future collaborations and contributions from other perspectives. For now, I can't express how thrilled I am to share this publication with **you**. Enjoy!



DEFINITIONS

THAT WILL HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY



Ecovillage

An innovative human settlement built around principles of ecological well-being and intentional lifestyles.

Regenerative

Regenerative practices give life and give back; a philosophy on how to sustain relationships with the earth and between people.

The Renaissance

"The Renaissance" is a revolution of regeneration that embraces nature's technology and wisdom to create a more integrated life on Earth.

Off-grid

Independently sourcing energy and managing waste without reliance on public utilities.



CACTIMAR

A BAJA PERMACULTURE RANCH





WELCOME TO THE RANCH

AN EXAMPLE OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND AMENITIES

Driving off-road between cactuses (and probably getting lost) you can reach Cactimar, an eco-ranch on the Baja coast thirty minutes outside La Paz. The ranch has a stable of horses and goats, a garden, compost toilets, guest lodgings, and even a resident turtle. The infrastructure impact on the land is minimal, and the palapas incorporate natural found materials for building. Jean-Christophe,

the owner, shared his adventures building greywater systems and a bit of a jungle to provide shade for his vegetables -- squash, tomatoes, herbs, and leafy greens -- to grow. The buildings on the ranch are simple and efficient, using upcycled palettes and palm leaves for thatching. The results are very DIY and a great example of what amateur building can accomplish.



RECLAIMED MATERIALS

The life of modern materials is short. Use once, throw away. Reclaiming materials is a noble effort, and sometimes results in surprising and quirky spaces. Rather than junk it, our French family from Cactimar permanently parked their RV in what has now become a kind of office and coworking space. They built a patio around it that connects to the main house. Somewhat visible is the outdoor patio and kitchen area, which looks dreamily out onto the sea.





DOME SWEET HOME

GEODESIC BUILDING TECHNIQUE

There's a popular fascination with geodesic domes right now. They're a kitschy accommodation that just about everyone and their uncle is building as a backyard Airbnb accommodation with minimal hookups. But one of the really cool things about domes is that they are cost-friendly and low-impact. Domes homes can save up to 30% of construction materials for a regular house. The dome design is totally feasible as a house to live in full-time, and often withstand earthquakes at a higher rate. On top of that, they are built around sacred geometric design.



THE DOME TREND

The thing about the popularity of domes, besides their fun shape, is that they are also relatively easy to build. Minimal wood or metal is required for the frame, then the frame is simply covered with a water-resistant canvas or other material. Domes can also be constructed of adobe or aircrete, which are high-performing and sustainable building materials.

