

A photograph of a dining table set with a vase of red flowers, a stack of plates, and silverware, against a light green wall.

# Gorgeous & Green

Home  
interiors  
embrace  
sustainable  
style

BY ALEXIS BLUE



When it comes to creating a greener, more environmentally friendly home, there's much more to consider than insulation and water use. Home interiors have also gone green, as innovations such as recycled-paper countertops, glass tiles made from discarded windowpanes, and old barn walls turned into wood floors make bold social and artistic statements.



From a bamboo-plywood vanity and marmoleum natural flooring to nontoxic paint and low-flow faucets, Aja Knaub's green remodel incorporates a wide variety of products from Originate Natural Building Materials Showroom. (photography by Amy Haskell)

A few short years ago, finding so-called green-design materials took a fair amount of hunting, says local interior designer Juliann Berens of JB Interior Design, which specializes in eco-friendly interiors for homes and businesses. "The quality and diversity of the products now available are just amazing," says Berens.

Designer Patricia Mooney, owner of Tucson's Designlines, agrees. Her foray into green design began when she was enlisted to "green up" the interiors of model homes in Tucson's eco-savvy Civano community. "Before, you really had to look for products, but now it's on everyone's mind," Mooney says. "Everyone has their own niche for green products."

### The benefits

From clay-based paints that don't emit toxic volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to carpets made from recycled water bottles, earth-friendly materials continue to gain popularity. Natasha Winnik, owner of the local Originate Natural Building Materials Showroom, says many of her customers seek out natural, nontoxic design materials so they can breathe better in their own homes. "More people are suffering health issues because of overexposure to chemicals," she says. Earthen materials free of common synthetics such as acrylic, latex, and formaldehyde can go a long way in improving indoor air quality and the health of a home's residents. Many local designers, such as Aja Knaub of AK Designs,





look to Winnik's sustainable material options for their projects.

Berens—who prefers the term “sustainable design” to the more general green designation—recently gave an entire home an eco-friendly makeover, starting with a fresh coat of zero-VOC clay-based Green Planet Paint, manufactured in Patagonia. The master bathroom was upgraded with the addition of a dual-flush toilet, and water fixtures with aerators to create the feeling of greater water pressure with less water. The wood flooring throughout much of the house came from harvested orchard walnut trees that matured past producing nuts.

### The materials

Besides being good for the environment and our health, natural design products are some of the most attractive materials on the market. For skeptics who think green interiors are nothing but beige and brown or sticks and stones, one visit to Originate will prove otherwise.

There lies an impressive sea of color. Accent tiles, wall sconces, and vases made from 100% recycled glass come in vibrant shades, as do recycled aluminum tiles. Countertop choices include durable surfaces made from recycled paper, cement tiles that sparkle with inlaid bits of recycled glass, and a silky smooth surface made from recycled milk jugs and laundry detergent bottles, swirled with creamy colors.

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Juliann Berens carefully chose products such as Green Planet Paint, South Cone sustainable furniture, and Eco-Timber walnut floors for her client's home. (photography by Jeffrey Volker)

Agriculturally derived materials include pressed wheatboard and sorghum board, made from the non-edible stalks of sorghum (part of the sugarcane family) that would otherwise get burned and disposed of. There's even an interior surface made from a blend of soybeans, sunflower seeds, and recycled newspaper. If it's wood flooring you're after, eco-friendly options abound in three major categories: rapidly renewable, sustainably harvested, and reclaimed wood. Quick-growing bamboo is an example of a rapidly renewable resource often used in flooring and

## SHOPPING GREEN

### INTERIOR DESIGN

**AK Interior Design** 882-5537 • **Colorizing Interiors**—Bobbi Mandelbaum 529-9451 • **Contents Interiors** 881-6900, [www.contentsinteriors.com](http://www.contentsinteriors.com) • **Gamba Design Group** 730-9839, [www.gambadesigngroupusa.com](http://www.gambadesigngroupusa.com) • **The Gear Group** 444-3945, [www.thegeargroupinc.com](http://www.thegeargroupinc.com) • **JB Interior Design Inc.** 886-8932, [www.jbinteriordesign.com](http://www.jbinteriordesign.com) • **Designlines** 885-9577, [www.designlinesaz.com](http://www.designlinesaz.com)

### FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES

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### PAINT

**American Clay** [www.americanclay.com](http://www.americanclay.com) • **Citron Paint** 886-5800, [www.citronpaint.com](http://www.citronpaint.com) • **Dunn-Edwards Paints** 4 locations in Tucson, [www.dunnedwards.com](http://www.dunnedwards.com) • **Fraze Paint** 3 locations in Tucson, [www.frazeepaint.com](http://www.frazeepaint.com) • **Green Planet Paints** 394-2571, [www.greenplanetpaints.com](http://www.greenplanetpaints.com)

### LIGHTING

**Highlight Enterprises Inc.** 298-4522, [www.solatube.com](http://www.solatube.com) • **Illuminations** 325-3031 • **Light Composers Inc.** 797-0070, [www.lightcomposers.com](http://www.lightcomposers.com) • **Outdoor Lighting Perspectives** 544-0224, [www.outdoorlights.com](http://www.outdoorlights.com)

### BUILDING MATERIALS

**Clay Mine Adobe** 578-2222, [www.claymineadobe.com](http://www.claymineadobe.com) • **Originate Natural Building Materials Showroom** 792-4207, [www.orientatenbm.com](http://www.orientatenbm.com) • **Plum Windows & Doors** 795-4104