



# the new look of green

This modern farmhouse by designer Jill Sharp Brinson is a stunning example of how to reduce, reuse, and recycle stylishly, both in ways you can see and in ways you can't.

BY KATE ABNEY | PHOTOS ROB BRINSON | PRODUCED AND STYLED BY JILL SHARP BRINSON

**Talk about sustainability—**an étagère is one of the hardest-working, most versatile pieces of furniture you can own. Use it as a bar, a library, a front-door drop zone, or a dining room buffet. Designer Jill Sharp Brinson hung fabric behind the open shelves, which is a simple way to give the piece a custom look that can be changed easily.



**In the heart of Serenbe, an eco-community near Atlanta, the new look of green building and decorating is showing its face.** This fresh and friendly farmhouse—a collaboration between home appliance company Bosch and Jill Sharp Brinson, creative director at Ballard Designs—is a showcase for innovations such as geothermal heating, solar panels, and advanced appliances that make going green smarter than ever. And Jill's decorating, with its soulful found objects and sustainable materials, demonstrates just how pretty green can be.

**What you see**  
**Farmhouse charm**

In the kitchen, *opposite*, Shaker-style cabinets contrast with the industrial sheen of stainless-steel appliances and sleek modern hardware. A speckled granite countertop bridges the two styles. On the wide front porch, *below left*, extra-large planters full of ferns and creeping Jenny echo the green of the landscaping. Bold stripes on chair cushions and paper lanterns add modern kick.

**What you don't see**  
**Energy conservation**

Energy Star-qualified Bosch appliances such as the dishwasher, *opposite*, can reduce energy use by nearly 20 percent and water use by as much as 69 percent. The light fixtures use extended-life LED bulbs or eco-friendly halogen bulbs. And photovoltaic solar panels, *below*, contribute to the home's net-zero status: Over one year's time, it generates as much energy as it consumes.



**INNOVATION!**  
A MIRRORED  
BACKSPLASH CUTS  
THE NEED FOR  
UNDER-CABINET  
LIGHTING.



“This home represents the innovation that we all need to strive for, in a small footprint.”

—Jill Sharp Brinson

INNOVATION!  
TRANSOMS AND GLASS  
INTERIOR DOORS LET  
NATURAL LIGHT FLOW  
BETWEEN ROOMS, SO  
LESS ELECTRIC LIGHT  
IS NEEDED.



#### What you see

**Recycled chic** A beam reclaimed from a North Carolina tobacco farm became a rustic mantel, *above*, accessorized with a recycled jar and farm antiques. Among a trio of wing chairs, an antique Chinese elm table and a reclaimed teak stool stand in for a traditional coffee table. Even the magazine tote is made of recycled rubber. The dining area, *opposite*, is a symphony of natural, chemical-free materials: a Belgian oak trestle table, rattan chairs, and a linen-covered banquette complete with hidden storage.

#### What you don't see

**Sustainability** Made in the U. S. and certified sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council, Castle Combe's engineered oak flooring met Jill's requirements both for a modern country aesthetic and a green pedigree. The wide oak slats have a dry, gray-brown finish and a hand-scraped look. "I'm a huge floor snob, and this stuff is amazing," she says. Running the boards one way in the kitchen and baths, and perpendicular to that in the rest of the rooms "makes for a great detail you see in old houses," Jill says.



“My inspiration was the color of trees in spring—that vivid, happy green.”

—Jill Sharp Brinson

**INNOVATION!**  
RECLAIMED MANGO  
WOOD FRAMES THE  
MIRROR ABOVE THE  
BED.

**What you see**  
**Inspiration from nature**

An abundance of natural textures and a big shot of leafy green make this bedroom feel inviting. Hand-creweled burlap curtains dress the windows. The rest is a creative mix of sustainable natural fibers—rattan, sisal, and bamboo—that pays subtle homage to the earth.

**What you don't see**  
**Advanced climate control**

A geothermal heat pump dips 300 feet into the ground, extracting heat and repurposing it and the energy it creates to warm or cool the house. Because it is underground, no unsightly HVAC units blemish the exterior. It's also equipped with baffles to control airflow between floors.



**INNOVATION!**  
AN OLD RATTAN  
CHAIR GETS A GREEN  
MAKEOVER WITH A  
COAT OF VOC-FREE  
PAINT.



#### What you see Smart furniture tricks

The second-floor office, *above*, is an exercise in creative furniture repurposing. The desk is a dining table, with a small sofa pulled up as a comfortable spot to work or relax. In the guest bedroom, *left*, fabric panels hung from curtain rods turn basic twin beds into statement-makers. And a small desk becomes a shared bedside table. Finding new places and ways to use existing furniture keeps it in your house—and out of a landfill—longer.

#### What you don't see Energy efficiency

The home's double-thick windows are insulated with argon gas. An almost invisible low-emittance (low-E) coating does double duty, admitting warm sunlight while also reducing radiant heat transfer to the outdoors. In addition, situating the office, *above*, on the top floor along the west-facing side, and forgoing window treatments, bathes the room in natural light all day long, so there's no need to flip a switch until evening. ■