

# YOUR HOME



**FOR SAFE AND  
SUSTAINABLE  
RENOVATIONS**

## **BUILD IT RIGHT, THE FIRST TIME**

“Disaster DIY” host **Bryan Baemler** speaks on fixing reno mishaps—and how you can avoid them.

PHOTO: HGTV, BACKGROUND: ISTOCK.COM

**Water wasters**  
How your bathroom and kitchen can conserve H2O



**Property inspection**  
How to pick the best expert to examine your home



**Paint it green**  
Melissa Davis' tips on environmentally friendly decor

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## CHALLENGES

TIP

1

SOME PAINT, A GREAT VISION AND A LITTLE TLC CAN REALLY INCREASE THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME



Beautifying your **indoor** space doesn't have to be hazardous for the **outdoor** environment. When it comes to decor and renovations, know your **“green” options.**

## What does “green” really mean?

Second only to “organic,” “green” is arguably the most used and least understood product label, especially in the home improvement industry.

We tend to use the word as an absolute when in fact it's a comparison based on which product causes less harm to the planet. Consequently, while there really are no “green” home improvement products, there are some that are “green-er” than others and choosing them can have significant benefits when we renovate. Bamboo flooring, for example, is not “green”, but it can be a “green-er” choice when compared to teak hardwood. Dual flush toilets are not “green”, but they can be a “green-er” choice when compared to traditional single flush systems.

Today, with the increasing number of earth-friendly material and product options and falling prices, we can all make “green-er” choices when renovating. And, with ever increasing energy costs, a possible link between poor indoor air quality and the ris-

ing rate of allergies, and concern over declining natural resources, we should all make “green-er” choices. Green-er Renovation Dictionary Here is a starter list of terms to help make shopping for “green-er” home improvement materials, products and professionals easier.

■ **Sustainable:** A label given to products made from materials that are renewably-grown and harvested. Cork flooring is a sustainable option as it is made from just bark trimmed from older homes or a visit to your local Habitat for Humanity Re-Store are great places to stretch a renovation dollar and make “green-er” choices.

■ **Reclaimed:** A label given to products that are salvaged and re-used to reduce the need to harvest new materials. Reclaimed lumber from older homes or a visit to your local Habitat for Humanity Re-Store are great places to stretch a renovation dollar and make “green-er” choices.

■ **Water saving:** A label given to faucets and fixtures that use less water per use than traditional types. A typical Canadian family can reduce their water usage by



Carl Mascarenhas  
Casa Guru

### MY BEST TIPS

#### To renovate “greener”

■ **Provincial rebates:** Tap into incentives like the Ontario Power Authority's (OPA) \$650 for an ENERGY STAR qualified central heating or cooling systems.

■ **Municipal rebates:** Cities like North Vancouver offer a \$50 rebate to upgrade from a 13-litre toilet to a six-litre water saving toilet.

■ **microFIT:** Get paid by the Ontario government to generate electricity from solar cells installed on your roof.

125,000 litres a year by installing efficient toilets, faucets and showerheads.

■ **Energy saving:** A label given to products that lose less energy to a home's exterior. Since 15 to 20 percent of a home's energy is lost via doors and windows consider upgrading to windows with Low-Emissivity (Low-E) coatings because they keep heat on the inside.

■ **Energy efficient:** A label used by products that consume less energy to be as effective as traditional options. LED light bulbs can last six times as long, cost half as much to operate and don't contain the toxin, mercury, unlike Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs (CFL).

■ **Low VOC:** A label for products that release less Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), known toxins, than traditional options. Low or Zero VOC interior paints are widely available today and offer the same finish quality without the health hazard.

■ **Carbon neutral:** A label used by companies that buy enough carbon credits to offset the carbon they release to the atmosphere from manufacturing or construction projects.

## A little elbow grease goes a long way

**Kimball Sarin of Bosley Real Estate has sage advice for the home buyer: do a thorough home inspection (you don't want to end up with a dud), buy ugly, and decorate—not renovate.**

“I tell my clients that decorating is all about putting their finishing touches. It is not renovating, which involves fixing structural problems, and can cost serious money,” he explains.

