

House to Home Artisans' touch

Handmade furnishings lend a rustic touch to a home makeover



Native Trails invests in the remarkable warmth and craftsmanship of products made by hand with sustainable and reclaimed materials.

Q. We are in the process of building a cabin in the woods, a dream we have had forever. As much as possible, we are using reclaimed wood and any other salvaged materials to complete the rooms. Have you any sources or ideas for the kitchen and bathroom? – Hannah and Doug

A. I admire your adventurous spirit and know how it feels to make a dream like this come true. I have been renovating an 800-year-old villa and farmhouse in Tuscany for three years now, and have taken countless trips to stone quarries and salvage sites as well as every kind of flea market and roadside sale to gather material and

furniture for my new home. While scouting the Internet, I came across Native Trails, (www.nativetrails.net), a company that produces the most stunning sinks and cabinets. In their words, the pieces are artisan crafted from natural and sustainable materials such as copper, concrete and reclaimed wood. Here are some ideas and innovations you will want to check out.

For the kitchen, they have handmade concrete sinks that are reinforced with jute fiber, a material that is extremely strong and sustainable. These sinks are about 40 percent lighter than standard concrete and are easy-care. Antique and hammered copper sinks styled as farmhouse sinks and trough sinks are handsome and practical, and they have a true hand-hewn quality that is earthy and engaging. Their antique copper and brushed nickel range hoods are unique and provide professional-grade ventilation.

For the bathroom, vanities and mirrors are made by artisans from reclaimed wine-making materials and reclaimed barnwood. The Bordeaux wall mount shown here is made from a reclaimed wine barrel. Their Baby Classic undermount oval sink is available in antique copper or a hand-dipped brushed nickel finish. The Bordeaux mirror frame is made from reclaimed wine barrel tops, and each frame has a unique barrel maker's stamp on it. You'll get that "wow" factor combined with craftsmanship and sustainability – a good fit for your handmade home.

Q. I have a '50s-era home. The bathroom has tiles in pink with black tile edges. Over the sink is a large chrome and glass mirror with small compartments below the mirror for medicine cabinet stuff. It's in poor shape, and I want to replace the whole unit. But I am overwhelmed by the choices available. Can you recommend an option or two? – Frances

A. The '50s style lends itself to today's clean modern pieces, but also looks great with rustic chic, so you do have some interesting options. I agree you should start from scratch. It's helpful to find a product that is new and different that you really like. Then you can build on that. Check out the new LED-lit mirrors; they are slim and give movie camera quality light. Everyone looks fab in these mirrors. On either side of the mirror hang modern open shelves for lotions, soaps and pretty bath products. These containers and the wonderful scents they give off add an inviting feeling of luxury to a bathroom. Open shelves are practical and look great as long as they are not overly cluttered. Fill a basket with the hair dryer and other bathroom necessities and keep this in the vanity.

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