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MAGAZINE

LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

# How to Inspire the Best in You

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this guy!

LONG BEACH CONVENTION CENTER

## Flower Power

A designer draws inspiration—and electricity—from nature.

→ **DARREN SARAVIS** fears we're losing touch with the natural world. To Saravis the mountain climber and environmental activist, the notion is disheartening. To Saravis the designer and engineer, it's a problem to be solved. That's why he invented the Solarflora, a towering flower sculpture with solar-panel petals.

"It's a power plant," explains the soft-spoken founder of the California product-development firm Nectar Design, punning earnestly. "We take in energy from the sun and transform it into energy for life. It's a very direct metaphor."

Most solar power comes from sprawling industrial farms way out in the desert. Saravis created Solarflora to bring solar power into the heart of downtown—the idea being to make it beautiful and make it public. The graceful 15-foot structure can hold four solar panels generating up to 1.2 kilowatt-hours of electricity per day (enough to charge 24 laptops from outlets at its base) and is fitted with lights for either a soft green glow or streetlamp brightness. Saravis envisions malls, campuses, and parks lined with Solarflora, where passersby can pause to juice up their cell phones or Segways and take a nighttime stroll (or roll) beneath light the sun left behind.

In February, Saravis installed the first permanent fixture in front of the Long Beach Convention Center. He has received inquiries from architects and developers in the United States and Egypt interested in acquiring their own solar generators. Saravis is hopeful that with some seed money, a little time, and lots of light, his Solarflora will bloom around the world. —**AMANDA SCHUPAK**