He has used this mantra successfully when buying income properties for his own portfolio, he reveals.

“It amazes me that home buyers don't want to do anything,” he says. “What happens is that they have to elbow other buyers out of the way for the same staged property, just for the privilege of paying way over asking price.”

Sarin shares two examples of clients who bought ugly, and, with a little bit of money and elbow grease, ended up creating a very attractive return on their investment.

### Property #1:

A few weeks ago, Sarin sold a semi that had been a rooming house in a former life. The owners, who bought the house in 2006, were very handy, and did most of the work themselves. Built in the 1920s, it was run down, had a tiny kitchen and unfinished basement. For about \$25,000, the new owners rewired the house, finished the basement, and reconfigured part of the ground floor layout to create a beautiful kitchen. They kept the original details that gave the house character. The second floor was repainted, and carpets pulled up to reveal wooden floors which were sanded and polished.

Advertised for \$479,000, the property sold for \$60,000 over asking.

### Property #2:

This was not only a two-bedroom detached house, it also had a 1950s kitchen, and came with a lot of junk, remembers Sarin. He, along with the owners, rolled up their sleeves to clean the house, offloading a lot of the clutter and old furniture. The



Kimball Sarin  
Bosley Real Estate

“It amazes me that home buyers don't want to do anything.”

interior of the house was painted cream, with white ceilings. The external stone cladding was painted olive and the front door was given a dramatic black finish.

The kitchen was cleaned up and left old, as a period touch. Total costs

came to about \$5,000, but the house sold for \$20,000 over asking.

### Quick decorating ideas

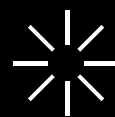
Homeowners can do simple things to increase their home's value, says Sarin.

■ **Kitchen:** change the lighting, redo counter tops, use new handles for cupboards. If necessary, turn the cupboard doors inside out, and paint.

■ **Bathroom:** change the sink, install a new vanity, and if possible, paint the bathtub. Paint over old wall tiles with a modern colour. Invest in a good quality showerhead and buy a classy shower curtain.

■ **Basement:** drywall the basement, install potlights, and use laminate flooring. The one non-negotiable is that basements must have high ceilings, says Sarin.

INDRANI NADARAJAH  
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### WE RECOMMEND



**Water wasters**  
How your kitchen and bathroom can conserve water.

PAGE 6

“We use the second highest amount of water per person in the world—an astounding 336 litres a day!”

**Home inspectors** p. 5  
How to find the best pro for your home inspection.

**Contractor essentials** p. 7  
Looking for the right person for the job? Be sure to ask the right questions!

## MEDIA PLANET

YOUR HOME  
1ST EDITION, MARCH 2011

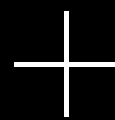
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### DON'T MISS!

Ramp up your “curb appeal”

### Celebrating the great outdoors

With an emphasis on healthy lifestyles, entertaining, cooking and design flair, expect the garden to be the new “chic” gathering space for friends and family this summer.

Landscape designers will be focusing on outdoor kitchens, and extensive seating areas surrounded by vibrant and fragrant plants.

### Hot hot hot!

From cushions to crotons, look out for tropical colors this season. Some new plants to check out include: PowWow Wild Berry Coneflower, Tie Dye Clematis and Double Zahara Zinnia.

### Food for thought

It seems everyone is thinking about the “grow-local” trend. Look out for a dramatic rise in the popularity of growing your own herbs, vegetables and fruit—the kitchen garden returns!

### Garden gadgets

Yes, Fuchsias are on Facebook and teak tables are being Tweeted about. Welcome to a new generation of garden enthusiasts! New trends may be propagated this year with the touch of a screen.

### Green for life

Many studies have shown the importance and benefits of connecting children with nature. Leaving a legacy will be an important trend this year, encouraging children to garden, plant trees, sow seeds, eat freshly picked peas and simply get their hands dirty!

