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THE GREEN ISSUE

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style

HOME & GARDEN **H&G**

Interior Designs by Shannon Scott Design. Photos by Thomas Ploch



Gradual Greening

Global warming, greenhouse gases, and CO₂ footprints have left many people seeking ways to minimize their impact on the planet. They've switched out traditional incandescent lightbulbs in favor of compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and traded their energy-guzzling appliances for more frugal models all in an effort to make their homes more eco-friendly. Beyond those simple modifications, however, creating a green environment in an existing home can be overwhelming. But with a little thought and planning, you can manage it without demolishing your house and starting from scratch. As you change the décor—paint a room, for example, or replace old, worn carpet—use it as an opportunity to incorporate green or recycled materials into your environment. “You have to look at the big picture and have a game plan,” says Shannon Scott, owner of **Shannon Scott Design** in Los Olivos. “You have to do a little research, but sources are available and the information is out there.” »

Photo by Thomas Ploch



FLOORING

From recycled carpet to poured concrete, many options exist for eco-friendly flooring. "There are natural or recycled flooring materials that can be durable but comfortable," said Ellen Strickland, founder, co-owner, and manager of Livinggreen—a Santa Barbara-based retail business that offers green design alternatives to homeowners.

Armstrong Marmorette-NaturCote is an all natural linoleum flooring dyed with mineral pigments to provide rich colors.

Kirei Board is a strong, lightweight, durable, environmentally-friendly substitute for wood.

VM-Carpet's line of "shaggies" are odorless and made from environmentally-friendly, 100 percent polyamide pile. This Finnish company also produces other smart choices such as natural sisal, linen, and paper yarn carpets.

TerraMai reclaimed hardwoods repurposed for use in flooring, beams and timbers, decking, siding, and paneling.

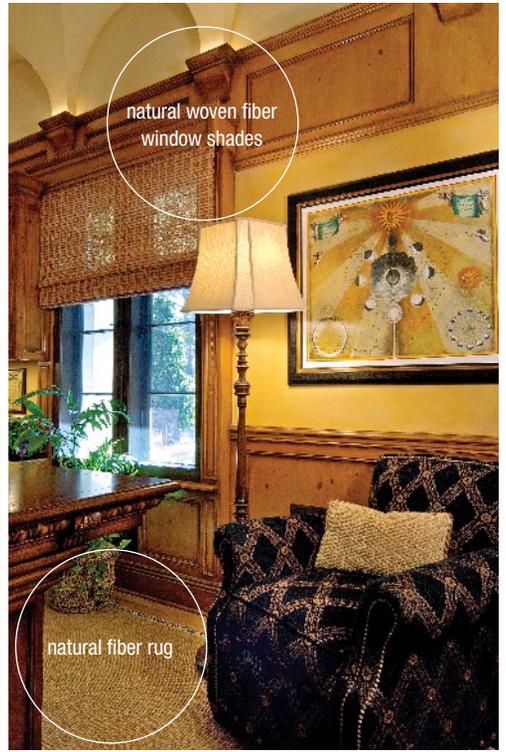
Bamboo converts eight times more carbon dioxide to oxygen than trees, and returns large quantities of nitrogen to the soil.

Terra Green Ceramics manufactures recycled content ceramic floor and wall tile made with over 55 percent recycled glass.

Merida's woven floor coverings are made from all natural fibers including sisal (shown here) jute, wool, paper, and abaca.

Ruckstuhl's top quality coir and sisal carpets and rugs are woven exclusively from regenerative natural fibers.

ContempoCork offers a line of recycled cork tiles colored with water-based stains.



Carpet

Look for carpet made from renewable resources such as biodegradable wool, cotton, jute, hemp, and even silk. Or consider carpet produced from recycled carpet material or plastic drink containers. Approximately 50 two-liter bottles are used to produce one square yard of carpet, and because the bottles are made with top quality polyethylene terephthalate (PET) resins, they emit fewer volatile organic compounds (VOCs) than other synthetic fibers and have less off-gassing.

If you're replacing old carpet, be sure to ask your retailer about recycling options; nearly five billion pounds of used carpet end up in landfills every year.

Hardwood

Some of the best hardwood for flooring comes from old barns, buildings, rural structures, and sustainable sources of reclaimed timber. "In the United States they're re-milling old lumber into new," says Scott. Other environmentally-friendly hardwoods include:

Bamboo, a plentiful and renewable resource, is one of the fastest growing plants in the world and can be harvested every three to seven years.

