



Sustainable—And Chic

Santosh and Praneeta Rao traded in their Jaguar for a hybrid Camry and left the corporate world to live their passion for living green, which included opening the unique Natural Territory showroom in the Scottsdale Airpark. You can get an amazing array of environmentally friendly items here, including furniture, like this all-natural, sustainably harvested solid wood dining table and chairs. Even the table setting is 100-percent recycled glassware and tableware.

Sophisticated Sorghum

Among the many amazing products sold at a.k.a. green, the "eco-friendly building center" in Scottsdale, is Kirei board, made from the stalks left over after the harvest of the sorghum plant. The resulting product is a lightweight, strong board that can be used in a multitude of ways, from wall coverings and furniture to cabinetry and flooring.



A Distinctive Aura

A March 2008 groundbreaking is set for Aura at Camelback, an exciting new development at 25th Street and Campbell designed to achieve a genuine balance between luxury living, lifestyle, sense of community and environmental responsibility. Developed by the innovative Catalyst Communities, Aura on Camelback is on track for LEED Silver certification—one of many indicators is that each of the 36 luxury townhouses at Aura will get 80 to 100 percent of its annual electricity needs from solar power.



going GREEN

Cutting-Edge Condos

Look for two new eco-friendly developments to appear in the Phoenix area this year: 26forty (artist's rendering pictured above) at 2640 North 52nd Street near Camelback Mountain, and 52thirty at—you guessed it—5230 East Oak Street. The green communities are the work of Arizona-based development firm twelve28 and Moran Architects, a leader in environmental design. The projects combine enhanced energy efficiency and resource conservation with the benefits of renewable technology and the use of recycled materials. Both projects are expected to exceed industry-accepted standards and best practices for environmentally sound development.



Green Up Your Kitchen

Another popular product sold at a.k.a. green is IceStone, made from recycled glass and concrete. Strong like granite, not as porous as marble and heat-resistant like stone, this makes the perfect eco-friendly solution for kitchen or bathroom countertops, tabletops, shower surrounds and bathtubs.



Remodels That Rock

Philip Beere of Green Street Development recently completed renovating a 1960s Biltmore Park house to LEED standards, with features that include furniture from Natural Territory (made of Kirei board and bamboo), low-E windows, clean-burning fireplaces and non-formaldehyde bamboo floors. It's the first single-family home west of the Mississippi to go through the LEED For Homes pilot program.



Earth-Friendly Spa Treatments

Even your day at the spa can be good for the environment. The Arizona Biltmore Resort and Spa is creating a green spa experience, using natural and organic products and practices from head to toe, including the presence of clean-burning flameless candles.



Living In Harmony With The Environment

When It Comes To "Green" Products, Let The Buyer Beware

It's become the buzzword of our generation: green. But exactly what does it mean to be green? Mick Dalrymple, co-founder of a.k.a. green in Scottsdale, the Valley's leading supplier of eco-friendly building materials, is concerned about the "greenwashing" of America. "It is important for consumers to know what they are buying," he says. "As green becomes so popular, many marketing departments will increasingly brand their products as green, even if the sustainable aspects are thin or nonexistent." Chad Gifford of Catalyst Communities agrees. "Green building is getting touted by everyone because of global warming, the energy crisis and the rise in oil prices," he says, cautioning the public to understand what it actually means and how it is measured. "It is a third-party certification of a project; you need to quantify and qualify what you're doing." One of the most important ways for builders to do this is to get LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. LEED for Homes is a national green home rating system developed over many years by the U.S. Green Building Council. Dalrymple himself is involved with the National Association of Homebuilders and the International Code Council to write a national standard for green homes. New green building projects are popping up all over the Valley, each of them building to stringent LEED guidelines in hopes of getting certified.

Not building new? You can also remodel with green in mind, either by gutting your whole house and starting over, aiming to achieve LEED status, or just tackle the issue little by little, utilizing the many eco-friendly products on the market. But with products, be very careful. Although plans are being formulated to provide national standards and a rating system for products, like LEED does for buildings and homes, that goal is a number of years away. In general, thinking environmentally friendly can be simple: recycle; consume less and think sustainability; use LED or CFL lights; paint with low or zero-VOC paint; weatherize; install shade on the east and west sides of your home; reduce hardscaping around your home and maybe even consider solar panels. "Phoenix is second only to Perth, Australia in terms of solar collectability," points out Gifford. Did you know that as much as 40 percent of a home's cooling needs is a function of heat coming through window glass? Consider professionally installed spectrally selective heat-blocking window film like V-Kool, which keeps out heat but still lets in light, significantly reducing air conditioning costs. At the very least, check out the wonderful retail locations in the Valley specializing in eco-friendly products and design, like Scottsdale's Twig & Twill at The Borgata, Natural Territory at the Scottsdale Airpark and a.k.a. green. There are even green-thinking interior design firms now, like the Scottsdale-based Elements of Design, who help you incorporate green products into your home in chic and stylish ways. The earth will love you for it!