

Masterful compound: The Hubbell home

James Hubbell's artists complex was designed to be at one with the earth and to dance with the sky

By Ann Jarmusch • Special to the U-T

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James Hubbell is a national treasure in our midst. An [artist](#) and designer, humanitarian and environmentalist, he is internationally revered for inventive, ecological buildings and uplifting [public parks](#) constructed with volunteer collaborators from many cultures. Nine intimate and unique structures house his renowned, vibrant home and busy art studios on a hilltop near Julian. Rustic, imaginative and uncommonly beautiful, these curvy buildings comfortably hug the earth and dance with the sky with undulating roofs and sculptural accents. Hubbell and assistants embellish them with cascading [mosaics](#), rich [stained-glass windows](#) and whimsical arcs of iron, all in harmony with nature. San Diegans mourned when the 2003 [Cedar fire](#) damaged four of the beloved buildings, but Hubbell, his wife, Anne, and many friends quickly mobilized to rebuild them, with some improvements such as solar panels and a new kitchen. Another addition is a sparkling, sculptural shell just big enough to shelter one to three people in quiet contemplation. The Ilan-Lael Foundation is the steward of this magical, historic landmark, which is open once a year on [Father's Day](#) (June 19) and for groups by appointment. Visit and you'll never want to live in a box again.

James Hubbell Home and Studio

By: James Hubbell and family, artists and volunteers

Built: 1958-present

Materials: Wood, stone, clay, concrete, stained glass, wrought iron, glass mosaics

Size: Nine structures, pool and garden on 40 acres

Where: Santa Ysabel

Annual Open House: June 19.

Phone: (760) 765-3427

Tickets and info: ilanlaelfoundation.org/visit/open-house/

• ilanlaelfoundation.org/about/ilan-lael-the-place/

• hubbellandhubbell.com/studio/history/



-> Built in 1958 and renovated after the 2003 Cedar fire, the Hubbell home is made of materials including wood, stone, clay, concrete, stained glass, wrought iron and glass mosaics. The children's room is seen above.



->The bathroom in the children's room at James Hubbell's art compound is seen above. Four of the complex's buildings were destroyed in the 2003 Cedar fire and then rebuilt. Hubbell (pictured below) is revered for his innovative, uplifting and eco-friendly creations. K.C. Alfred • U-T photos



-> James Hubbell, at his Santa Ysabel compound, much of which was destroyed in the Cedar Fire, is now rebuilt, shown here on Feb. 7, 2011. (Photo by K.C. Alfred / The San Diego Union-Tribune)