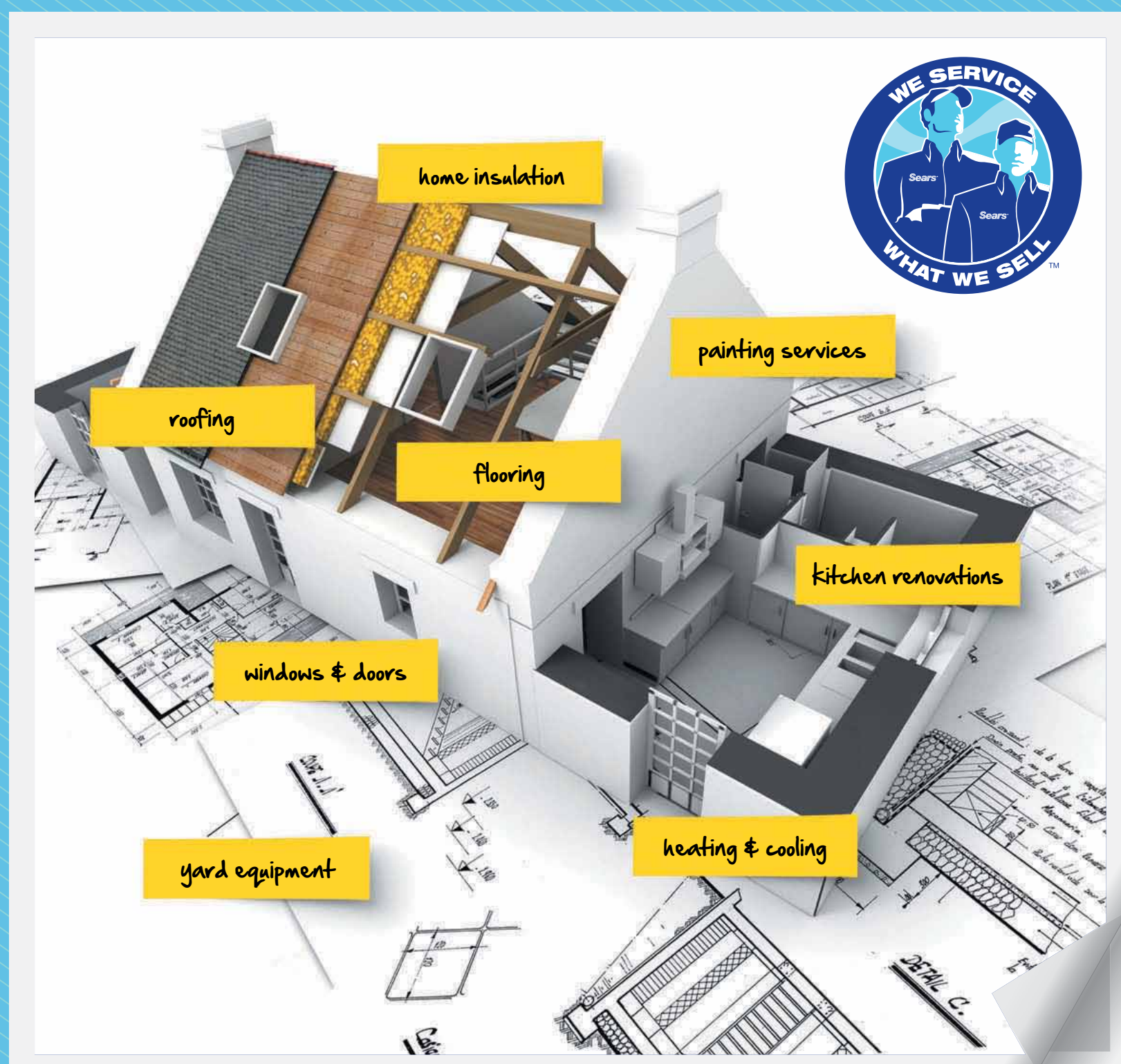
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## INSPIRATION

“Disaster DIY” host **Brian Baeumler** believes that home renovation shows can teach important skills, but they should be viewed with a pinch of salt.

