

## The Nurture of Nature G2 Gallery brings natural world to an urban oasis in the asphalt jungle

by James Koenig



Mother Nature is smiling on the newly opened G2 Gallery on Abbot Kinney Boulevard in Venice, CA where Dan and Susan Gottlieb have opened eyes—and other lenses-- on Mother Nature's family album to have a look at the marvels, miracles, and sadly, endangered, natural world.

Making Mother Nature smile these days can be a tough order when the natural world has as many scrapes, scars, repairs, patches and plasters as a reckless kid in a playground hanging by his legs from monkey bars above a concrete carpet. The natural world is under siege! Mother Nature has every right to her bruised ego—and environmentally speaking, "When mamma isn't happy, nobody's happy!" Just look at the gas prices, the melting ice-cap, the unwieldy weather patterns, floods, and food shortages.

When I was growing up, I remember being amazed at stories of children in cities being taken on field trips to a barnyard at a zoo so they could see a real cow and that milk comes from something "udderly" different than a carton. I had really been to a farm and knew where milk came from! Of course, they also had me convinced that the chocolate milk I loved came from Bessie the brown cow. "How now brown cow?" On to Hollywood--remember Marilyn Monroe's diction lesson as her voluptuous lips carefully pronounce "How now brown cow?" in "Some Like It Hot"? Some may, indeed, like it hot. But, we are in trouble! It's too darn hot! Global warming is not cool! We need nature—and we need nurture. We need to nurture nature and to let nature nurture—and inspire—us! We need to open our eyes and pay more than lip service to environmental causes.

## The Nurture of Nature G2 (con't)



The G2 Gallery is doing its part to open both our eyes and our “awes” —as it brings us back to nature via photographic and other nature inspired art. When we are aware—when we allow the world around us to take us out of our “urban accommodations to” the natural world, we are changed; and, ultimately, develop a sensitivity to the environment that doesn’t make us just feel “warm and fuzzy” about it, but results in positive action to environment causes. With the G2 Gallery Dan and Susan Gottlieb are setting an incredible example of “giving something back” that makes a difference. Work of the gallery will benefit various non-profit organizations—including Friends of the Ballona Wetlands—dedicated to restoring and preserving the Ballona Wetlands, a unique California coastal area; the Theodore Payne Foundation—devoted to promoting and restoring California landscapes and habitat; and the California Plant Society—dedicated to conserving California native plants.

The stellar opening exhibit of G2 featured the work of Thomas D. Mangelsen— arguably THE premier nature photographer of our time. You’ve seen his work undoubtedly in the doctor’s office—uh, not on the walls, but in that National Geographic Magazine you were lucky enough to nab before getting stuck with a six month old issue of something with an exposé of so and so’s return to rehab! Some of Mangelsen’s work continues in the gallery’s second show—“Boundless Vision” along with work by Frans Lanting, David Muench, Marc Muench, Jim Stimson, and Larry Ulrich n which will be up from now until August. There is certainly “boundless vision” behind the G2 Gallery. Recognizing the important role of nature photography in opening eyes and hearts to conservation issues, the G2 Gallery continues in a California tradition that goes



way back to the early days of Ansel Adams. G2 also recognizes that every facet of the arts—all of art, architecture, design, music-- reflects a relationship with and response to the natural environment. This Fall, G2 will open ears as well as eyes with plans for a concert series in the gallery.

Just who are the two G’s—Dan and Susan Gottlieb--- of G2? Already more than a quarter century ago as a Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney Dan Gottlieb had garnered a reputation as a “go to” man for issues of finance and business. He actually had been assigned to the Santa Monica division of the District Attorney’s Office and had investigated many cases in the Venice area where the gallery is today. “There used to be a murder a week on these same streets.” Says Gottlieb. “We’ve come a long way since those days.” Dan was spirited away from “law and order” L.A. style in the District Attorney’s office to “make a killing” elsewhere! The first step to the world beyond was to become advisor to entertainer Ann Margret. He is still general business manager of the multi-talented twice Oscar nominated, five time Emmy nominated, five time Golden Globe recipient actress, dancer, singer—in addition to being co-partners in G&L Realty. Gottlieb’s G & L Realty enterprise, a well respected Beverly Hills company with a long established record of quality and success, specializes in medical offices and facilities.

