

A Sense of 'Repurpose'

Decorating with recycled and sustainable materials helps reduce waste and save energy. **By Denise Bates Enos**



1. Artist John T. Unger's handmade grills and firebowls are crafted of 100 percent recycled steel. Made to accommodate firewood, the bowls also can be adapted for use with gas, \$149-\$1,249, at johnunger.com
 2. For earth-friendly artwork, log on to art.com, which offers fine art prints produced on Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper, using post-consumer and sustainably sourced paper and soy-based inks, \$37.99 each
 3. Most people would think old plastic milk jugs are only good for the recycle bin, but leave it to an artist's eye to see the beauty in such discards. British artist Caroline Saul's sculptural vessels and bowls have a lacy, ethereal look that bears no resemblance to their former incarnation, \$58-\$122, at carolinesaul.co.uk



WITH APOLOGIES TO KERMIT THE FROG, IT IS EASY BEING green these days. Because of an elevated environmental awareness and an ever-increasing bounty of eco-friendly home décor products, it's never been easier to decorate responsibly.

When shopping for green décor, "look for key words like 'sustainable,' 'post-consumer waste' and 'biodegradable,'" advises Meg Allan Cole of threadbanger.com, a do-it-yourself home design and fashion site. "More and more companies are using recycled materials."

Marla Greenough, owner of Greenough Interiors and Design in Orlando, feels it's up to everyone to do their part to make the planet greener by making smart decorating choices: "It's really not that difficult to make positive changes. If everybody would make a little change, it would make a huge difference."

One of the greenest ways to decorate is using repurposed items in which little energy was expended in making them. Artist Sherri James of Blue Moon Bottles in Athens, Ohio, for example, reuses old bottles in her furniture and accessories, including colorful coffee and accent tables. "As I explored the unique features of wine bottles, I was inspired by the variety of shapes and detail," says James. "I wanted to facilitate it becoming what it was best suited to become, not melt the bottle down into a new product."

While the recycled elements in James's pieces are still recognizable, repurposed materials may be less evident or completely disguised in other furnishings. That's when consumers must rely on labeling information that identi-



4. Artist Sherri James preserves the inherent beauty of the wine bottles she uses in her pieces, including tumblers, four for \$40, vases, \$25 each, and accent, end and coffee tables, \$800-\$850. Custom tables also are available from \$675-\$2,500, at bluemoonbottles.com
 5. All manner of home items are being created from sustainable materials, including bath towels made from a blend of bamboo and cotton, \$3.95-\$24.95, and placemats made from hyacinth leaves woven over a metal frame, \$5.95 each at cb2.com



fies recycled content. Luckily for environmentally responsible consumers, there's a broad range of home items that incorporate recycled content, including flooring and fabrics. A case in point is Colonial Mills of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. It has introduced a line of reversible indoor-outdoor rugs made of 50 percent recycled yarns from Sunbrella, an outdoor fabrics company known for creating durable, fade- and stain-resistant materials.

Products made from sustainable materials are another eco-friendly option. Bamboo, which can be used in a variety of products, from furniture to rugs and even fabrics, is one of the best known. But other quick-growing plant materials such as rattan and even hyacinth leaves are made into guilt-free decorative items. Many green-friendly companies, including contemporary home goods retailer CB2, offer a variety of sustainable items. Look for pieces certified as sustainable by organizations such as the Forestry Stewardship Council and the Institute for Market Transformation to Sustainability.

When going green, it's also important to choose items that don't pollute your own environment, advises Cole. "The materials that we use at home not only have an impact on our carbon footprint, but also directly interact with our family." Choose nontoxic items such as no-VOC (volatile organic compounds) paint, for example, and opt for PVC-free wallpapers made with natural dyes and materials.

There's never been a better—or easier—time to go green at home. It's healthier for your family, your home and your planet, and with all the options available, there's no reason to sacrifice on style.

6. Native Trails creates hand-hammered sinks crafted with recycled copper tubing and telephone wire, as well as vanities made of wood salvaged from old barns, barracks, fencing and other structures. Calypso Brushed Nickel Lavatory, \$998, at nativetrails.net
 7. Colonial Mills' new Renaissance line of indoor-outdoor reversible rugs are made with 50 percent recycled Sunbrella yarns that have the look and feel of wool. 5-by-7 feet, \$600; 8-by-10 feet, \$1,200, at colonialmills.com

FIREBOWL: COURTESY OF JOHN T. UNGER; ART: ART.COM; MILK JUGS: COURTESY OF CAROLINE SAUL

BOTTLES: COURTESY OF SHERRI JAMES; PLACEMAT: CB2.COM; SINK: COURTESY OF NATIVE TRAILS; RUG: COURTESY OF COLONIAL MILLS