

Vina – www.solhausdesign.com/tiny-house

Basic Stats:

- What is(are) your name(s)? **Vina Lustado**
- What do you do for a living? **Designer/ Owner of Sol Haus Design**
- How many people do you/will be living in your tiny house? **1**
- What part of the country do you live in? **Ojai, CA**
- How many square feet is your house? **140sf**
- When did you start your build? **Sept 2012**
- Is your house complete? **Yes**
- Have you been documenting your tiny house build and if so, where can people find that information? www.solhausdesign.com/tiny-house

Background:

- Why did you decide to build? **I wanted to live in a way that reflects my values regarding sustainability and simplicity. I wanted to learn about construction since I am in the architecture profession, and use my hands to build my home.**
- What was your life like before your tiny house? Were you fairly active, have you always had ‘projects’ going on? Were you fairly sedentary and looking for a change? Did you tend to work too much? (This question is an effort at trying to figure out WHO gravitates to the tiny house lifestyle) **I was always an active person on the GO: traveling, camping, climbing, moving from house to house, city to city. I wanted to maintain flexibility and mobility so tiny houses on wheels are perfect!**
- How did you come to hear about the movement, figure out it was right for you and get started? **I heard about Jay Shafer here and there, but it**

- wasn't until my colleague from Germany reminded me of the tiny house again when I was desperately trying to find a way to build and design my own home or office.
- What is/was your design inspiration? **A variety of sources: Renzo Piano's Diogene, and Swedish/German/Japanese architecture. They excel in small utilitarian spaces that are well designed.**

Technical:

- How do/did you find the time to work on your house with a job, kid(s), relationships, AND building a house? Did you do anything special to keep the balance? **I completed the construction in one year, but I definitely gave up all of my free time during that year (every weekend and weeknights). I was juggling my own design firm and projects when I wasn't building and researching tiny houses. Building a tiny house requires a firm commitment and a good level of sacrifice, but it's certainly worth it in the end. Anything worth doing requires it.**
- Have you run into any problems with your local codes? How did you solve them? **I consulted with my local building official early during construction, and didn't really encounter pushback, as long as I maintain it as a temporary structure. Since completion of the project, I've been featured in local papers, mostly because I wanted to spread the tiny house movement and start the conversation with the public, including building officials.**
- Where did you get the tools that you use? Were they yours, borrowed, rented etc.? **I'm lucky! My partner has access to tools since he works in construction.**
- How long did (are you expecting) construction to take? **One year**
- Have you/were you able to stay on schedule? **I hired other builders to keep me on track for the one year schedule.**

- What is/was the most time consuming portion of your build? **Modifying the trailer took about 2–3 months, welding and putting in the floor insulation. It was also wintertime with rain and wet weather.**
- What is/was the most limiting factor for your build? **Cost. I wanted to stay within my budget, but I still went a bit over my original estimate.**
- Is your house on a trailer? If yes, how do you attach to the trailer? How do you move your tiny house? (Do you have a truck, do you hire it done?) **My house is on a trailer. I rent a truck or use my partner's heavy duty truck if I want to move it.**
- Do you have accessory houses/dwellings that you use to supplement storage/working/living? **I have a small storage unit (5x7) off site and a small trailer onsite to store my outdoor sports gear.**
- Where did you get your plans? **I'm an architect, so I customized my tiny house for my own needs and developed my plans.**
- Have you consulted any 'professionals'? (structural, mechanical, plumbing, design etc.)? **Yes, I consulted with a structural engineer when I framed the house, and I consulted with my Title 24 engineer (for energy efficiency) for insulation requirements. I hired professional help for plumbing and electrical.**
- Are you insuring your house? With who? **My house is insured with Darrell Grenz.**
- Have you been using any sponsorships to help fund your house? How do you go about finding that sponsorship? **I don't have sponsors because I want full control of design. I did hire professionals and had product suppliers give me trade discounts because I work in the industry. Many were good artist friends who volunteered their time and services. So generous!! And HUGE help from my partner!!**

Specifics:

- What sort of items do you have for cooking? **2 burner RV stove, sink, small refrigerator. No oven (I don't feel I need it or I will build an outdoor oven later).**
- Are you tied to the power grid or are you off grid? **I'm off the grid with PV/ solar panels, but have the flexibility to plug into an outlet when necessary.**
- Are you going to have a washer and/or dryer? **No. I go to the laundromat. I may consider getting a portable washer.**
- Where does your water come from? **Water spicket and garden hose.**
- What kind of toilet are you going to have? **Composting toilet**
- What do you use for a heat source if anything? **Gas propane fireplace with a remote control and thermostat. I love it!!!**
- What are some of the space savings tricks you used? **My sofa is multi purpose: seating, storage and guest bed. I have drawers under my kitchen cabinets instead of baseboards. I have cabinet storage behind my bed. I have a small loft above my desk for storage (or extra sleeping space!). My coffee table is on casters and can be my dining table, side table, and storage.**
- What do you have for insulation? **Denim insulation for the foundation and Roxul or rock wool insulation for the walls and ceiling. It's great!!**
- Where are you planning to park your tiny house? **My partner's property is on 1 acre land in Ojai. We both rent the land. He lives in his own small cabin on one side of the property and I have mine on the other side ☺**

Personal:

- How much will/did your tiny house cost? **Approx. \$35,000**
- What is/was the most expensive part of your house? **My fireplace (\$3k), trailer (\$3k) and big operable skylight (\$1k)**
- 'Best' injury story (worst injury)? **I'm lucky! No injuries!**

- What has been your biggest accomplishment with your tiny house? **Putting up the roof without scaffolding. I am a climber so I hung from ropes and carabiners the whole time!**
- What is/will be the biggest benefit to living in a tiny house? **I can clean my house in 15 minutes after a big party!**
- Is there anything you'll miss about living in a standard house? What will you miss the most? **None!!!**
- What has been the scariest part about building your own house? **Making sure the plumbing and gas line work, especially the fireplace because I spent so much money on it.**
- If you could change one thing about your house what would it be? **I would put a vent pipe for the plumbing. I hear gurgling sounds when I turn on the faucet, but it's endearing 😊**
- Did you have cash in hand to complete your build, pay as you go or take out a loan to construct your house? **Pay as I go for half of the cost, the other half was a loan. But I will pay it off with my retirement account.**
- Have friends and family been skeptical or supportive of your ideas? **A bit skeptical in the beginning, but surprised and happy in the end.**
- Is there anything else you would want other people to know about your house and build? **I LOVE LIVING IN MY TEENY TINY HOUSE!!**