

Dorian Bernard of Resilient Design: Rebuilding Malibu

Building in wildfire-sensitive areas requires specialized expertise and innovative fire-resistant strategies

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[Architectural designer Dorian Bernard](#), founder of Resilient Design, is redefining Malibu's landscape with innovative fire-resistant strategies. Since arriving in Malibu in 2018, Bernard has collaborated on over 70 projects, including 27 fire rebuilds, significantly contributing to the community's recovery after the Woolsey Fire.



Rendering of Malibu residence designed by Dorian Bernard

Originally from the Basque Country in southwest France, Bernard moved to Malibu during a gap year between his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Architecture. His relocation coincided with the devastating Woolsey Fire, which deeply impacted him both personally and professionally.

“

Fire prevention in the Wildland Urban Interface is critical. I always analyze the site's topography and select materials and construction details that meet the highest fire safety standards.”

Dorian Bernard, Resilient Design

“I'll always remember evacuating Malibu and feeling unable to help,” Bernard recalls. “The orange sky and falling ashes left a lasting impact, leading me to volunteer as a wildland firefighter to better understand fire behavior.”

Bernard's design philosophy is influenced by renowned Mid-Century Modern architects such as Mies Van Der

Rohe, John Lautner, Richard Neutra, and Frank Lloyd Wright. His approach emphasizes the seamless integration of buildings with their natural surroundings and the preservation of architectural heritage.

“Malibu suits Mid-Century Modern very well,” Bernard states. “Panoramic ocean views, open

space, and natural light are abundant here, making it an ideal canvas for this architectural style. Architectural heritage must be preserved. This is what gives a city or an area its identity, like Palm Springs or Santa Barbara.”

Building in wildfire-sensitive areas like Malibu requires specialized expertise. Bernard’s designs prioritize fire prevention and environmental sustainability, considering factors such as access, topography, and wind patterns. He employs fire-rated materials to enhance fire resistance, such as adding cement board under plaster or stucco. “Fire prevention in the Wildland Urban Interface is critical,” Bernard explains.



Malibu, California coastline

California faces increasingly severe fire seasons each year, with the 2023 season alone witnessing over 7,000 fires and more than 324,000 acres burned, according to CAL FIRE. This ongoing threat highlights the urgent need for resilient home design. Bernard's approach to designing homes in Malibu integrates aesthetic elements with the natural landscape and incorporates robust fire prevention measures to withstand these extreme conditions.

Bernard's work extends beyond architectural design to active community involvement. Following the Woolsey Fire, he joined and trained with a local fire station and has been volunteering ever since. This commitment is driven by his desire to support the community and prevent future tragedies. Among his notable accomplishments is the 2020 Tiny House design competition organized by Volume Zero, an international design magazine. Bernard's design collaboration with colleague Dylan Morel, selected from over 375 entries, was praised for its exceptional innovation, thoughtful site selection, and responsive spatial design. Volume Zero Competitions exist to provide a platform for young architects and professionals to showcase their best work, focusing on innovation, social awareness, sustainability, and global responsibility.

For more information about Dorian Bernard and Resilient Design or to request a consultation, visit: resilientdesignllc.net.

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