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Welcome **KenG** , Sunday, March 27, 2005 8:55 CST (GMT-6), 1952 surfers currently online

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What's Cooking on Renderosity" - KenG- Pt 2

Interview by Sandra Castie [SndCastie]

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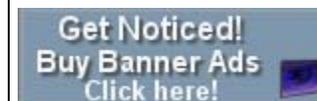
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Saving A Species, One Render At A Time with [Ken Gilliland\(KenG\)](#)

[Part two of a two-part interview - A year after KenG's [first interview](#), Sandy catches up with KenG to discover the projects he is currently working on, and what we can expect from this amazing artist in the near future]



Since our last interview what have you been up to in terms of creating more of your wonderful models of birds? I understand you created a European version.

After finishing the two *Songbird ReMix* packages I did last year [*Threatened, Endangered, Extinct, and Cool and Unusual*], I felt I was pretty much done with the series. Over the summer, and especially during the fall, I started getting requests of birds outside of North America for the series. I have always thrown in one or two European birds in each package but never an entire set dedicated to Europe, thus the *European Edition*.

Once I got it in my head that I was doing a European SBRM [Song Bird ReMix] collection, I dug into bird books and recalled my own bird watching experiences when I went to Bavaria a few years back. I tried to incorporate the most common birds found in Europe along with the requests I had received. Along the creation path, I found it a great learning experience for me. I'm anxious to return to Europe and try my enhanced identification skills.



Images from the *European Edition* © 2005 KenG
 [full images can be seen on KenG's Renderosit Gallery]

You not only deal with the endangered birds, you also are involved with endangered plants. Have you ever thought about doing some models of these? I for one can never get enough plants for my scenes.

Yes, I do some volunteer work for the [Theodore Payne Foundation](#) for (California) Wildflowers and Native Plants. Besides helping customers in their nursery, teaching some classes and going some promotional artwork for them, I created and maintain the foundation's website.

The foundation was formed to preserve the legacy of Theodore Payne, an Englishman who came to California in the early 1900's and fell in love with California's native plants. It is because of his vision, plus some propagating and seed collecting that many species are still around today. I became fascinated with native plants around 2000, in efforts to lure more birds to my yard and over the past few years have gardened exclusively in native plants.

A native plant model collection has appealed to me for some time. I purchased the x-frog modeling software with the express intention of creating some. I've started and shelved the project a few times ... something else always seems to come up, but it's still on the back burner.

Your home *Quail Hollow* is on the Theodore Payne Foundations Annual Native Garden Tour each year are there many people who come for the tour and what is their reaction to your beautiful gardens?

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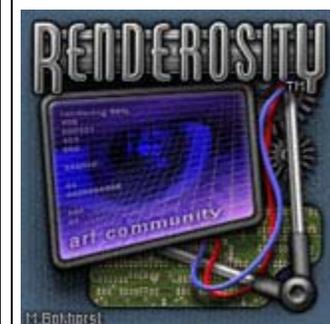
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Quail Hollow's Native Plants

Well, I guess I have to admit first that besides being a native plant advocate, I'm an addict. Our home, named *Quail Hollow*, has over 450 different species of California native plants and approximately 15% of them are endangered. I'll admit before we "went native"; I thought native plants consisted of two species, weeds and cactus. In the Los Angeles area, where I live, I'm lucky if I see one house in twenty that has one native plant species.

Although we live a dry, mild Mediterranean climate, everyone here thinks they're living in England or the East Coast when it comes to gardening. They don't understand that the seasons are turned around. The lush lawns and thirsty shrubs are in direct conflict with the natural conditions here. During the late winter through spring, our yard is an attraction for our community, mostly due to the wildflowers. We get a lot of brakes squealing and "fence-leaners" that time of year.

The TPF Annual Native Garden Tour started last year offers an excellent tool to show that California native plants are a quite a bit more than "weeds and cactus". On last year's tour, about 200 people signed up for the self-guided tour and a majority of them visited "Quail Hollow". A few people ended up staying all day in the garden missing the rest of the tour. I guess that means they enjoyed it. If anything, there were a lot more native plant converts by the end of the tour day. This year, the Tour is April 2nd and 3rd and the attendance is expected to triple.

