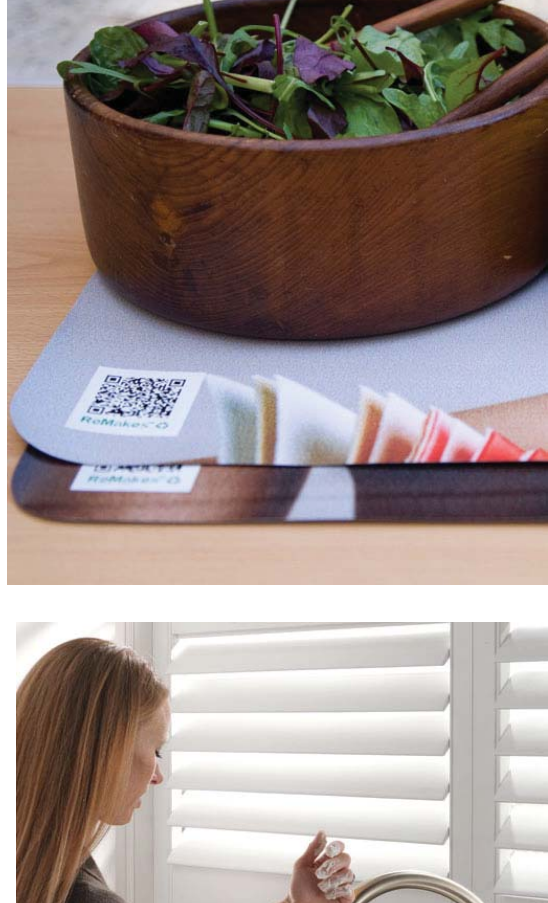
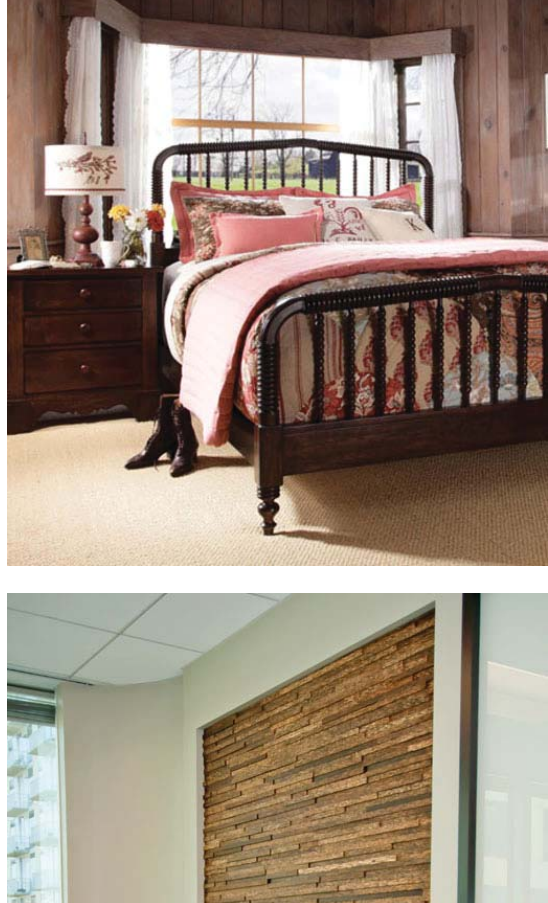
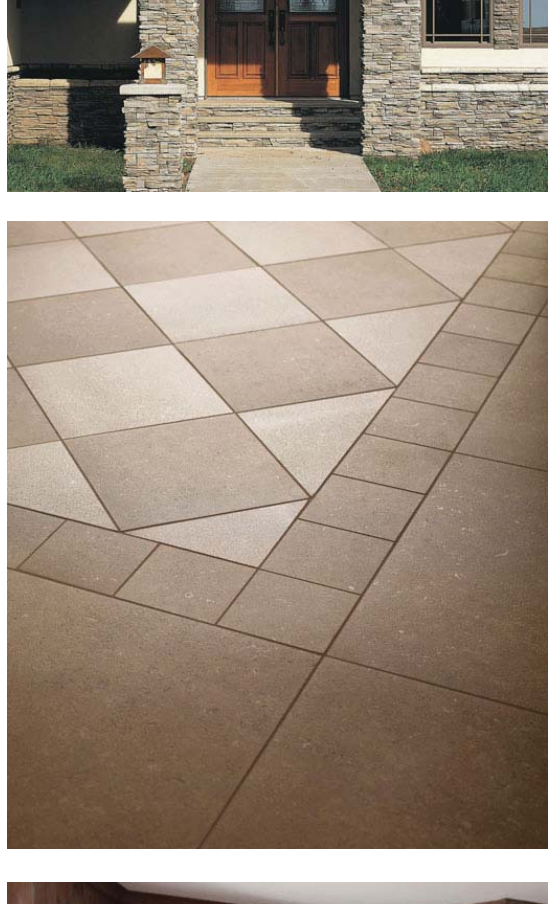
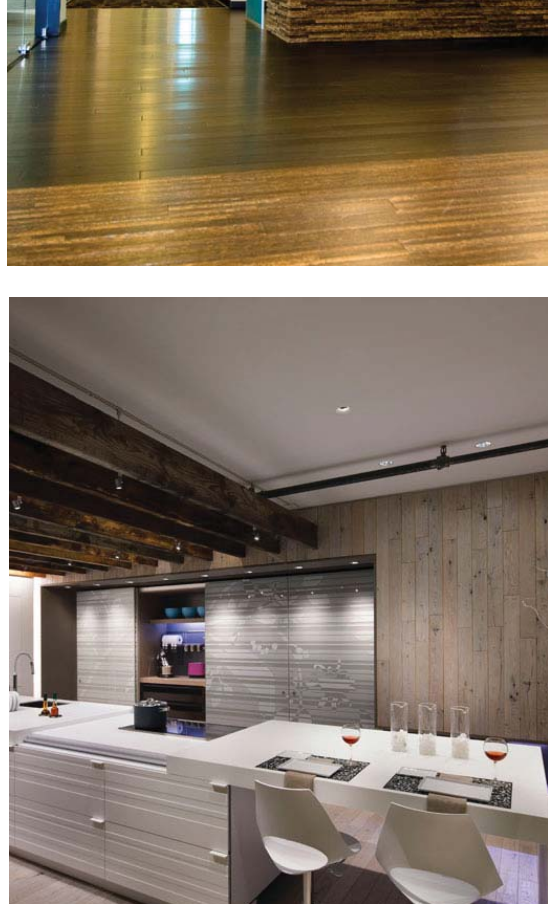


