



# Home Improvement **GUIDE**



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# Saving our planet, one home at a time...

By S.A. "Sam" Jernigan  
Interior Designer, IFDA

**B**ack in the day, Kermit was right...it wasn't easy bein' green. But fast forward to our current ecologically-minded climate and the advent of earth-friendly choices are increasing and more readily available than ever before. Here are a few innovative eco products turned up by my own research in the past year. Perhaps you'd like to incorporate one or more into an upcoming project at your residence [or business]:

**American Clay** - natural, healthy-breathing clay mixed with recycled and reclaimed aggregates, and vibrant natural pigments is offered in 40+ colors (custom colors available) to create hand-troweled textured walls. Ready-to-mix formulation and 3 different finishes to choose from. [www.AmericanClay.com](http://www.AmericanClay.com)

**Recycled paper countertops**

**Paperstone composite countertops** (and other brands). Made from post consumer recycled paper content, harder than wood, bonded with a 100% water-based resin system, strong, durable, and hygienic, stain and heat resistant, not hard enough to dull knives, yet dense enough to resist slice marks. *Handsome!* [PaperStoneProducts.com](http://PaperStoneProducts.com)

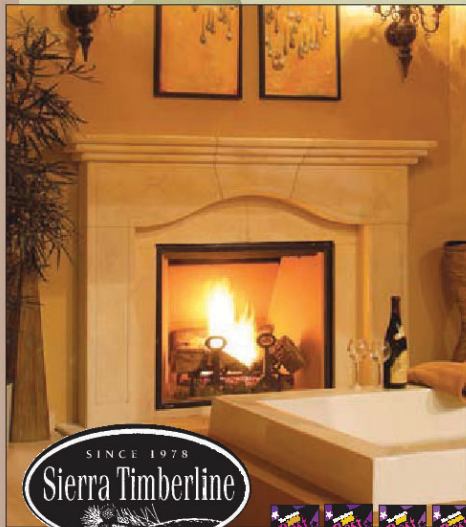
**Cotton building insulation** (Ultra Soft) - Would you believe recycled jeans make a fabulous insulating material? While it does cost appx. 50% more than fiberglass insulation, environmental engineers say this recycled, natural product



My hubby, Thomas Kehrlein, installing radiant barrier for our home in Grass Valley. Within 30 minutes of its summertime installation, the temperature in the kitchen dropped a full 10 degrees. The material was also utilized on our home's subfloors (first floor).

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is worth it to remove toxins and carcinogens from the air, which both trigger asthma and allergies. And, hey, you can install it yourself (soft to the touch!). Made in the USA too.

The manufacturer, Bonded Logic, Inc. also produces **radiant barrier** which is a thin almost aluminum foil type material that is sold in rolls. While I don't recall if this was the actual brand I purchased, nevertheless the radiant barrier installed on my house when it was being built has proven to be an excellent product. Our firsthand report was that as soon as it was staple-gunned on the outside sheathing of our south-facing hilltop home on a hot July day, the interior temperature literally dropped 10 degrees in 30 minutes' time! This material can be applied directly as we did to the exterior OSB and the 3-step stucco process was applied directly on top of it thereafter. We also used it on the first floor of our home to enhance insula-

tion; again it was easily staple-gunned onto the subfloor before padding/carpet as well as underlayment/wood flooring were installed. As my husband and I were owner-builders, we did many of these sorts of tasks ourselves (pic: here he is installing the radiant barrier).

Learn more about these two products at [www.BondedLogic.com](http://www.BondedLogic.com)

**Marmoleum flooring** - made of renewable materials (predominately linseed oil), soft under foot, great sound absorption properties. It's also VOC-free which means there's no off-gassing - important for folks with environmental sensitivity issues. Lots of wonderful design possibilities too, especially with the easy-to-install squares which come in oodles of fresh colors: [www.TheMarmoleumStore.com](http://www.TheMarmoleumStore.com)

**Mold-proof sheetrock** - This unique new "paperless" sheetrock designed to prevent mold is called DensArmor and is manufactured by Georgia-Pacific. Ideal for basements as well as humid climates. Mold can be a serious health hazard so this is a great first defense.

[www.StopFeedingMold.com](http://www.StopFeedingMold.com)

Other renewables you may not have been fully introduced to include wool carpet (definitely worth the extra cost), as well as cork and bamboo flooring. Interestingly, bamboo can also be utilized as a finish building material. A client of mine in Grass Valley had a local carpenter create exquisite master bathroom cabinetry for her utilizing this nearly indestructible and water-friendly material - in fact, special saw blades are necessary to cut bamboo as it's SO much harder/denser than conventional wood. But the end result and durability are definitely worth the extra time and trouble. The final look is organic, fresh, and sleek...but with an underlying warmth always imparted by the use of nature's own materials.

So whether building, remodeling, or just updating your nest, explore these green options along with others you may find on your own. We're all together on this spinning blue orb and when it comes to making ecologically

responsible choices, there's no place like home to begin to "be the change you want to see in the world."

(Ms.) S.A. "Sam" Jernigan, Interior Designer, IFDA, is owner of **Renaissance Design Consultations** (founded in Sonoma County, Sam relocated to Grass Valley in 2004). She has specialized in all aspects of residential interior design (including whole house design and 3D space planning/renderings), retail merchandising, and staging services for the real estate community for 20 years. For more information regarding her services or to read additional decorating articles, visit her website: [www.RdesignConsultations.com](http://www.RdesignConsultations.com).

She has been interviewed as a design expert for articles on AOL, BobVila.com, and TotallyHer.com (owned by Lifetime and Glamour)

Renaissance Design Consultations is a member of the NCCA as well as the Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce and the IFDA (Int'l. Furnishings & Design Assoc.) Business phone: 530.362.1339



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