

Home Green Home

Interior design that's stylish & healthy

BY AMANDA MAREK

Home might be where the heart is, but it's also a place where toxic and unhealthy elements are living in our fabrics, furniture, flooring and more. With green living becoming a household concept, more and more homeowners are not only looking at building sustainable homes, but ways in which they can incorporate eco-friendly interior design.

"The word finally got out and people have woken up to it," says registered interior designer Lyn Falk, who is president of Solterra Studios and Retailworks Inc. in Thiensville, as well as an author, educator and advocate for sustainable design.

"People have been forced to think about it." Falk was forced to think about changing her way of living 12 years ago when she and her husband were renovating their cabin up north. "It hit my immune system. I had respiratory issues from products and had to find alternatives," she says.

Alternatives can be anything from flooring to furniture or fabrics to paints. "For flooring, you have options that are natural products such as cork or bamboo. For both carpet and fabrics, you have recycled product options such as 100-percent recycled polyester," says Jennifer Pecoraro- Striepling, interior designer and owner of JPS Design & Project Management in Sussex. "You can find paint with low-emitting VOCs (volatile organic compounds).

And lighting and appliances are constructed to be high in energy efficiency." Jeff Auberger, owner of Conservation Development, LLC and Preservation Homes in Elkhorn, agrees that you don't have to look very hard to find eco-friendly design alternatives.

"Sherwin-Williams offers two great options for paint — the Pro-Green 200, a very low V.O.C. paint, and Harmony, a no- V.O.C. paint," he says. "They provide great coverage, no odor and easy clean-up." But before you start making drastic changes, consider the following advice from Matthew Tollefsen, kitchen and bath designer at A. Fillinger Inc., a Milwaukee



Green interior design means eco-friendly wall paint and sustainable woods like bamboo flooring and pine cabinets and trim work. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Pecoraro-Striepling, owner/interior designer of JPS Design & Project Management.