

# CHESAPEAKE HOME

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THE MID-ATLANTIC'S HOUSE AND GARDEN MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2007

## MODERN MINDED

CONTEMPORARY  
+ ECO-FRIENDLY  
DESIGN

PLUS:  
A VISIT WITH  
HUGH NEWELL JACOBSEN



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**RIGHT:** EcoTimber's "Australian Chestnut" floors are manufactured using wood from certified well-managed forests.

**BELOW:** JG's Architectural Supply offers an array of sustainably-harvested exotic hardwoods.



# HOW TO *Green* UP YOUR HOME

BY DEBORAH R. HUSO

NO, WE'RE NOT TALKING LANDSCAPING. HERE'S SOME ADVICE ON TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTS FOR HOME BUILDING AND DESIGN THAT WILL HELP YOU PROTECT THE EARTH, YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH, AND YOUR POCKETBOOK.

**S**o you're ready to start a home remodeling project or are planning a new custom home. But with recent concerns over conserving natural resources and health problems associated with chemicals found in many construction materials and household products, you might be wondering if there's a way to change your home's look without endangering the environment or your health. There is.

Green building isn't just a fringe idea anymore. In fact, making use of green products—materials that minimize or eliminate negative environmental or health impacts—is not only hitting

the mainstream, it's also becoming more cost competitive. Skip the hype, and take a look at some green building products that really work and won't pinch the pocketbook either.

**Recycled Decks:** Enjoy the natural look of wood without the maintenance with a composite deck. Among the more popular composite deck materials is Trex®, which is a mixture of recycled plastic and waste wood fiber ground into sawdust. Trex® Public Relations officer Maureen Murray says the mixture of plastic and wood is ideal because plastic protects the wood from weathering while the wood fiber gives the deck a natural



look. Plus, you reap the benefit of putting recycled and waste products to a great new use. Composite decks emulate the appearance of wood but require no painting or staining, which cuts down on long-term maintenance costs. And since there are so many different composite deck colors and textures available, homeowners can get creative and mix and match for stunning patterns like sunbursts and herringbone looks. How long will a composite deck last? Murray says that Trex® decks in the Florida Everglades have stood up to 15 years of harsh, wet climate so far.

**Natural Siding:** While the watchword of the residential siding industry has long been “maintenance-free,” environmentally friendly hasn’t always played into the mix. Highland Craftsmen™ Inc., however, has developed a siding product that not only provides decades of maintenance-free living but is also 100% natural. The company’s Bark House™ siding is made from the bark of the tulip poplar and provides homes with a beautiful rustic exterior that can last for as long as 80 years without painting, staining, or any other form of maintenance.

The bark is harvested in the course of normal logging practices. When loggers fell the poplar trees, Highland Craftsmen comes in with old-time bark peeling tools similar to those once used to curl the bark off of chestnut trees to secure tannin. Highland removes, dries, and sterilizes the bark in kilns, thus making use of a material that would normally be considered a useless byproduct of logging. Because of its natural appearance, bark siding helps houses blend into their surroundings, too.

**Aerated Concrete:** Another smart option when it comes to siding and cladding, as well as walls and flooring for that matter, is aerated autoclave concrete (AAC). Used widely in Europe for over 70 years, the non-toxic, eco-friendly material is so light that it floats. AAC, manufactured by Aercon, has all the properties of wood, without the headaches—it has an exceptional fire rating, is resistant to mold and pests, offers good thermal insulation, and is easy to



## BUILDING PRODUCTS



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT ACROSS:  
Rhino Deck Composite Decking,  
Trex Composite Decking,  
Highland Craftsmen Bark Shingle,  
Bark siding by Highland Craftsmen

OPPOSITE PAGE: Earth Plaster by  
American Clay (detail and fireplace  
vignette)



Enviroshake shingle made  
from post-industrial recycled  
plastics.



"Beaver Tail" shingle by  
EcoStar Majestic Slate  
Series.



