



Making Your House Greener for 2008

Many people these days are changing their attitudes to favor a life of “enough” rather than a life of “abundance.” Perhaps one can obtain a greater sense of peace by not participating in the headlong race to accumulate the most toys. There has been plenty of media coverage about the rampant consumerism in America which contributes to the wasteful use of the world’s petroleum, water and clean air. If you do not think you are part of the problem, look at your garage that is too full to offer a haven for your car, your crammed dresser drawers and the overflow of clutter on your horizontal surfaces.

Here are some suggestions for using our resources more intelligently:

1. Consider the lifetime cost of a purchase from its fabrication to its delivery to your home to its maintenance. For example, natural stone for counters and floors is shipped from China or Europe and will require regular sealing to maintain its beauty. On the other hand, quartz and stone composite counters, fireplace mantels, and flooring are made in Sacramento and do not require any maintenance.
2. Buy locally made goods. A business in Berkeley makes unique tables and chairs from felled trees in the Bay Area. Another business uses local woods such as Madrone to make beautiful cabinetry for kitchens and offices. Patronizing farmers’ markets supports small family businesses. Most of these fruits and vegetables are trucked shorter distances than the produce in the grocery store. Buying produce when it is in season locally also helps to reduce the energy expended. Imagine the carbon footprint of the banana on your cereal that has been flown in from South America!
3. Using biodegradable cleaning products such as Seventh Generation™, or Simple Green™, baking soda or vinegar protects our streams and the San Francisco Bay from contamination. Car wash businesses must recycle their water and use non-toxic cleaners, making a “paid for” car wash one indulgence that is beneficial to everyone.
4. When you throw something out, it does not go away. There is no “away”. Once our landfills are full, we will face the dilemma of having to truck or ship our trash elsewhere at a steep cost. Contact companies that are sending you junk mail and request to have your name removed from their mailing lists. Select goods with less packaging and get used to taking



*Great Ideas
Come in
Small Packages*

- bags to the grocery store now before we face a plastic bag usage tax or a fee like the consumers in Ireland. Support the businesses using recycled components in their products such as glass tile, glass and concrete countertops, and Flor™ modular carpet tiles.
5. Thousands of barrels of crude oil are consumed every day to make the plastic water bottles in America that are used once and thrown out. If Hetch Hetchy tap water does not suit your palate, carry a reusable water bottle.
 6. If your lawn is more weeds than grass and you do not want to spend your weekends re-sodding it, consider installing artificial turf that lasts 20-25 years without watering, fertilizer or cutting. Alternatively, a consultation with your local nursery will provide a list of drought tolerant California native plants that can replace your sod. Be creative about ways to decrease your water use indoors as well. Installing dual flush toilets and front loading clothes washers may decrease your water usage by 40%!
 7. Begin converting your light fixtures to compact fluorescent bulbs. There are various shaped bulbs to replace those in reading lamps, spotlights, chandeliers and recessed fixtures. Ask your lighting store for the correct bulb. The increased energy efficiency of these over incandescent bulbs has prompted the passage California laws that will mandate conversion to compact fluorescent fixtures state wide in the next few years. It is already required that motion sensors be installed in kitchen and baths in remodels if florescent fixtures are not the primary light source.
 8. Converting your wood burning fireplace to a gas fireplace improves local air quality and provides more efficient heating.
 9. Recycle, re-use or donate the things in your home that you have not used for two or more years. Clearing clutter is a very liberating experience.

To incorporate more green ideas in your next decorating project, contact Jean Cary Interiors at 650-593-9622