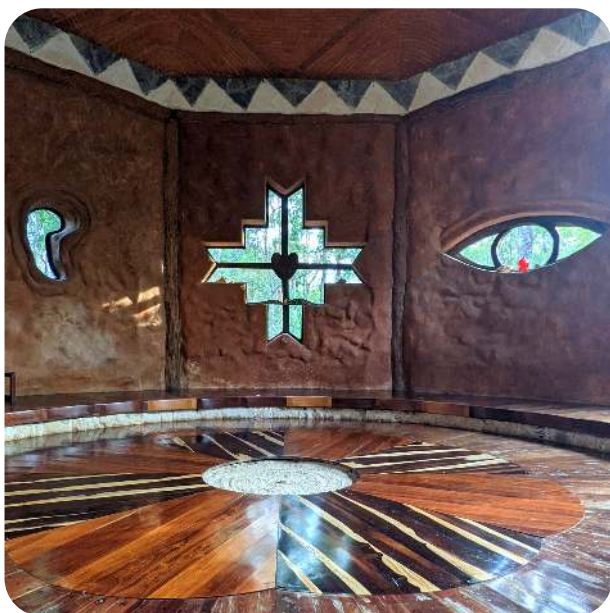
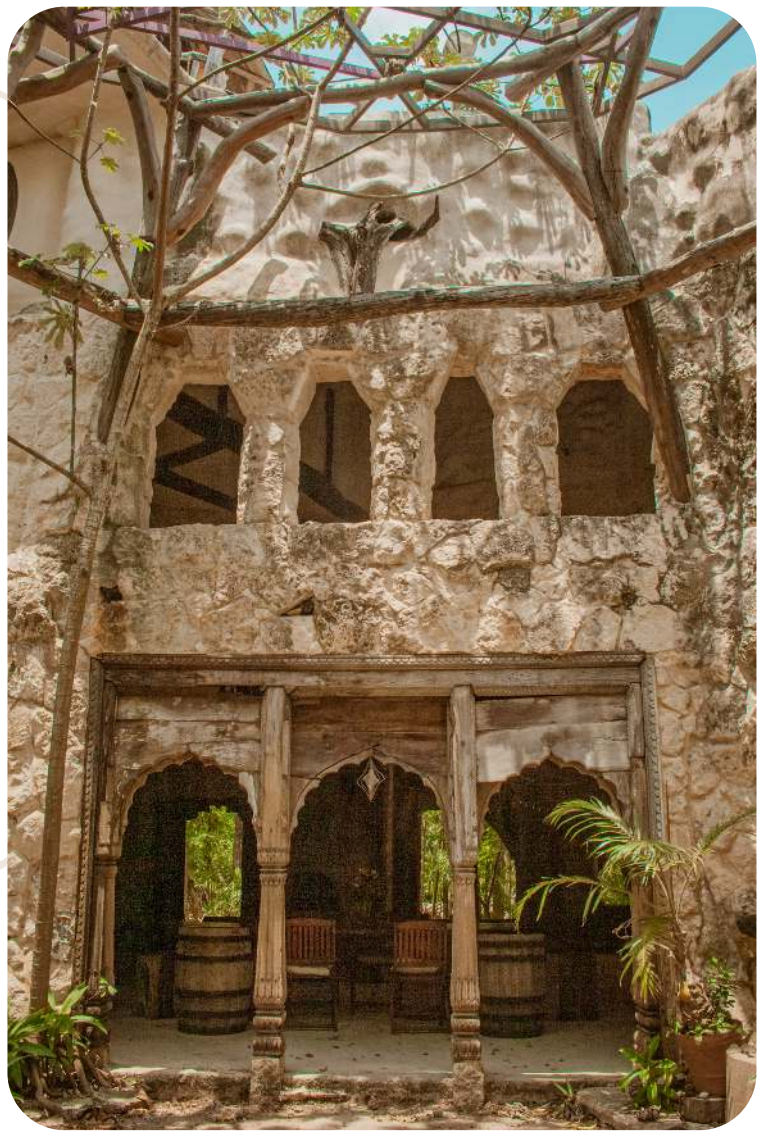
ORGANIC ARCHITECTURE



(Left) Casa Espiritu or "Spirit House" is huge, but hard to capture because it is completely enveloped by the surrounding trees in Pueblo Sacbe, a conscious neighborhood outside of Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

(Right) The Temple at Portal Xibalba has eyes, ears, and a heart portal as windows.

NATURALE
-MENTE



Organic architecture is a style that focuses on natural curves, organic materials, and delightfully surprising and unique features. Like heart-shaped windows, tree shaped pillars, and squiggly rooftops. Architects like Guillermo Siliceo are known for this style. Pictured above and far left is the main house, Casa Espiritu. It functions as a retreat center and extension of the private home that belongs to the Bolivar family. They maintain this ecovillage and plant medicine community, Portal Xibalba, which translates as "Portal to the Otherworld".



This treehouse has glass bottle mosaics windows, a deck with an outdoor bathtub, and hammocks hanging inside. This whimsical lodging is reached by exiting a window on the third floor of Casa de Espiritu. Accessing it involves the fun of climbing on the roof.

SALVAGED FROM LA SELVA

At Portal Xibalba, they are constantly building and expanding. The team of local construction artisans have Mayan lineage, and are trained to forage wood and other building materials from the jungle, "la selva" in Spanish. They create their own type of adobe from dust and sand found in the area, and mix it with cement and water to create the

smooth, contouring exteriors found on buildings like Casa Espiritu. For the walls of the outdoor shower and the roof of the compost toilet pictured below, they source dry palm leaves from the jungle floor. Stones from the area line the pathways and plant beds, while foraged wood create archways, stairs, and the pillars of the houses.