Enviroshake's composite cedar-shake-like roof shingles



Low or no VOC (volatile organic  
compound) paints by Serena &  
Lily, Benjamin Moore, and ICI's  
Wonder Pure

Want some history with your "green" hardwood floor? Reclaimed wood flooring from manufacturers such as EcoTimber, JG Architectural Supply, Olde Wood Limited, Goodwin Heart Pine, and others look to such sources as old barns and the bottom of lakes to recover beautiful wood that may have been originally harvested centuries ago. John Gasparine, president of Linthicum-based JG Architectural Supply, distributes flooring made from 200-year-old hard woods such as rare American sweet chestnut and antique heart of pine. A history about the wood's origins is supplied with each antique floor the company

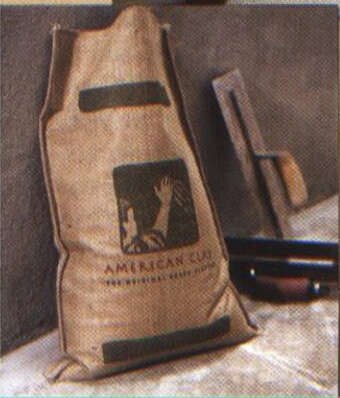
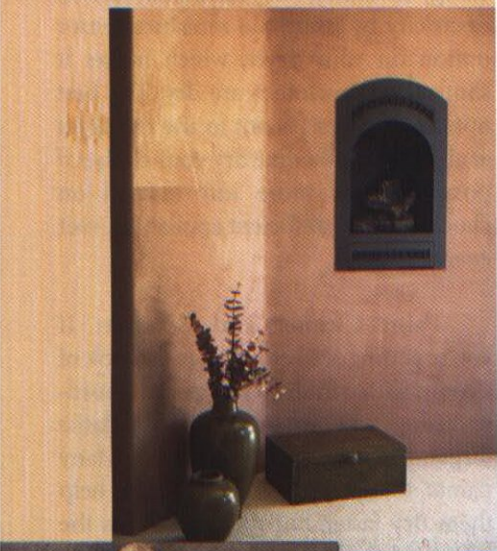
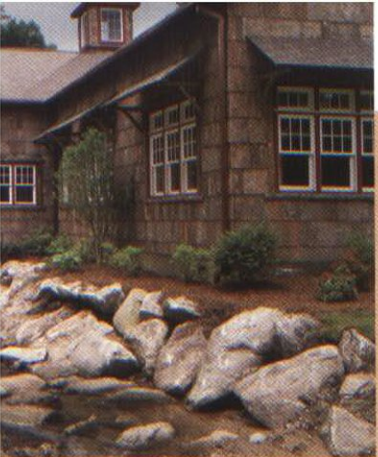
sells. The wood is salvaged from historic buildings, barns, distilleries, and mills constructed prior to the advent of steel—timbers used for structural support were harvested from first growth forests. When it comes to quality, this is a plus, says Gasparine. "These are the trees that were standing when America was founded. Because the trees grew slowly, the wood is much harder and more stable." His company also offers a line of sustainably harvested exotic flooring and a new "green" plywood composed of a bamboo substrate instead of birch or pine.

**Renewable Kitchens:** Floors aren't

the only place where you can install quickly renewing wood products these days. Cabinetmakers also offer kitchens made from sustainably harvested cherry as well as bamboo. Neil Kelly Cabinets, for example, has a line of premier cabinets called the Naturals Collection, which features cabinets made with certified and recycled woods with environmentally-friendly finishes and case materials like quickly-renewing and urea formaldehyde-free wheatboard.

Amicus Green Building Center in Kensington, Maryland offers a closer-to-home option for green cabinets made from wheatboard and bamboo





with sustainably-harvested veneers. At present, however, they only offer custom cabinetry.

