

GREEN WITH ENVY

135 tips for Earth-friendly living, from kitchens and baths to natural pools
plus: A once-forgotten Costa Rica mansion sets new boundaries in eco-conscious building

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Celebrity Interior
Designer Kari
Whitman's top 10
eco-conscious
kitchen and bath
must-dos

By KARINA TIMMEL

Stage Advice
Whitman had the back wall of the shower in a Hollywood actor's historic Glendale, CA, home assembled from hundreds of recycled tile pieces cut into one-by-one-inch squares. All fixtures are also low-flow from TOTO.



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Kari Whitman was green before anyone even knew what being “green” was

The Boulder, CO-raised and Los Angeles-based owner of **Kari Whitman Interiors** (kariwhitmaninteriors.com), who has designed the homes of celebs like Jessica Alba, Kristen Bell, Emilio Estevez, Don Johnson, and Virginia Madsen, says, “My parents led kind of a hippie lifestyle. I never realized how much waste and indulgence was going on in the world around me until I left my Boulder bubble.” Even in college, Whitman was decorating her dorm room with the environment in mind.

“Whether or not my client is ‘green,’ I’ll always spend my own time researching the greenest way to go. In every project I do—whether it’s a cozy studio apartment or a huge mansion—I always bring in the highest-quality, eco-friendly products available.”

Ready to remodel that kitchen or bath? Whitman reveals that it’s easier than you think to reduce your environmental impact while maintaining a chic look in these essential rooms.



1

CLUED-IN COUNTERTOPS

When designing a kitchen or bath, countertops set the stage for the look and feel of the space. Now more than ever before, there are absolutely gorgeous materials for your surfaces that would otherwise have ended up being dumped into landfills. Consider glass, sustainable stone, and even architectural metal salvages. “**EnviroGLAS**’s Enviroslab countertops (enviroglasproducts.com) look like gorgeous granite, and you’d never believe they’re actually made from recycled mirrors, windows, and even soda bottles,” Whitman says. If you prefer a stone-counter look, check out beauties from **Eco by Cosentino** (ecobycosentino.com), which are made from 75-percent

recycled materials and 25-percent natural stones. And **PaperStone** (paperstoneproducts.com) offers sustainable countertops made out of 100-percent recycled paper, which “look like stone and they’re actually really strong, so they’re perfect for kitchens,” Whitman explains.

Another option is architectural salvage. “Metal grates look great on top of countertops or used as a back-splash. Pounded metals are especially interesting and hip,” Whitman advises. This type of “trash to treasure” is the ultimate way to go green. Before you rip out your old stuff, ask yourself, “Can I repaint this? Restain it? Resurface it?”

Evolving Door

Opposite, the pivoting glass door between the cabinets and refrigerator in the kitchen of a hip, young prince’s Beverly Hills home is made from recycled glass from pulp, with pressed rice paper in between. This stunning feature opens from the kitchen into the dining room. Kangen Water filters and sustainable wood cabinets also were installed. Above, this vintage hood, in the kitchen of a West Hollywood bachelor, was found in an antique store. “To reuse is to recycle, and buying vintage or antique is the ultimate in green,” says Whitman. The cabinets were constructed from sustainable wood and the faucet is low flow.

FLOOR STORY

Bamboo, palm wood, and cork are all eco-friendly flooring options. Some companies, like **Kirei Board** (kireiusa.com), make beautiful, sustainable flooring from a combination of materials, like bamboo and wheat board with low-VOCs (volatile organic compounds). Added bonus: If you choose cork floors, not only does it look really cool, it's also hypoallergenic, so it's great for people with asthma and allergies. "Cork is a naturally renewable resource, and **Nova Flooring** (novaflooring.com) kicks it up a notch in the green department and recycles all byproducts from manufacturing," Whitman says.

TILE FILE

Look for tiles and slabs made from natural stone and environmentally conscious materials. You can find everything from travertine to hand-painted tiles to recycled products. Two options Whitman recommends are **Stone Age Tile** (satile.com) and **Eco-Terr Tiles** (coveringsetc.com/ecoterrhome.aspx).

APPLIANCE MART

Definitely scout out Energy Star-rated appliances, which use less energy and help prevent greenhouse emissions. "The best companies also restrict the use of hazardous substances and chemicals in the production of their products," Whitman notes. She recommends using **Green Building Advisor** (greenbuildingadvisor.com) as a fantastic resource to make sure you're buying from companies that are truly green.





5 NEED A FILTER

Save the Earth from your bottled-water habit by installing a water filtration system in your kitchen. “**Kangen Water** (enagic.com) machines transform your tap water, balance its pH levels, and can even work wonders on your skin,” Whitman says.