# Saluting Sustainable Designs: Innovative Green Design Award Winners

by Vicki DiStefano with reporting by Holly J Coley and Nancy Meyer  
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*New York House* salutes the winners of its third annual Innovative Green Design Awards competition, which concluded on Aug 10. This year, the judges found a lot of new technology and improved design among the entries. Ultimately, the winners were those with minimal environmental impact in their manufacturing processes, products that reduced consumption of water or electricity, and items that creatively used recycled materials.

The panel of independent judges, which included Paulette Cole, CEO and Creative Director of ABC Home; Paul Gleicher, LEED AP, founder of Gleicher Design Group; Robin Wilson, author, ecofriendly and healthy space interior designer, Robin Wilson Home; Doug Mazeffa, Research Director for Greenopia, and Cheryl Terrace, owner of Vital Design, Ltd., debated the merits and shortcomings of each entry. In some cases, the judges found whole categories to be lacking, as was the case in building materials and plumbing fixtures. In other categories, such as lighting, they found a lot to praise in terms of technology and aesthetics, which resulted in multiple awards.

As more 'sustainable' products come to the market, educating the consumer is crucial, judges pointed out, because certain marketers are simply slapping a green label on their products rather than truly reducing their carbon footprints. The judges scrutinized each product for 'green washing' and other marketing gimmicks. As a counterpoint to this, the panel singled out one manufacturer, Kincaid Furniture, for its transparency in labeling. Kincaid's Eco Home environmental footprint label describes all that went into the product's manufacturing; its water, electricity, materials use, and waste created. In fact, Mazeffa stated "I wish every product in the world had that label."