TIPÍ TIME

The truth about tipis is that if they aren't built well, they don't self-regulate temperature efficiently. They are a whimsical place to stay when traveling, but in this case, the tipi required A/C hookups to be bearable during the day in Baja in the spring. If building a tipi,

traditional, climate-appropriate methods are recommended. That said, their shape is an iconic symbol of the ingenuity of Northern Plains native peoples. Tipis are versatile and function as great guest accommodations.

TREEHOUSES & TENTS

One type of eco-architecture overlooked is a tent! They can be incredibly low impact, and rarely disturb the nature around them. However, quality is key, since many tents are made from nylon or polyester, which are synthetic fabrics. A durable tent will have a lighter footprint in the long-term. Like tipis, tents are best for guests rather than permanent residents.



Treehouses are another whimsical and low-impact housing structure, especially if they are sourced from local materials. All of the pictures on this page were taken from an intentional community called Cenote Ixchel in Tulum, Mexico. Open-air structures like this perform best in similar temperate climates.



SUPERADOBE

ECOBRICKS

A Plastic-Negative Design



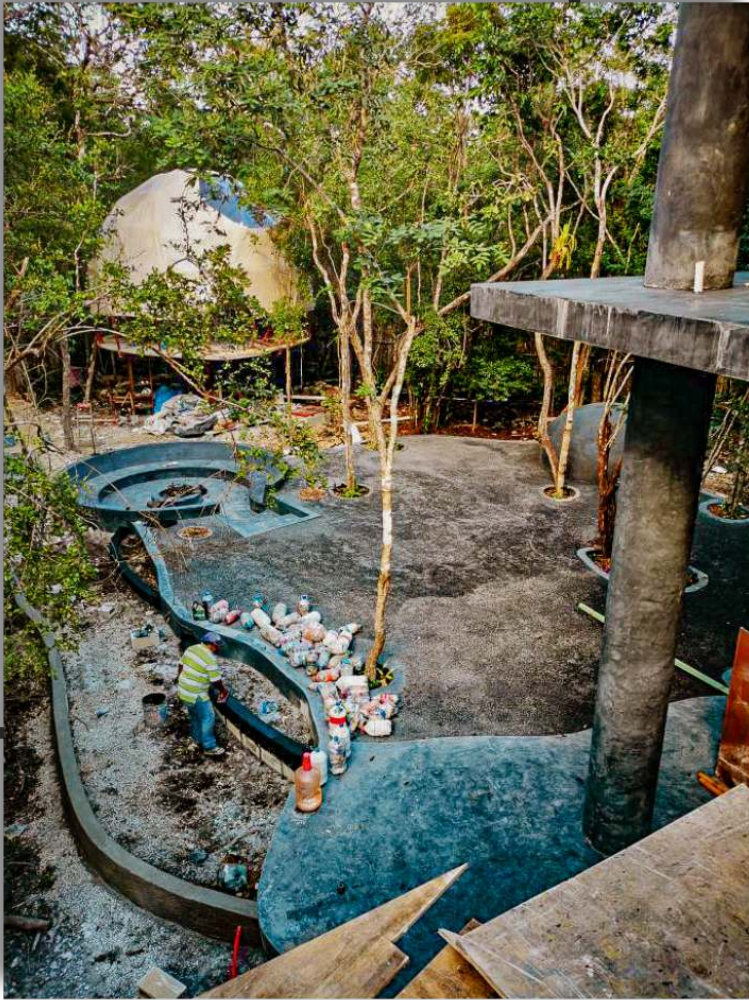
Villa Duendes is not just some eco-chic settlement in the Mayan Riviera. From their building methods to their onsite eco-practices, they are active in their community. Their main building (pictured far left) and organic domes are built using plastic bottles stuffed with non-biodegradable trash to create ecobricks. These serve as a stabilizing internal material, which is then covered with superadobe. This technique is very similar

to a clay building method native to the area. Achieved by mixing red sand with calcium, cement, and water, the result is a smooth surface with a luxurious feeling. Villas Duendes is a few miles off the coast and a quick plunge into the jungle of Akumal - situated between Cancun and Tulum. The project started 6 years ago, and now they host The Sacred Ecoferia, an incredible day festival with spiritual activities and workshops on sustainable topics. Cacao ceremonies are held right next to workshops about conscious communication and compost, with circus and fire dancing performances at night. The team also organizes regular cenote cleanups to support the threatened local ecology of the underground rivers. What

(continued on next page)



(cont.)



makes Villa Duendes stand out is that the team is primarily a young, but highly organized crowd. Diego Zamora Quezada is the architect of the project and, undeniably, his most impressive structure is the main building, with 5 levels that rise up out of the jungle. If you climb to the top tower, it seems as if you are in an ocean of never-ending green.