Speaking of *Quail Hollow*, you give us a little of the reasons on your home page, but could you give us a little more in-depth of where your dream came from?

Quail Hollow is a section of my [website](#) that deals with my home and the flora and fauna around it. The first thing I did to the property when I moved in was to significantly change the house. The house built in the 30's was moved on to the property. Over the years, it has undergone a series of facelifts, the last being a Ranch-Tudor conversion. Since the house had no character, I decided it was a blank canvas and I could do to it

whatever I pleased. I chose to turn the clock back to 1890 and turn it into a Queen Anne cottage. I guess I did a pretty effective job — I've had to turn down requests to be part of Historical Home Tours.



Quail Hollow

In 2001, my wife and I purchased a couple vacant lots next to us. We have a history of donating quite a bit to various environmental groups, but we found it frustrating not knowing how our donations were used. With purchasing land adjacent to us and to keeping it from being developed, we knew exactly how the money was spent. We started to plant natives, doubling our bird species count from 40 to 80 different species year-round. We get many rare species of birds, but our favorites were the 30 to 60 quail that visit us on a daily basis. The property on the hill above us is named *Quail Hill*, thus our name became *Quail Hollow*.

Since our first interview has anything changed in your life?

Oh boy, there's a question ... yes. Chains of events starting over the summer have significantly changed my life. It started with this crazy idea of a creating a main walkway to our house. Since I'm a do-it-yourselfer, I did everything, starting with ripping-out 100 feet of driveway with a sledgehammer.

By fall, my walkway, complete with a stream, bridges and waterfalls was done, unfortunately so was my back. Doctors determined I needed surgery. Since my day job was a physical one my employer put me on medical leave without pay. Now I know all of this sounds pretty depressing but a small miracle happened — in January, a guitar manufacturer contacted me about placing my art on a line of electric guitars, and now I find myself living my dream, being a full-time artist.

I sit here now mending after the surgery (that went very well) almost thanking the back

injury for breaking me loose of that "day-job." I should add, that having a great and supportive wife makes living my dream a lot easier.

Do you have any projects in the works that you can talk about without giving away too much?

Well, now being a full-time artist, obviously my digital art, texture and modeling are going to be sought as a source of income for me, so yes, I have quite a few projects that are in the works or being dreamed up almost as we speak. My initial primary concerns will be to take my shelved projects, evaluate them, and bring them to completion if viable.

Most of these are no secret to visitors of my website. I'll be bringing my hummingbird and lizard models forward, much in the same spirit and style as the *Songbird ReMix* collection. I'm planning to complete the two *PoserTown* buildings I started based on Edward Hopper's paintings *House by the Railway* and *Circle Theater*. I'm also planning to revisit the native plant model idea and there may be one more *Songbird ReMix* package in there as well. I was thinking African and Indonesian birds.

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- [Part one of this two-part interview can be read [here](#)]

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- We invite you to visit KenG's [Renderosity Gallery](#) and [Renderosity store front](#).
- Take a stroll though [KenG's website](#), where you will be delighted with gallery images of his current works, and those dating back to the early 1980's.

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- "[What's Cooking on Renderosity](#)," with [Sandy Castle](#), is a regular Renderosity Front Page featured column.

March 21, 2005

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**Reader Submitted Opinions:**

By: [LillianH](#) on 2005-03-24

Hi Ken,

Thank you for sharing about yourself and your work. I was very impressed with all the environmental work that you do, and you play music, too!

Neat pictures of the house. Absolutely beautiful. Sandy thanks for another wonderful interview!

Best regards,  
Lillian

By: [deemarie](#) on 2005-03-24  
Ken,

Sorry to hear about your accident - but very glad that it gave you more time to work on your new creations! Your remix series is one of my favorites - your realistic models are truly amazing - and I am excited about your upcoming products.

Thanks so much Sandy, for catching up with Ken :)

Dee-Marie

By: [Firebirdz](#) on 2005-03-24  
Your models are very inspiring and I love your work!

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### What's your opinion?

Opinion:

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Opinions are reviewed before they are made available to the general public.

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