Each entry met strict criteria—that it have a defining green, sustainable attribute (in design, material, increased energy efficiency, or reduced embodied energy) and/or be made in a sustainable way; and it must be on the market less than two years. The judges also took into account the aesthetics, functionality, creativity of its use, and affordability. The judges carefully scrutinized each product to ensure it was new and innovative, not merely an old product wrapped in new packaging or marketing.

The winners of each category are as follows:

In the bedding category Coyuchi was declared the winner for the company's Lattice Coverlet, woven from 100 percent organic cotton in smooth and waffle textures and backed with flannel. It is offered in a variety of colors, and produced in India. Coyuchi was the first company to bring organic bedding to the U.S. The company's product process is certified by the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). Judges applauded the Coyuchi's commitment to sustainability and the design of the product itself.

"At one point textiles were bland and blander and now we're having the fashion aspect to your basic textile," Wilson said. The only concern raised was Mazeffa's that "organic wool and organic cotton aren't really that green" because of the amount of energy it takes to make these products, a process he called "carbon-intensive." In the end, all agreed that this product and company deserved recognition.

In flooring, the overall category award was given to Smith and Fong, (makers of Plyboo) for its Deco Palm flooring, made from sugar palm. Terrace was initially concerned that the product was not FSC certified, but Wilson explained that the palms the company used were naturally renewable.

"You have to, with mango wood and coconut palm, cut them down after their fruit bearing years, and replant the tree," explained Wilson. "They're going to cut them down anyway. That's why it's FSC in general, because you have to cut it down so that the new tree produces fruit." Beyond the material, the functionality and aesthetics also impressed the judges.

Another impressive flooring entry earned an honorable mention--Crossville's Bluestone porcelain tile, for innovation and the company's commitment to sustainability. The tiles were inspired by the look of natural stone and are available in eight styles, including Colorado Buff Honed and Vermont Black Cross-Sheen. They contain 20 percent of post-consumer recycled materials.

In the furniture category, Bazzo was honored for its GAIA TECH kitchen line, made from recycled and laminated wood from certified areas. Laminates and aluminums are non-toxic. Designed to conceal the kitchen and let users have an adaptive space overall, Gaia Tech was described by the judges as "handsome," "modern," "versatile," and "innovative."

In the interior finish category, Crossville took the award for its Mixology line. Mixology tiles replicate cast metal sculptural pieces as affordable and earth-friendly tile. Cole applauded the company not only for its green effort but for "trying to create a design statement." Wilson agreed: "We've seen porcelain; we have not seen this." Smith and Fong Company took in another award, an honorable mention for its DecoPalm paneling, made of the same sustainable wood as its flooring.

The judges chose Miele's Futura Series Dishwasher as winner of the kitchen appliances category. "Miele's a phenomenal company," said Terrace. This dishwasher was loaded with new features that impressed the judges including a heat sensor that adjusts the temperature of the water to the temperature of the surrounding air, and an auto-dry function which opens the dishwasher door during the drying cycle to allow the heat out. However, Wilson noted that no one wants hot steam coming out into the kitchen during hot seasons. Regardless, Wilson noted its many positive attributes including how quiet the machine is while running. Terrace agreed that avoiding noise pollution was an asset. Mazeffa pointed out that 90 percent of a dishwasher's environmental impact comes from its water and electrical use, and this product's conservation of resources was exemplary.

Because of an overwhelming number of lighting entries, the judges chose to break the lighting category into four categories; interior lighting, exterior lighting, recessed lighting, and lighting controls. For interior lighting, Human-Scale earned the overall award for its new series of LED task lamps, Element 790, Horizon LED, and Element Vision. The judges loved the leading-edge LED technology, the color of the light produced, the style of the lamps, as well as the electricity-saving occupancy sensor, available in Element Vision.