Building With Local Materials

A WORD ON BAMBOO

Bamboo is a popular material in the eco-world right now. It can be used for manufacturing items and construction. It grows quickly, and can be harvested without destroying the whole plant. But it is important to remember that bamboo is only "sustainable" if it is sourced locally. For example, the greenhouse gas emissions of transporting bamboo from Asia to North America greatly outweigh the eco-benefits of using bamboo in the first place. In the Mayan Riviera, bamboo can be grown and sourced locally, making it a good choice for building.





PREVIEW OF NEXT ECO-LOGIC ISSUE

The ECO-LOGIC Fall 2021 issue's theme is "Community". It will highlight the practices, rituals, celebrations, and relationships of people who live in ecovillages and intentional communities. Expect more interviews and different perspectives.

SPECIAL SECTION

MISCONCEPTIONS & PERSPECTIVES



COMMUNAL, NOT COMMUNE

ECOVILLAGE MISCONCEPTION #1

There are some negative connotations with living communally. Let's clear these up! Ecovillages are built on principles of sustainability and connection. A resident chooses freely to live in an ecovillage for the high quality of life. In many cases, shared meals are more common than eating alone, and there may be a main dining area such as the one pictured to the left. Members can choose to participate in a variety of activities specific to their interests - yoga, meditation, dancing, outdoor excursions, etc. Very little is "mandated" besides eco-friendly behaviors and perhaps some contribution to the community in the form of engagement or chores. Above all, many ecovillages strive to make decisions inclusively, and use alternative, decentralized governance systems like sociocracy. This is a co-leadership style that focuses on consent rather than majority voting or a few figureheads with the final say.



Nicole Reese is a writer, traveler, and ecovillage specialist. Informed by studies in Anthropology and Sustainability, she shares from her research, opinion, and experiences.

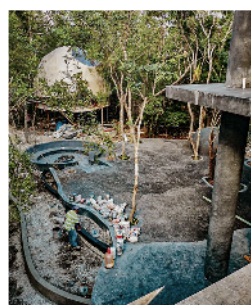


LOCATIONS SHOT

FEB - MAY 2021

Cactimar, Mexico
La Paz, Mexico
Villa Duendes, Akumal

Portal Xibalba, Playa del Carmen
Cenote Ixchel, Tulum
Alajuela, Costa Rica



BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

TERRENITY ECOVILLAGES



Terrenity's heart and soul is all about ecovillages - how to learn about, find, join, and build them. The activities of the project are currently dedicated toward ecovillage education. By demystifying aspects of offgrid life, Terrenity works to provide inspiration for a regenerative and sustainable world.

READ MORE AT [TERRENITY.ORG](https://terrenity.org)

[@TERRENITY.ECOVILLAGES](https://www.instagram.com/terrenity.ecovillages) ON INSTAGRAM



LA NATURALEZA

A MANIFESTO

The opposite of harmony is alienation. It is a feeling of dissonance and difference. This feeling is the result of seeing the world as disconnected parts that are loosely related.

The truth is that humanity is suffering from the ideologies that teach separation. Individualism has manifested in core aspects of human life and leaves us feeling bereft of something very dear to both our biology and our psychology – connection.

Glances at the natural world show us that everything on Earth is deeply, profoundly interconnected. That these connections run so deep, it appears on micro and macro levels as an elegant and organic system with nearly flawless design.

Let's never forget that humans are the children of this organic system. Life is the mesh of heartbeats, pulse between roots, and response echo of creature calls. We are nature. We must learn to come home.

May we live entwined with Nature – personified here as the sum of natural forces, flora, fauna, and inner creativity that guide us. There are ways to live close to the earth and close to each other. May we find them, embrace them, and live them.

ECO-LOGIC

SPRING 2021



Every step is a choice. We can find ourselves closer to Nature or closer to an insulated life. Which door will we choose to walk through?