

SARASOTA MAGAZINE'S biz941™

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A photograph of Michael Carlson, a man with a goatee wearing a light-colored striped button-down shirt, looking upwards and to the right. He is holding a white architectural model of a building with a curved roof and wooden supports. The background is a bright blue sky with green palm fronds and other foliage in the foreground and background.

MICHAEL CARLSON

President

›CARLSON STUDIO ARCHITECTURE

DESIGN PIONEER

In the mid-'80s, way before sustainable design became fashionable, Michael Carlson became enthralled with eco-friendly architecture as a student at Ball State's College of Architecture. Today Carlson Studio Architecture in Sarasota has become one of the region's top green architectural firms, and Carlson, 45, is a leading voice in the growing chorus that buildings can be beautiful and environmentally meaningful. He's paved the way for other architects and builders in our region who not only care about the planet but are convincing their clients it's the smart way to build. His Twin Lakes Park Office, built in 2005, was the first green building in Sarasota County and remains the greenest building in the state based on LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) points.

Carlson's Fruitville Road office is a "green" converted 1934-vintage grocery store; he's designed the new green home for the Wellness Community of Southwest Florida to be a model for Wellness Communities around the world; and he's even created a sustainable doghouse, called Scrap-e house, made from recycled materials.

Carlson sees his once lonely pursuit gaining "a lot of momentum" and becoming mainstream. "The products are here and affordable, and contractors and subcontractors are getting the idea that it's not a fad," he says. "There is a better way, and that's what I want people to know about."