TIP

2

START SMALL,  
IT'S EASY TO  
GET OVER-  
WHELMED IF  
YOU TAKE ON  
TOO MUCH AT  
ONE TIME

# A real fixer-upper of a career

## LEADER TO LEADER

“Disaster DIY” host **Bryan Baeumler** has an interesting way of describing home renovation shows on television.

“They are the romance shows of today—they only show the sunsets and walks on the beach,” he says.

“TV is not real life. While there is no acting on my programs, editors have a way of speeding things up and smoothing out the bumps, and everybody gets along. Real life is not like that at all!”

While renovation screw ups are the bread of butter of his television career, Baeumler admits that some of the amateur jobs he has seen has frightened him. A nightmare scene greeted him when he walked into a basement that had been entirely built with metal studs. The wrong electrical wires were used so that the walls were live, he recalls.

“It really upset me. I’m a father and I

couldn’t believe that somebody would expose their family to such hazards,” he says.

**Starting young**

Baeumler has always been a do-it-yourself kind of guy. As a child, he was constantly in his father’s tool box, and taking things apart in the family garage.

At 14, he teamed up with a friend to start a handyman business, fixing neighbours’ cottages during the summer.

After graduating from the University of Western Ontario with a degree in Political Science and Business, he flirted with the idea of going into law, but decided, at the age of 22, to open his own cargo company. However, the boredom of an office routine, even though it was his own business, just about did his head in.

“I would sit in the office staring at my watch wishing I was renovating the house and condo I had bought. I finally decided that pushing paper wasn’t for me and it was time to get paid for doing what I love,

## PROFILE

**Bryan Baeumler**■ **Date of birth:**

April 18, 1974

■ **Hometown:**

Brampton, Ontario

■ **Married to:**

Sarah, owner of a ballet school.

■ **Father of:**

Quintyn, six-years-old; Charlotte, four-years-old; and Lincoln, four months.

■ **Personal motto:**

“Education is important and builds confidence. Never stop learning.”

building and fixing things, just like my dad,” he says.

He has not looked back. From those humble beginnings, Baeumler now oversees a sprawling home renovation and construction business. Apart from his business, Baeumler Quality Construction (with the semi-alliterative tagline “Design, Destroy, Rebuild”), he also is the Gemini Award-winning host of the very successful HGTV series “Disaster DIY”. He also put his skills and reputation on the line with his House of Bryan series, where viewers followed his no-holds barred, six-month odyssey to build his dream home. It was the highest-rated show on HGTV, breaking all records, he says with pride.

“It had not been my intention to be on TV, but since HGTV had become so popular, it became part of my marketing plan to approach them with an idea that I was going to work on for free. I was surprised when they reciprocated, and the pilot turned in a series.”

**Be nice to people**

That was six years ago and life has since become very busy, but Baeumler remembers the lessons his parents taught him.

“My parents instilled in me a very strong work ethic. They also taught me to be nice, treat everybody the same, pay my taxes and show up when I say I will.”

He is very fortunate to be doing what he loves. Being able to fix things around the house is a life skill, he adds. “I go to my friends’ houses and some of them do not even have a picture up on the wall because they don’t know how to bang in a nail.”

His next life goal is to teach.

“One of the things I want to do is to help people help themselves. I would like to provide a venue where people can go to and have hands-on experience. Working with young people to equip them with the necessary skills is a goal of mine.”

Disaster DIY” Thursdays at 8pm ET (5pm PT) on HGTV Canada beginning April 7.

INDRANI NADARAJAH

editorial@mediaplanet.com



Countertop shown in 2020 Cinder

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1. Bryan Baemler's interest in DIY started at a young age.  
 2. Bryan and his wife, Sarah.  
 3. The Baemler family.  
 PHOTO: HGTV

↓  
**BILL'S TIPS**



**Bill Sutherland, RHI**  
 President, CAHPI National

**Property inspection tips**

**It's often said that one of the most expensive and important purchases you will ever make will be your home. This is why it's best to know as much as you can before you make the commitment to buy, especially if you're a first time home buyer. Here's a few tips that can help you along the way:**

First, hire a Registered Home Inspector (RHI). A professionally trained home inspector will review your house as a system, looking at how one component of the house might affect the operability or lifespan of another. Home inspectors will go through the property and perform a comprehensive visual inspection to assess the condition of the house and all of its systems.

