



## The Green Architect

By Blair Seibert, AIA, LEED AP

Originally published January 2007 in the San Fernando Valley AIA Elevations Newsletter

### Top 10 Green Products of 2006

As a teenager I loved the radio stations' January countdown of the preceding year's favorite songs. In that tradition, I am providing a list of the top 10 green products of 2006, as selected by *GreenSpec®* and *Environmental Building News™*. My advice about these products is the same my favorite college professor gave me: "Don't be the first to try something or the last to use it." Much of the information here has been taken from manufacturers' literature so please do some reality checking before you specify them.

1. *Polished concrete system from RetroPlate.* This is a process of grinding, polishing, and chemically hardening concrete floor slabs. The resulting concrete can serve as the finished floor, reducing the need for other coverings. It is highly durable, easy to maintain, free of VOC emissions, and can be reflective enough to reduce the artificial lighting requirements. (retroplatesystem.com)

2. *Underwater standing timber salvage by Triton Logging.* Utilizing Sawfish submarines with special electric chainsaws, this company harvests underwater standing trees that were parts of forests before

reservoirs were created for hydroelectric dams. Triton estimates that 100 billion board feet of salvageable underwater timber is available. (tritonlogging.com)

3. *SageGlass tintable glazing from Sage Electrochromics.* Electricity activates the tinting of multiple layers of thin-films of tungsten-oxide coating. In minutes the glass's visibility reduces from 62% to 3.5% while the solar heat-gain coefficient lowers. It can provide energy savings and reduce peak electricity demands. Because glare is a serious problem with naturally lit spaces, this flexibility can improve the usability of a space. It's expensive but manufacturers expect it to eventually be competitive with high performance, insulated glass with mechanized shades. (sage-ec.com)

4. *PaperStone certified composite surface material from KlipTech Composites, Inc.* Consisting of 100% post-consumer recycled paper and a nonpetroleum-based resin, KlipTech has created a solid surface composite product that is hard and water resistant. It can be used for countertops, toilet screens and, until November 2006, was used exclusively by Starbucks for its rainscreen siding (Paperstone XV). (paperstoneproducts.com)

5. *Varia and "100 Percent" recycled content panel products from 3form, Inc.* The transparent/translucent panels are made of 40% post-industrial plastic waste; the opaque panels are 100% post consumer plastic. The panels fit into an aluminum frame system much like glass, come in a variety of colors, and can be used for workstation and toilet partitions. UV inhibitors make these panels appropriate for outdoor use. (3-form.com)

6. *Recycled-content interior molding from Timbron International.* Timbron produces a highly durable, waterproof, termite proof, paintable molding consisting of 75% post-consumer and 15% post-industrial waste. It's made in Stockton, California, and is distributed through Home Depot stores. Its cost is comparable or slightly higher than finger-jointed pine but can be left unfinished (white). (timbron.com)