6 BATH PRODUCTS

Luxury toilets, faucets, and bathtubs can be “green,” too. “**TOTO**’s products (totousa.com) are so incredibly elegant and they really think of the big picture when it comes to manufacturing. They even use soybean-based hydraulic oil to fuel their factory forklifts,” Whitman raves.

7 PAINTERLY WAYS

White, gray, and black with hints of metallic are very cool right now—think modernized Venetian plasters, shimmering with flecks of metal. Whitman advises to look for zero-VOC, lime-based plasters. “Eco-friendly paint is not only important for people; it’s important for your pets, too. Paints with zero-VOCs reduce emissions, meet LEED standards, and eliminate all those nasty toxins,” she says.

Reuse

Above, The cabinets in this luxe bathroom in Beverly Hills are made from recycled wood, as is the bathtub surround. The faucets, tub, and toilet are all from eco-conscious TOTO. Whitman installed solar energy to run the sauna. Bottom left, Whitman had antique cabinets installed in this Asian-inspired West Hollywood home’s bathroom to accommodate its fixtures. Bottom right, The home’s “love tub” (which accommodates up to eight guests) has low-flow faucets, as does the toilet.

ETHICAL ACCESSORIES

You can find all sorts of cool kitchen and bathroom accessories made from recycled and upcycled goods. Choosing items made in the USA is a great way to cut down on emissions caused by long-distance shipping (and to fuel American jobs). You can go even more local and choose unique art, furniture, and accessories handcrafted by artisans in your hometown or region.

WALL WEAR

"I love going outside the box and covering kitchen stools, dining chairs—even walls—with pleather," Whitman says. Available in everything from rich chocolate browns to faux ostrich, pleather is a cruelty-free alternative to leather that's also green. "Animal production leaves a huge eco-footprint with its carbon emissions and major use of fossil fuels, water, and land ... Even better, if you spill a glass of red wine or your pets slobber all over it, just wipe it clean with a sponge," Whitman says.

BE RADIANT

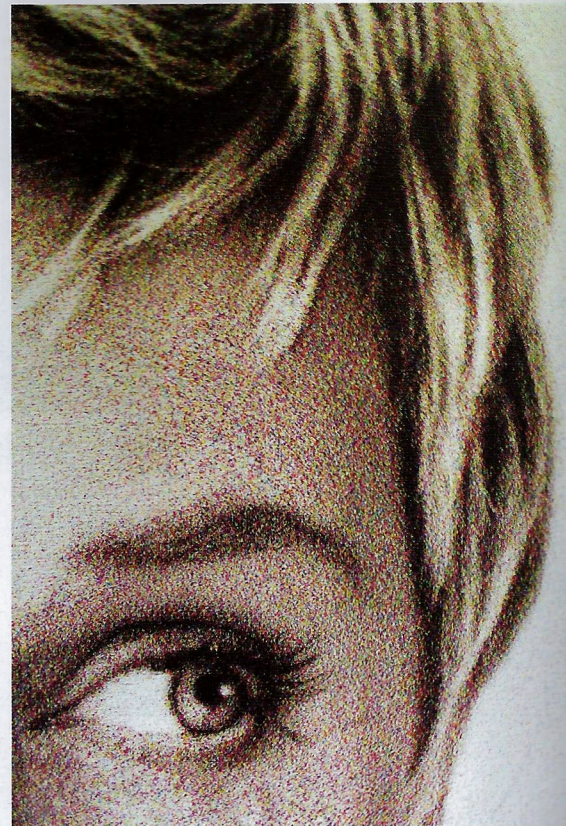
Radiant heat takes up less energy, as it warms water to also heat your home. "Plus, who doesn't love a warm bathroom floor underfoot on a cold morning?" Whitman asks. **OIH**



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FRIENDLY FINDS: It's easy to be green in other areas of your home



1

1. Billboard Beauty

Doreen Catena "I C U," \$600, dordesignonline.com. This 43-by-30-inch work of art is handmade in the U.S. from old billboards.

2. Sitting Pretty

Sifas lounge chair, \$4,850, sifasusa.com. A cute seat is made by using electro polishing to reduce the effects of air pollution, while the low-carbon footprint materials are durable and recyclable.

3. Eco Pups

Greener Pup large round bed in "Earth," \$89.99, greenerpup.com. Kari Whitman's eco-friendly designer pet bed is custom made in the USA.

4. Hit Snooze

Pluunk bunk bed, \$4,400, pluunk.com. Your kids will pass this bed down to their little ones with its high-quality hardwood and ply with environmentally sound whey-based finishes.

5. Hot Spot

Sunlighten infrared sauna, starting at \$3,999, sunlighten.com. Made from eco-friendly woods and assembled with magnets to avoid VOC-heavy glues, this sauna uses no more electricity than a hair dryer.

5. All Fired Up

John T. Unger sculptural firebowl, \$3,000, johntungers.com. This outdoor decorative gem is made from 100-percent recycled steel and designed to last for generations.

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