



REDECORATING *Au Naturel*

Mirroring today's simpler lifestyles, home décor is more down-to-earth in lieu of opulent and flashy – and not just in terms of going “green.” Homeowners are refocusing values on subtlety and comfort instead of what’s new and abuzz. Keeping up with the Joneses is no longer primary; now it’s about expressing personal style – tastefully.

Possibly attributed to the “organic” craze, this shift is complemented by natural materials’ beauty, craftsmanship, colors and textures. Think mother-of-pearl wallpaper, twig chandeliers, wood-pulp lamp shades, or sisal rugs. Imagine bamboo in fabric, flooring and walls paired with fossils, rocks and horns of all types – architectural elements, which add personal color and natural bling.

Here are ways to tastefully integrate natural materials into the home:

Flooring/Carpeting

Consider fibers made of recycled everything – from cardboard to corn sugar and plastic-bottle ingredients. With car-

pet being notorious for emitting harmful toxins and trapping in dirt, dust, and allergens, your bonus: improved air quality.

Reclaimed (barn) wood is a unique choice. Bamboo delivers beauty, durability, and easy maintenance using a simple water/vinegar mix. Cork absorbs sound while looking good in high-traffic areas. Recycled glass tiles brighten a room and get people talking. Stone is wonderful in bathrooms; it doesn’t warp if it gets wet, and is one of the most durable natural options that will last forever.

Add warmth to floors with natural-material rugs such as jute or hemp; vegetable dyes are now used to provide colors for stunning patterns.

Wallpaper/Coverings

Textured materials such as metal, leather, embossed vinyl, or cork add dimension and an architectural feel. Create faux wall finishes using recycled paper that take advantage of making old into new.

Specifics? “Stark makes wallpaper covered in mother-of-pearl shells,” says Charlotte’s Studio 21’s Connie Knowles Morgan. “Schumacher has a very cool wallpaper that is a rhomboid pattern with the wood’s grain creating a spectacular look. There is also a crocodile-textured wall covering by Valtex.”

Furniture/Fabrics

Natural-material furnishings go center-stage with sophisticated design and shape. There are many choices besides wood such as bamboo and natural-fiber rattan. Experts predict heavy, distressed wood; shearing; burnished leathers; and other such materials will be prominent, but none more so than fur – real or faux – as a much-desired element. Organic cotton, hemp and bamboo are natural fabric choices; wool, silk, jute, and recycled polyester are options, with Tencel® becoming more prevalent in window treatments due to drapability and as a lovely silk substitute. Many designs are nature-inspired, with striking florals and leaf patterns.

Pillows

Inexpensively update throw pillows by sewing or hot-gluing on wooden beads, shells, and raffia. Be creative: express yourself! Colors of choice will be vibrant citrus shades, dramatic reds, and corals. Another idea: fur again rules for pillows.

Sinks

Copper is 100% natural, providing that aesthetic for bathrooms, kitchens and bars while being just as durable as stainless steel.

Tile

There are fabulous leather and bamboo styles available – gorgeous, not to mention incredibly durable. Also, look toward bumpy, textured, patterned, or metallic glass.

Countertops

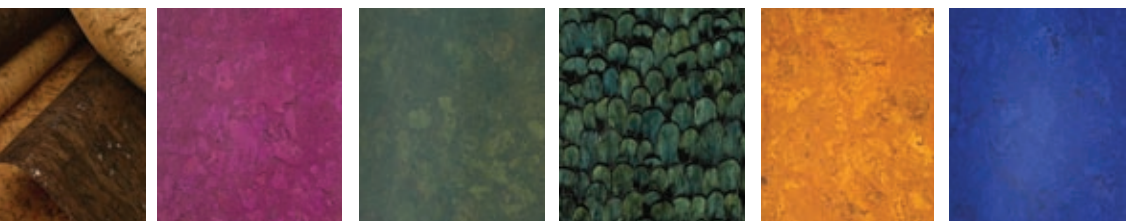
Bamboo and concrete both lend themselves to durability and “greenness.”

Extras

Get to know natural materials, such as bamboo towels and wool comforters. You’ll be surprised by how healing they are for your body compared to synthetic chemicals.

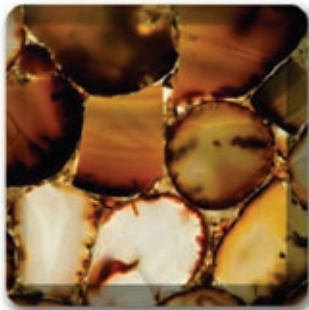
Go Natural Your Way

More natural homes are meant to feel good and live well while reflecting both nature and the homeowner. The bottom line for a warm, natural home: Create a space that works for you.

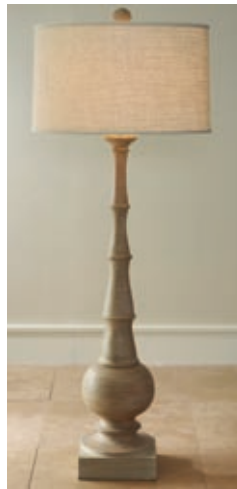




The wood grain wall covering uses matte and iridescent inks to create an luminous moiré in five rich colors. Constructed with natural fibers of organic cotton, bamboo and hemp, all patterns coordinate and are available in seven colors. **starkcarpet.com. Stark Carpet. 704-588-8842.**



The Prexury Collection by Cosentino merges the natural beauty of semi-precious stones, petrified woods, and fossils with modern technology to create an extremely durable surfacing material that sets a new standard of décor, elegance and sophistication. Available in twelve colors. **consentino.com. Stone Systems of the Carolinas. 704-238-1659.**



The banister floor lamp by Global Views incorporates natural elements into any room with a substantial wood base and crisp linen shade. Shown in the scratched white finish. **globalviews.com. Lucy & Company. 704-342-6655.**



Nature inspires a peaceful, relaxing, airy, clean and inspirational space filled with hues, colors and textures of our beautiful world. A vintage rug, woven tapestry, embroidered fabric, natural silks and cotton linens, light colored wood pieces all bring the essence of our beautiful outdoors inside. **frontdoorfabrics.com. Front Door Fabrics. 704-844-6330.**



These cork tiles are sized 12x12" and 12"x24". This pattern can be done in smaller sizes and can be installed for flooring or wall use. The colors used are Olivewood and Bleached. **corkfloor.com. Metropolitan Kitchen & Bath. 704-334-2002.**



The distinctive Flint Side Table is an architectural form of natural materials. The organic nature of the materials, when paired with strong lines and a graphic shape, create a handsome and uncomplicated side table. Made from limestone and wrought antique brass. **mcguirefurniture.com. McGuire Furniture.**

With a Bamboo shade, the Hanalei Bay collection brings the tropics indoors in style. Fixture Height: 15" by 30". **forecastlgt.com. Lighting and Bulbs Unlimited. 704-845-8844. 704-602-0150.**



With humanely gathered feathers, arranged by hand on non-woven paper backed panels, the Montauk wallcovering is crafted entirely by hand using all natural feathers. This textured wallcovering offers a sense of luxury and beauty that can only come from nature. **feschumacher.com. Studio 21. 704-376-1701.**

Realstone Systems is a natural stone alternative to composite/faux stone products, for beautiful green living. Realstone is ideal for any interior, exterior, residential and commercial project that you can imagine. **realstonesystems.com. Classic Stone Creations. 704-525-2580.**



Teragren's hard and durable alternative to traditional butcher block delivers an intriguing and subtle parquet pattern of end-grain bamboo into modern kitchens. **teragren.com. Teragren. 800-929-6333.**



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