In outdoor lighting two winners were selected, one for pathway lighting and one for decorative lighting. For pathway lighting the judges chose ILOS Corporation's Meteor Solar LED. Although the product is expensive (\$743 per unit), the judges applauded its energy efficiency and light spread the LED gives off, which they felt was the right amount of downward-directed light, which won't cause light pollution. "I have a huge thing against light pollution. There are so many resorts or places where the lights are just inappropriate," Terrace remarked. Allsop's Solar Tea Lamp took the award for exterior decorative lighting, thanks to its design, versatility, and uniqueness. A small, solar powered lamp, the Allsop Solar Tea Lamp impressed the judges as affordable and practical in many applications. "You could have a party and carry the lanterns...or put them down a path," Wilson said.

For recessed lighting the judges awarded USAI Lighting top honors for its BeveLED. The judges loved the BeveLED's versatility with wall wash, downlight, and adjustable capabilities. They also really appreciated that the driver can be swapped out as LED technology advances, rather than forcing the consumer to replace the whole system.

For lighting controls Lutron Electronics took top honors with the C.L Dimmer Family. These multi-use light dimmers can dim a mixed load of light sources (i.e. LED and halogen or CFL and LED bulbs) on the same circuit. Available in both wall models and credenza model for table lamps, Lutron's dimmers truly are leading-edge in energy conservation and will help encourage the use of CFLs and LEDs, the judges pointed out.

In the 'other' category two winners were selected. Bronzecraft was the overall winner with The Smart Window Sensor, a solar powered, wireless communication device for remote monitoring of room conditions, window security, and window performance. The sensor reports solar gain and thermal loss data via RFID signal to allow the HVAC system to evenly adjust the room temperature across all micro climates. Mazeffa felt that this product could be a "pretty awesome product for a lot of buildings... could lower energy footprints."

Eton was awarded an honorable mention for its TurboDyne series, a collection of crank powered safety devices such as Road Torq, a self-powered spotlight and the Axis and Rover, crank powered AM/FM/NOAA emergency radios. The judges felt that there was a great potential for these products, and they could be beneficial for travel or in an emergency situation.

In the building materials category the judges decided to award no winner, but an honorable mention to CertainTeed Corporation for its Landmark Solaris Platinum reflective roofing shingles. These shingles reflect solar heat, lowering roof temperature by up to 40 percent. The judges awarded honorable mention to the product for its new design innovation, such as dark colors for reflectivity, and high recycled content, but weren't sold on the effectiveness of the product since it's so new. Terrace said, "It needs to be tested over time, but more companies need to get on the market, and it can be the alternative to buying asphalt shingles."

There was no overall winner in the plumbing fixtures category. The judges stated that water conservation is an essential part of being sustainable and innovative, and they felt it was wrong to award products that encourage long showers or wasteful water practices. Because all new plumbing fixtures have to meet EPA's WaterSense standards, judges found several instances of exaggerated claims with few distinctive, innovative features. Even so, the judges gave an Honorable Mention to Delta Faucet for its Addison lavatory and kitchen faucets, touch-powered timed faucets, which the judges said deserved merits for greatly reducing water waste and for being accessible to many demographics, including the disabled, children and older adults. This was particularly interesting, as these attributes can be hard to find for residential applications, judges pointed out.

Other Honorable Mentions awarded were;

ReMakes placemats by ViaMaris Partners, made from reclaimed billboards and movie posters, which won the award for best use of recycled materials. Judges loved the unique designs, which could include movie stars or recognizable text from advertising, and felt they can be used as a design statement.

Kincaid furniture was given the Award for Transparency for its Eco Home Promise environmental footprint label (located on all of its products), which lets consumers know the energy and water consumption the manufacturing of the product created, as well as carbon dioxide emissions and waste created.

The judges pointed out how much more difficult it is for the consumer to be green in this economic environment. Wilson said, "The biggest issue is the economy and people having to make choices on what they can afford." With that in mind Gleicher stated "I hope this [green] doesn't become a fad, and it becomes something that we have to deal with and we want to deal with."