



**HOT WATER FROM THE SUN**  
The Hot2o hot water system, \$1,800, was introduced at the recent builders show in Orlando.

*We want to make a statement by doing an ecological building said the Miami architect Chad Oppenheim.*

that, mountainous regions and windswept Midwestern prairies are probably best. There are strong winds off the Florida coast, but that would mean locating the turbines offshore, within sight of beaches and oceanfront property. People who pay top dollar for oceanfront property “don’t want to look at a wind farm,” Bates said, noting that FPL Energy, of which FP&L is a unit, is the largest U.S. generator of wind power in the U.S., with 44 wind farms in 15 states (none, however, in Florida). And those living in condos are out of luck, no matter how windy their terraces. A condo can put solar panels or wind turbines on the roof, but individual owners are precluded from doing it.

In general, Florida has been relatively slow to get behind the concept of green or sustainable design, be it solar power or otherwise, judging by the number of buildings in the state that are LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), a benchmark for the design and construction of high performance green buildings by the U.S. Green Building Council. Currently, only 14 Florida buildings are LEED-certified, compared to 84 in California and 55 in Washington State, according to the Green Building Council. While Miami does not yet have a completed LEED-certified building, its first green building, the University of Miami Clinical Research Center, opened only last July. And Miami Green, an office tower on SW 38th Avenue, broke ground in December. The developers hope it will qual-

ify, on completion, for a silver LEED certificate.

LEED-certified buildings do not necessarily include solar power but do measure energy efficiency as part of a point system in the qualifying criteria. The planned 30-story MaxMiami building, which Dean Lewis of D.B. Lewis Architecture and Design has created for Northeast Miami Place in Overtown, may qualify for LEED certification based on, among other things, using a hydraulic parking system, so cars will not be driven up the parking ramp. A Whole Foods Market in Sarasota won silver LEED status for several elements, including skylights that provide maximum daylight, an energy-saving roof system and “nontoxic, environmentally friendly art work,” according to a press release.

Camila Querasian, the architect at Perkins+Will, said Florida’s mild climate is one reason why many people are not that concerned about green or sustainable design principles. (You can survive a hot summer with a wet towel and a fan, but when it’s 30 below zero in the Midwest, you’ve got to turn on the furnace.)

And then there’s the speculative real estate market, which focuses on quick profits instead of the long-term return on investment that is required with green buildings. “Owners are not keeping buildings for a long time, and that does not attract an owner to create a green building,” she said.

That is starting to change. Solar industry experts say the incentives enacted last year by the Florida legislature—including a \$500 rebate on a solar water heater, and \$100 for a pool heater—are likely to spur homeowners and developers to at least think about solar. Meanwhile, federal rebates and incentives are available concurrently with the state program.

Experts suggest that those building new homes consider solar systems in the planning stage, even if they are not used immediately, because it is more expensive to retrofit a house for alternative energy systems than to built it into the infrastructure.

Meanwhile, utilities like FP&L are expanding their own solar production and offering it to customers. For \$9.75 per month, for example, customers can sign up for FP&L’s Sunshine Energy Program. This means the house is supplied from the utility’s solar generating array; so far, 28,000 consumers have signed on, out of some three million served by the utility.

Well, it’s a start. What may finally make solar more acceptable in the Sunshine State, however, is its arrival in upmarket residences. The Sarasota

architect Todd Johnson is offering a solar-energy package, with photovoltaic panels, on the roof of the 10,759-square-foot, \$3 million showcase home, the Mandalay, at a new development in Sarasota County called the Lake Club.

The Miami architect Chad Oppenheim’s new COR condo project, in the Design District, will generate some electricity with wind turbines and solar thermal systems on the roof; the pool will be solar-heated, too. Deploying alternative energy sources, Oppenheim said, “adds cost, but we wanted to prove something, to make a statement by doing an ecological building.”

He feels that opinions are finally changing. “People really want to be green now,” he said. “The public awareness is astronomical.” ■



**GOING FOR LEED CERTIFICATION**  
The 30-story MaxMiami building in Overtown will use light-reflecting glass and a novel parking system.