

# AUDIO SOLUTIONS

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# GETTING SCHOOLED

HOW TODAY'S AUDIO EDUCATORS KEEP  
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**STUDIOSTORIES**  
**GREEN ROAD STUDIO**  
MIXES SCENERY AND SOUND





## GREEN ROAD STUDIO COSTA RICA

By Jeff Touzeau

Green Road Studio is a 'compact' destination studio located in Costa Rica — a country well known for its rainforests, its highly agreeable climate, and of course, its beaches — which many consider to be among the finest in the world.

Federico Hencker is managing director and studio engineer of Green Road. His vision for the studio was to create "a fusion among Central America, South America, and the United States." Drawing clients from each of these regions, his aim is to provide artists with a world-class recording environment, while providing access to the serenity and beauty that is unique to Costa Rica.

While attending a university lecture in Bogota, Columbia, Hencker met studio designer Horacio Malvicino of Malvicino Design Group. The two discussed Hencker's vision for the studio at length and began outlining the planning process for Green Road. Hencker indicated that he not only wanted a full-tilt professional studio complete with state-of-the-art equipment, but he also wanted an ecologically friendly one. Malvicino, an



The control room is based around the Solid State Logic Matrix console.

avid surfer who had visited Costa Rica in the past, was more than happy to accommodate. Once the two agreed on a design, Malvicino worked hard to source the right construction materials, most of which were

recyclable and/or ecologically friendly. Green Road Studio, which is com-

prised of a control room, a live room (or master suite, as Hencker refers to it), and an isolation booth, has now been open for a couple of months. While it definitely falls into the 'small studio' category, it is

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large enough to comfortably accommodate a live rock band and also extremely well suited for television and voiceover work, among other things.

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Hencker and Malvicini were successful in making Green Studio as eco-friendly as possible in every way. The studio, which is built using "room within a room" construction techniques, features a long list of eco-friendly features and materials, including bamboo floors and wall resonators, acoustically isolating doors, and

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Federico Hencker, managing director and studio engineer, Green Road Studio.

insulation made out of recycled plastics as well as environmentally friendly paints and fabrics. "Obviously, there are limitations if you want to build a studio that is 100 percent green, but we did it as green as possible," recalls Malvacino.

Once the studio design and construction was complete, Malvacino and Hencker visited the GC Pro showroom in New York City, where they met with account manager Michael Yorky. "He gave me lots of ideas about what kind of equipment to have in Green Road," recalls Hencker. "His insight was very useful — if I had any technical doubts or other issues, I would just call Michael and he would resolve them for me." Malvacino, who managed the studio integration process, states that his goals were simple: "In Central America, there are very few studios and, to be honest, many of these are very low quality. With Green Road, we wanted to raise the bar a little bit."

They decided to build the equipment infrastructure around a Solid State Logic Matrix console — a decision that, according to Hencker, makes Green Road the only studio with an SSL in Central America. For recording, they chose to install an Avid Pro Tools|HD3 system along with a combination of both new and vintage rack

gear. Hencker's preamplifier rack includes four channels of the SSL VHD and the API 3124, as well as a selection of preamps from Millennia Media and Maui. For dynamics, he has a classic Teletronix LA2A compressor, an Empirical Labs Distressor, and a Manley Labs Slam, as well as an Avalon 737 among other units.

Green Road is well apportioned in the microphone department as well. For vocals, Hencker's go-to mic is an AKG C12; other instrument mics in his closet include a Microtech Gefell UMT 70, which he says is fantastic for miking guitars, and several models from Shure, Sennheiser, AKG, and others, which he uses to record drums. "I am very happy with all my equipment," Hencker observes. "With the SSL, for example, I have greater headroom so my mixes sound louder."

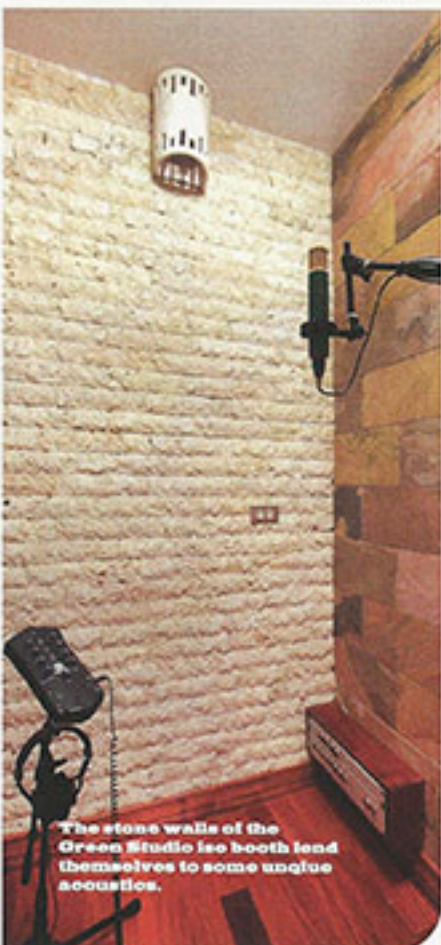
Hencker says despite being open for only a couple of months, he has already put the studio through its paces by recording friends' bands. "I have been experimenting with all the rooms that I have," says Hencker. "The iso booth, for instance, has a very live sound that is great for guitar amplifiers." In terms of clients, he says he is keeping an open mind: "I prefer rock music, but I like recording just about any style."

If location is everything, then Green Road has a strong advantage: "Costa Rica is a major tourist attraction — my idea is to let people know that they can work here Monday through Friday, and then on the weekend, go to the beach. People can come to Costa Rica and enjoy all the things that this beautiful country has to offer while working in a professional, state-of-the-art studio," he adds.

Whether Green Road's clients are local bands or international tourists, they are bound to have a unique and satisfying experience: "We wanted to bring something different to Central America," Hencker says. "There are just a few studios here, and most of them are very old."

"We tried to make the studio as flexible as possible," concludes Malvacino. "Even though it is small, we followed the same guidelines that we use when building a world class studio anywhere in the world."

*Jeff Touzeau is a journalist and author. His latest book is The Green Musician's Guide: Sound Ideas for a Sound Planet (Cengage).*



The stone walls of the Green Studio iso booth lend themselves to some unique acoustics.