Palm Wood, from plantation-grown coconut palm trees that proliferate throughout much of the world, offers an alternative to exotic and tropical hardwoods that are becoming rare or endangered. **Kirei Board**, produced from the stalks of the sorghum plant, is made by heat-pressing the stalks with a nontoxic adhesive to form lightweight yet strong flooring material.

Whatever hardwood you choose, look for certification from an oversight organization such as the Forest Stewardship Council, which indicates the wood comes from properly managed forests and is produced in a sustainable manner.

Natural Linoleum

One of the most environmentally-friendly flooring options, natural linoleum is durable and resilient and is made from linseed oil, pine resin, wood flour, cork powder, limestone dust, natural pigments, and jute.

Vinyl

As an entirely man-made material, vinyl might not seem to fit the green or eco-friendly flooring paradigm. However, a few companies produce vinyl tiles and vinyl wood planks that meet the standards of the Leadership in Energy and

Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. LEED is a nationally accepted benchmark for the design and construction of green buildings. Burke Flooring's Luxury Vinyl, for example, is made of 67 percent post-consumer recycled materials—vinyl products previously discarded in a landfill.

Other Flooring

"There's always natural stone and ceramic tiles," Scott notes, adding that the hardness and abundance of these materials make for very green resources when quarried responsibly and transported minimal distances. "There's also cork flooring, which is a softer material than hardwood, but is quite beautiful and can be used for a number of surfaces."

Strickland noted the eco benefits of ceramic and glass tiles, which are comprised of 55 percent recycled glass, as well as recycled rubber flooring and recycled rubber and cork floor tiles. The rubber and cork tiles are a composite made from a blend of recycled rubber and mineral fillers with cork granules. The rubber and cork are 100 percent post-production waste.

Innovations Wallcoverings offers (a) a wide variety of breathable papers made of wood pulp from managed forests using water-soluble inks which contain no heavy metals; (b) beads of glass on a wood pulp and recyclable polyester, nonwoven backing; (c) cork wall covering from a managed harvesting program with water-soluble inks containing no heavy metals.

Opuzen 100 percent true hemp content upholstery fabric.

WALL COVERINGS

Paint

Thanks to consumer demand and new environmental regulations, low-VOC and zero-VOC paints and finishes are now available, as are natural paints and finishes. All three are durable and cost-effective options to traditional high-VOC paint.

Natural paints are made from raw ingredients such as water, plant oils and resins, plant dyes and essential oils, natural minerals (such as clay, chalk, and talcum), milk casein, natural latex, beeswax, and earth and mineral dyes. Water-based natural paints emit virtually no smell, while their oil-based counterparts usually have a pleasant fragrance of citrus or essential oils. Providers of natural paints include The Real Milk Paint Company, Aglaia, Livos, Auro, EcoDesign's BioShield, Weather-Bos, Silacote, Anna Sova, and Green Planet Paints.

To be considered zero-VOC, a paint's VOC level cannot exceed five grams per liter. The addition of color tint usually increases the VOC level to 10 grams per liter, but that's still low. Some of the manufacturers offering low-VOC paint include Benjamin Moore, Cloverdale, MAB Paints, Miller Paint Company, Vista Paint, and PPG Architectural

Finishes. Low-VOC paints and stains rely on water as the carrier rather than petroleum-based solvents. To meet the EPA's low-VOC standards, paints and stains must not contain VOCs in excess of 200 grams per liter. Varnishes cannot exceed 300 grams per liter. Among the producers of zero-VOC paint are AFM Safecoat, ICI Decra-Shield, Kelly-Moore, Devco®, American Pride, Sherwin Williams, Frazee Paint, Allied PhotoChemical, Olympic Paint and Stain, Yolo Colorhouse, Green Planet Paints, and Benjamin Moore.

Wallpaper and Natural Fibers

If you prefer a wall covering other than paint, green options include wallpapers made from recycled and natural materials such as cork, rice, and grass cloth. "A company called Innovations has a series of eco wall coverings that are even commercially rated," said Scott. "They have wonderful patterns and textures."



Avignon 100 percent recycled wallpaper enhanced with nontoxic water-based paints.

Hartmann & Forbes all-natural window coverings handmade from materials harvested only from well-managed ecosystems in an environmentally sustainable fashion.

RESOURCES

Livinggreen

Retail locations in Santa Barbara, Montecito, and Los Angeles.
www.livinggreen.com

Shannon Scott Design

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SAMPLES PROVIDED BY SHANNON SCOTT DESIGN