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YOUR GUIDE TO ECO-FRIENDLY HOME FURNISHINGS

Interior designer **Jillian Pritchard Cooke** (right) specializes in decorating ideas that are friendly to the environment.



The fireplace area at the home of interior designer Jillian Pritchard Cooke features a mantel reclaimed from another source.



Her curtains are made of eco-friendly and low-cost burlap.



A vase made of rolled and coiled newspapers is next to a lamp made of straw and concrete in Cooke's home.

Photos by **KIMBERLY SMITH/Staff**

living green



By **ALMA E. HILL**
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Living green has gotten red hot. Eco-friendly furniture was showcased last month in the Greenstyle Pavilion at the International Home Furnishings Market in High Point, N.C. HGTV is developing programs that focus on eco-friendly designs, products and lifestyles. And trendy magazines such as *Town & Country*, *Vanity Fair* and *Domino* have devoted entire issues on how to live, eat, decorate and dress green. All this makes Jillian Pritchard Cooke smile. She's used to interest in eco-friendly living spiking around Earth Day, but now being kind to the environment is becoming a way of life 24/7/365. "People like myself in their 40s were there at the

beginning of the Earth Day movement," says Cooke, president of Des-Syn, a national interior design firm that specializes in eco-sensitive residential and commercial spaces. "Scientific reports and global warming are causing folks to jump on the green bandwagon. We're not going away." For Cooke, being kind to Mother Earth starts in her Atlanta home. She selects furnishings made of natural fibers, avoids items with stains that emit toxic fumes, uses interior paint that has no or low volatile organic compounds, cleans with chemical-free detergents and follows the environmentalists' motto to reuse, reduce and recycle. "My favorite thing," says Cooke, "is to look at some-

► Please see **GREEN, HS6**

"My favorite thing is to look at something and say: 'Today you are a foundry wheel, tomorrow you're going to be a lamp.'"

JILLIAN PRITCHARD COOKE, interior designer

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Photos by KIMBERLY SMITH
Above, coffee tables made from Chinese calligraphy stones are a visual anchor in the eco-friendly living room of interior designer Jillian Pritchard Cooke. Above right is a mantel reclaimed from another structure, a coffee table made from skids and a chair that has been reworked and recovered with new fabric.



Green: Furnishings give homes natural feel

Continued from H51

thing and say: "Today you are a foundry wheel, tomorrow you're going to be a lamp. Today you are an oyster rod. Tomorrow you're going to be a coffee table."

Here are other ways, says Cooke, to make a home green:

► When buying upholstered furniture or having it custom made, select fabric that is either organic or 100 percent sustainable, such as cotton, linen, wool, silk, jute, hemp or bamboo.

► Choose furnishings that are finished with a stain that does not contain formaldehyde and a paint with low or no volatile organic compounds.

► Avoid new furnishings that contain foam. "If that sofa does end up in a landfill, you want it to disintegrate," Cooke says. However, if you already own sofas and chairs filled with foam, or acquire ones second hand, it's better to reupholster them in a natural fabric than to throw them out.

► Look for second hand, found or antique objects that can be repurposed or revived in your home.

"If it's vintage, then you've already achieved green integrity because you're recycling, reclaiming and reusing," Cooke explains.

► If you remodeled the kitchen or build a new house, consider cabinets made of hay or forest certified wood.

► Green flooring options include unglazed ceramic or Terra Firma tile, carpet made from 100 percent wool, sisal, jute, seagrass or bamboo.

► Instead of throwing away old jeans, shirts and other garments, use the fabric to cover pillows, make quilts or sew into curtains. For example, old linen and tablecloths can be made into shower curtains.

► Be aware that not everything advertised as green really is.

Products are considered "green-washed" if they have one eco-sensitive benefit, but also contain a host of other negatives that wash out any positive impact on the environment.

Cooke's advice on how to avoid green-washing:

► Ask the retailer for the name of the manufacturer and go online to the company Web site. "Those who are touting what they're doing is environmentally sensitive can back it up," Cooke says.

► Do your homework.

Look for products that come from a certified sustainable forest. Find out the type of paint, stain, fillers and other building materials that were used in production. If the retailer doesn't know, the manufacturer should.

"You've got to ask the questions," Cooke adds. "I don't believe you're ever going to get 100 percent green interiors. The integrity starts with you. If you discover something that's green washed, ask yourself how much green wash it is."

For more eco-friendly tips, check out: "True Green: 100 Everyday Ways You Can Contribute to a Healthier Planet," by Kim McKay and Jenny Bonnin (National Geographic, \$19.95) and www.betruegreen.com.

► Jillian Pritchard Cooke can be reached at www.design.com.



The Cooke home has a sofa covered with linen slipcovers. The floor is made of recovered wood, and the rug is vegetable-dyed wool.



A harp, purchased while on a jaunt for antiques, occupies a ceiling nook at Cooke's home.



A recycled film canister helps create an image of Fred Astaire dancing (on wall).



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