Now, it's time to renovate. Before installing a new bathroom or kitchen, building an addition, or finishing the basement, check your inspection report. Remember your home operates as a system and a renovation project needs to be carefully planned before you get started.

The Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors (CAHPI) has qualified members across Canada. [www.cahpi.ca](http://www.cahpi.ca)



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## INSIGHT

Did you know that **Canadians waste** the second highest amount of water in the world on a daily basis? However, there are simple ways to make water **conservation** possible in your home.

TIP

3

ENERGY  
EFFICIENT  
WINDOWS  
PREVENT HEAT  
LOSS AND  
REDUCE  
MAINTENANCE  
NEEDS

# Don't wash money and resources down the drain

**M**any homeowners look towards luxury kitchen and bath trends as a guideline then remove the extravagant features to retain a better designed environment and end experience.

Cost-efficiency is paramount to eco-friendliness as it relates to greatest value while maintaining the integrity of the design.

Though cabinetry and finishes factor into the design, appliances and faucets make up a significant portion of the budget for both rooms.

Fortunately, energy-efficient and/or water-saving products, both easily identifiable through the Energy Star and WaterSense labels respectively, fall into the value equation.

Eco-friendly appliances also save you time. Many newer dishwashers work better when you do not pre-rinse and high-efficiency washers and dryers take a fraction of the time to complete cycles.

## Down the drain

Wasting water is a huge Canadian problem: we use the second highest amount of water per person in the world — an astounding 335 litres per day!

About 65 percent of our water use stems from the bathroom, with

roughly 30 percent going towards flushing the toilet and the remainder to the bath/shower. That's an increase of more than 25 percent since 1980.

Low-flow showerheads use up to 70 percent less water and can save 15 percent on water heating costs. A full remodel is generally not required to upgrade your faucet. Simply unscrew the existing showerhead, take it to your local building store to ensure compatibility, then buy and install the low-flow model.

There are many online green calculators available to assess the cost savings of switching to WaterSense- and Energy Star-qualified products. Check with your region or municipality for local rebate programs. For example, upgrading your toilets—up to four per household—to low-flush or dual-flush models can net more than \$100 per unit purchased from your local and Ontario governments.

“Water” trends that are becoming more prevalent and worth incorporating into current design plans:

- Pre-set temperature and pressure settings for showers and faucets.
- More touchless features with faucets.
- Grey-water re-use.

Energy-efficiency also applies to lighting, where LEDs are becoming a more popular choice, particularly in kitchens. Intuitive lighting and temperature controls are another growing



trend.

Though granite countertops remain the preferred choice, composite options are gaining in popularity. Many composites contain at least 85 percent remnant and/or recycled crushed minerals like marble and granite. Some also incorporate recycled glass or recycled, crushed PET plastic.

These “recycled” countertops are similar in price and style, but are typically less porous and more scratch- and stain-resistant, and so are easier to maintain.

Recycling and/or refuse pull-outs are now a primary design consideration. Garbage disposals and trash

compactors are being incorporated more often, particularly in condos where composting is unavailable.

Chilled wine storage is leaving the kitchen in favour of open wine cabinets.

These aspects will mix and mingle with the current trend of mixing sleek, contemporary design elements with the more familiar traditional components for a blended transitional style.

