

# Sun Shines on El Chorro Lodge

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It's a history-making day for the historic **El Chorro Lodge**, as this longtime local haunt has been named the state's first LEED Gold certified restaurant. All of which is a fancy way of saying this **recently-remodeled** gem is as easy on the earth as it is on the eyes.

(Of course the revamped menu's been a **bit of a mess**, as the owners seem torn between pleasing the aging regulars and attracting a younger, hipper crowd.)

But why nitpick a really cool architectural accomplishment? Read more about how this 70-year-old landmark was successfully and sustainably restored after the jump.

LEED—or Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design—certifications are a nationally-accepted benchmark awarded by the US Green Building Council to recognize high-performance green buildings. And following a lengthy verification, El Chorro was stamped with a prestigious Gold certification thanks to the following factors:

- Expanding/modernizing the renowned El Chorro patio, special events and wedding areas while protecting the original building footprint, which has remained untouched for more than 70 years.
- Adding high-efficiency fixtures, solar thermal water heating systems and three solar carport structures that allow the restaurant to offset more than half of its total annual energy.
- Incorporating other unique green elements, such as eco-friendly insulation created through the reuse of approximately 840 pairs of blue jeans.
- Attaining a 75 percent re-use of building material and structures by salvaging items including roof tiles, beams and existing adobe walls, as well as more than 83 original plants, trees and cactus.
- Initiating an on-site recycling process and educating craftsmen on its goals and efficiencies, helping to divert more than 80 percent of El Chorro's construction waste away from landfills.



The El Chorro renovation team included several locally-based companies, including **Desert Star Construction**, **Candelaria Design** as architect; **Vallone Design** as interior designer; and **Berghoff Design** as landscape designer.