THE PERFECT STARTING POINT

Bioengineers love resurrected proteins because they often combine two desirable features: thermostability and promiscuity. For example, researchers at the University of Granada in Spain reconstructed several versions of an antibiotic-resistance protein called beta-lactamase, going back as far as 3 million years. As the protein evolved, its melting point dropped from more than 80 °C to less than 60 °C. It also became more specific for penicillin, losing its ability to neutralize other drugs (*J Am Chem Soc*, 135:2899–902, 2013).