**CHRISTINA MOGK**

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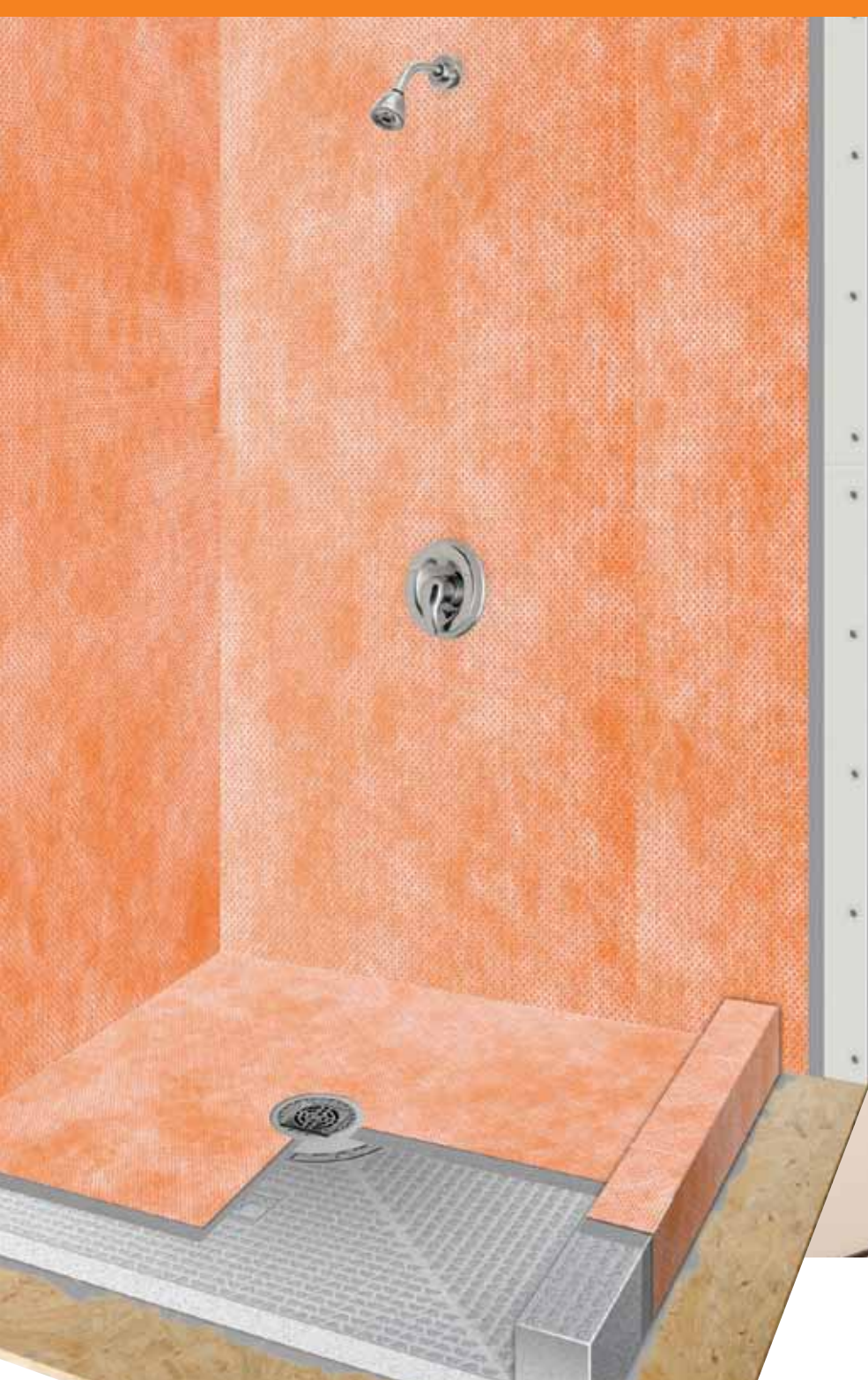
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## Waterproofing for Tiled Showers



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NEWS



DON'T MISS!



**Melissa Davis**  
Decorator  
Designer Friend

Decorating local can mean green

Green design has quickly become a buzz term in the decor business. Many of my clients ask that we “design green” without really knowing what that means or how we can make that work with their budget and style. Installing solar panels and green roofs are obvious steps, but not always practical without compromising on style or exceeding the budget. The good news is there are many options that will indeed allow us to design green and keep our project on track.

Over the years I’ve discovered that most of what I need for a project is available locally. The slow food movement has shed light on this fact when it comes to what we eat, but have you considered “decorating local”?