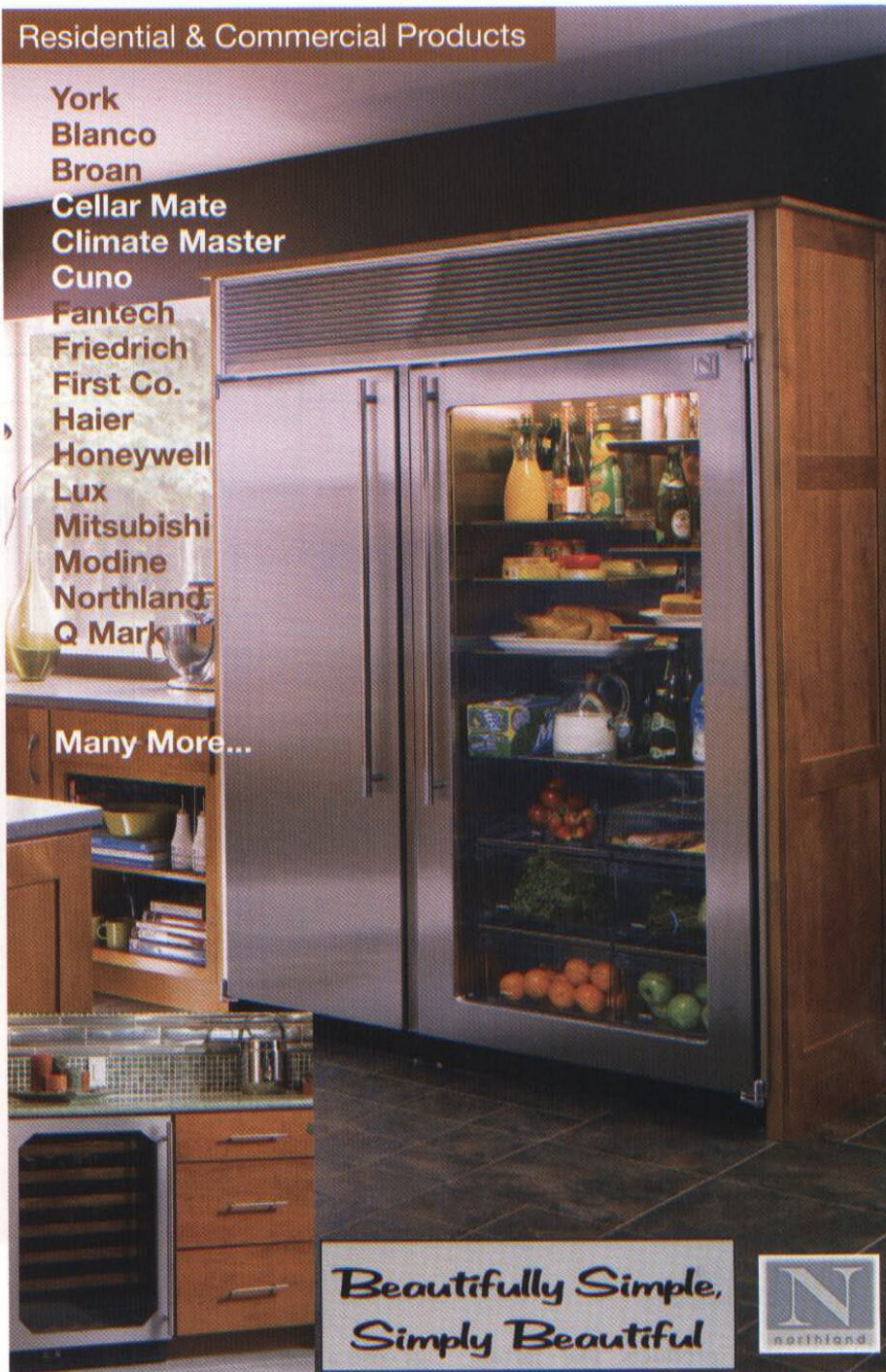
Be sure to check and make sure the cabinets or wood floors you purchase are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which verifies that woods have been harvested and manufactured in an environmentally-friendly way. You can access a listing of FSC-certified wood providers on the Rainforest Alliance web site SmartGuide at [rainforest-alliance.org/greenbuilding](http://rainforest-alliance.org/greenbuilding).

And don't forget you can go green with kitchen countertops, too. You can buy countertops made out of sustain-

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