Dan Gottlieb was born in Chicago. Later the family moved from the south side of “the Windy City” to the north shore community of Highland Park where Dan added exploratory “field work” in the woodlands along the shores of Lake Michigan to his earlier childhood passion for spending Saturdays in daylong visits to Chicago’s famed Field Museum

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of Natural History and the Museum of Science and Industry. He started college years at Indiana University where he was on the school's varsity wrestling team, but after the family moved to Beverly Hills, he transferred to USC. He is a graduate of USC and later of the prestigious Boalt Hall Law School at Berkeley. He also spent time in the US Marine Corps. Undoubtedly, skills from all of the above went into making Dan Gottlieb a formidable contender in the business world. He also has a reputation of being a generous mentor. His son Richard, and daughters Laura and Barbara from his first marriage along with many friends would attest to that. Both Laura and Richard have a "track record" driving Dan's race car "Big Red."

Susan Gottlieb started life as daughter of a Swedish immigrant mining engineer in a small town in northern Quebec. The thriving metropolis of Naranda, Canada was in an area that had no roads! Small pontoon planes landed on the lake in the summer and on skis in the winter. As the mines played out, the family moved to places like Lapa Cadillac and Porcupine. "When my sister was born" she says "the actual temperature—without wind chill factor—was 52 degrees below zero." No wonder she left the rural north to go south to Ottawa for nurses training. But she took a love for and awareness of the natural world with her. She was also an adept athlete. Skiing, hiking, and waterskiing were further points of connection to the natural settings. It was her nursing career that first brought her to the United States—first San Francisco, then Los Angeles. She later traded her surgical gloves for garden gloves. She is a native California plants enthusiast and bird watcher. Her Beverly Hills garden is an official preserve of California native plants and has been featured on garden walks and on Hewell Houser's television show. The yard hosts an amazing array of wildlife-- from humming birds to California quail, and even the occasional bobcat. Daily activities include



the servicing of so many bird feeders they've practically lost count! She laughs "Sometimes we go through fifty pounds of sugar a week just for the humming birds." No wonder Susan Gottlieb's feathered friends enjoy the garden as well as two-footed visitors. She comments passionately "The plants that grow here naturally make such good sense environmentally. They're 'made for' our dry climate and thrive on our natural soil. And, besides—they are so beautiful!" She's as beautiful as the garden and can go from garden to "glam" effortlessly. She's on the board of the Ballona Wetlands and has hosted gatherings in her garden for Friends of the Ballona Wetlands, The Theodore Payne Foundation, and a scholarship event for the American Scandinavian Foundation of Los Angeles. (Incidentally, one of the recipients was a budding researcher into environmental issues.) She and Dan have also been supporters of Scandinavian Film Festival L.A.

One place Dan and Susan Gottlieb have always found especially "lively" is Death Valley! It is a favorite "get away." Their environmental-interest-inspired travels have taken them to Siberia, South American, the Galapagos, the Sea of Cortez, Jackson Hole, Yellowstone, Sweden, and twice to Antarctica-- and this is a partial list. Apparently Dan Gottlieb thinks that photographing thousands and thousands of penguins is more fun than putting on a penguin suit. In his spare time, Dan is a gifted photographer. When G2 Gallery mounts a photographic exhibit, he well knows what accounts for quality. His skills are amazing and he has a great eye, although he lovingly says "Susan always points out the great shots." His own work will deservedly be featured in the gallery in December. He was reticent about the idea—but knowledgeable friends insisted! The gallery is located at 1503 Abbot Kinney Blvd. in Venice (310-452-2842). For listings of gallery hours, events, and exhibitions go to: [www.theg2gallery.com](http://www.theg2gallery.com)