I now purchase many designer approved products including contemporary acrylic bathtubs and custom garden doors, locally. They are made within an hour of my office, which means there is virtually no transportation and associated emissions. It also means I can buy direct and cut out the shipping and third party markup costs. I literally pay half of the retail cost and support the local manufacturing community. These are seemingly not such grand green choices, but the point is to be aware of your options and choose to shop local when given the choice.

The materials we put into our homes impact both the environment and our health. Thankfully it seems we’re moving out of a time when the newest man-made material was thought to be the best, and getting back to basics. This is a great time to be purchasing healthy products because they are abundant.

Virtually every paint manufacturer carries a VOC-free line. They are often slightly more expensive, but this is such an easy and healthy green choice. Painted surfaces surround us, and VOCs are nasty things linked to cancer, allergies and a plethora of other illnesses. Something most people don’t realize is that the worst of the chemicals is in the tint used to colour your paint. Lighter colours are actually healthier! If you want to go one step further, I prefer to purchase Farrow and Ball paint—it’s clay based, with natural pigmentations.

When it comes to selecting a wood floor material, I’m happy to report there are more green options than just bamboo. Many local flooring manufacturers are now producing local product. This means the wood is from local sustainable tree sources. It also means the wood will naturally acclimatize to our homes. The change of seasons is something inherent to its DNA, and typically these floors will fare much better than an exotic wood. I also suggest considering an oiled finish instead of those chemical top coats. It brings out the tone and depth of the wood much better, shows fewer scratches, and is 100 percent natural mineral oil.

Last but not least is using reclaimed or salvaged materials. This can mean literally installing a floor that use to be in a barn, or it can simply mean visiting your local [Habitat for Humanity] ReStore and buying your door, kitchen or toilet. We are a wasteful, throw-away generation, and the simple act of giving a product its second or third life equals less in the landfills, no new processing, and zero emissions for transportation. It also means big savings; The ReStore sells gently used and new product for 30-50 percent off retail. To top it off, they will come salvage your old kitchen, or materials in good condition, all for free; keeping it out of your waste bin, and allowing it the second life it deserves too!

# Ways to save energy, time and money

**You may have noticed that the appliances you see when you go shopping are more energy-efficient than they used to be.**

One reason for this is that the Government of Canada establishes energy performance standards to remove inefficient products and make sure that those on the market are efficient. And these standards are working. Since 1990, the energy efficiency of clothes washers increased by 82 percent, refrigerators by 59 percent and gas furnaces by 20 percent thanks to new standards and promotional programs. And even though the number of major appliances in Canadian homes increased by 38 percent, total appliance energy use actually decreased by 17 percent by 2005. Now that’s an improvement!

New standards are underway for

“New standards are underway for many other items such as lighting products, external power supplies and digital TV adaptors.”

many other items, such as lighting products, external power supplies and digital TV adaptors. Once the standards are in place, products that consume 80 percent of the energy used in homes and in the commercial/institutional sector will be subject to these standards. This is good news for consumers since it means more money in your pocket! Not only

that, energy-efficient products use less energy, which helps protect the environment.

The Government of Canada also administers the international ENERGY STAR® symbol in Canada. ENERGY STAR has been a trusted consumer brand in Canada for 10 years and is displayed on approximately 50 product categories, including home electronics, major appliances, lighting, office equipment, windows, doors and skylights, and home heating and cooling equipment.

The ENERGY STAR symbol identifies the models that are among the top energy efficiency performers in its category, while Canada’s well-known EnerGuide label shows the product’s energy consumption rating and efficiency. Consumers can use the this rating to compare the energy performance of different products.

Depending on the type of product being purchased, choosing an ENERGY STAR-qualified model can help reduce energy consumption and costs by 10 to 65 percent compared with a conventional product. For example, a clothes washer with an ENERGY STAR the symbol uses at least 59 percent less energy and 35 to 50 percent less water than a conventional model. And because ENERGY STAR-qualified washers remove more water from clothes and shorten the drying time for each load, you also save money by reducing the amount of energy used by your clothes dryer.

