WHERE ECOLOGY MERGES WITH TECHNOLOGY

The Mullin Automotive Museum, located in Santa Barbara, California, is a place where the barriers separating ecology and technology slowly evaporate. One will be over-taken by the sense that eco-consciousness has become a design priority in a museum that showcases groundbreaking vehicles. The major credit for this goes to David Hertz, the principal architect of Studio Environmental Architecture.

Previously it was an automotive museum owned by the newspaper tycoon, Osha Dyer. Mr. Mullin purchased the building with the intention of transforming it into a new world-class museum that celebrates the Art Deco Movement. It was a movement that produced exquisite decorative art and magnificent automobiles. The 45,000 square foot museum holds the private automobile collection of Peter Mullin. It displays some of the finest European automobiles from Bugatti to Rolls, as well as decorative art from the same period. It features the largest collection of Bugattis ever displayed, plus 120 cars in all.

When a discussion was held on eliminating certain green features due to budget constrains, the team insisted on retaining the same as that they were not merely a cost, but an investment. The museum features dramatic battery details, such as...
a grand entry way covered by repurposed automobile windshields, a lush green roof that doubles as an event space, and solar panels when the roof over the entrance.

The architect had to face a real challenge to convert an existing warehouse into a relatively tight budget of five million dollars. He was able to overcome the limitation by changing the house and creating a dramatic and outstanding feature. Although he moved along with the idea of keeping the brick core and shell, the design within it showed an extravagance in the employment of budget, he was able to produce maximum architectural effect in a limited area.

The major effects among these include a stunning pair of vintage gates from Argentina that were remodeled to create the entrance to the museum's glass elevator, which lifts visitors up to a mezzanine and to the green roof. The museum also features a photovoltaic array that, along with the wind turbines, supply all the energy needed for the building. Energy-efficient lighting is also installed throughout the building, which is controlled by an automated day lighting system to maximize natural light.
The ground floor level display area was designed to recreate a 1950s Pebble Beach auto show with lighting, decorations, and furnishings from that period. Three elevated platforms — one with a remarkable — situated in the center of the space, showcase some of the very special automobiles in the collection. It has a "must-see" that displays a Bugatti and an original French car in the setting of a desert country town, with boys on the floor and gas cans lying all around.

There is another area that displays a restored chassis of a 1929 Bugatti that was developed for...
entry to the Museum

At the point of entrance below the canopy, the architects envisioned an aluminum paneling around the plate doors. A design plan was made where the aluminum paneling mimicked the skin of a vintage Bugatti race car. After numerous mock-ups of aluminum design and the shifting and spacing of vents, approval was made to proceed which resulted in a surprising facade of the skin of a storage Bugatti race car.

The street side of the exterior features three tone wrapped sections to cover the existing building above. Each of these sections has a graphic abstract from the frontender, roof and rear south of a 1938 Talbot Lago. Extensive new landscaping that includes several 100 year old cypress trees adorns the exterior. The roof incorporates a roof deck with a covered garden area for guests. Thus, with a flow balance of oxygen and carbon, the Mulholland Automotive Museum proves that it is not yet time to entirely forget ecology for the sake of technology.