\*The ENERGY STAR® name and symbol are administered and promoted in Canada by Natural Resources Canada. Used with permission.

Courtesy of ENERGY STAR® editorial@mediaplanet.com

## The essentials for hiring a contractor

■ **Estimate by phone:** Contractors can’t renovate your home over the phone so never hire a contractor that estimates without surveying the location and handing you a detailed estimate in person.

■ **Cash operator:** Do you really want to risk your home in the hands of a contractor that avoids paying taxes or cuts corners to offer a cash discount?

■ **No proof of insurance:** If a contractor can’t/won’t show you valid proof of \$2-5 million Commercial General Liability insurance, don’t hire them.

■ **Nothing in writing:** Never hire a contractor that resists/refuses to sign a detailed written contract with design plans or use a change order form

■ **Imposes materials:** Avoid con-

tractors that impose particular materials or products on your project and favour those that not only recommend green-er options, but also help you to qualify for government rebate programs

**Five things to watch out for when you hire a contractor**

■ **50 percent deposit required:** Always match payments to milestones after a fair deposit for initial material costs or custom product manufacturing only.

■ **Paper testimonials:** If you can’t meet past customers and see contractor work, then he/she has no references.

■ **Permit avoidance:** If your city government says you need a Building Permit and a contractor offers to

do the work without it, find someone else.

■ **Rejects holdback:** If a contractor does not agree that 10 to 15 percent of the project cost will be held back after completion until all deficiencies are corrected, look elsewhere

■ **Paying for tools:** If a contractor doesn’t have all the required tools or expects you to pay for them, show them the door

**5 “never forget” reno documents**

■ **Project contract:** Be sure to include specific material names and quantities, contractor services, project milestones, design plans and payment schedule. You can find a sample contract on the CMHC website.

■ **Change order form:** Pre-arrange

fees for out of scope changes and then keep a running log paired with before/after photos.

■ **Home insurance policy:** Inform your agent or broker of the project scope and cost to ensure you maintain enough coverage.

■ **Building permit:** Renovating to the Provincial Building Code prevents possible city fines and rejected home insurance claims, so check to see if a permit is required.

■ **Contractor’s insurance:** Never hire a contractor that “forgot” or doesn’t have a proof of \$2-5 million Commercial General Liability insurance on them.

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## Think before your scrap materials

**The current design trend of “upcycling” is proving to be a boon for Habitat for Humanity’s ReStores as owners seek to achieve an eclectic feel to their homes.**

It is not just building materials that can be bought at Habitat for Humanity’s ReStores.

More recently, ReStores have begun selling more decor-inspired items, including light fixtures, but this is mainly due to their relationship with retailers and designers says Derek Harney, vice president of ReStore Operations for Habitat for Humanity

Toronto.

As a nod to the greater design focus, a fourth store, ReStore Studio District, will open in Toronto on April 4. There are now 65 ReStores nationwide.

“We are still first and foremost, a building materials store. That is our bread and butter and comprises 85 percent of our stock,” Harney says.

Habitat for Humanity started in the U.S. in 1976, and spread to Canada in 1985. Today, Habitat for Humanity in Canada has grown to 72 affiliates across the country, providing almost 1,800 families with safe, decent and affordable housing.

**Recycling reaps dividends**

ReStores have a number of ways to collect materials—home owners can drop off the materials at the stores, or the Habitat trucks will collect them. A less common option is for a Habitat salvage crew to turn up at the houses to uninstall kitchens and bathrooms.

“The environmental message has got across loud and clear, and people get a warm and fuzzy feeling knowing that even as they are building their dream home, somebody else is benefitting from their cast offs, which are not going into landfill.”

People are also good about what they donate—very rarely do they have

to turn away goods and materials that are not up to scratch. “Our pick up service is our most popular— we do between 10 and 12 pick ups a day,” Harney says. They try to pick up donated materials within 10 days.

Word of mouth has been their biggest recommendation, explains Harney.

“We offer value for money,” says Harney, simply. “Where else can you get a good quality kitchen for roughly half the price of retail?”

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