



Rosemary Merrill, Susan Jacobs and Susan Brunn in a chic, contemporary kitchen at the Casa Verde showroom.

Green and Gorgeous

The three local women behind Casa Verde Design share their passion for style, substance and sustainable home design.

INSIDE THE COZY BRICK STOREFRONT JUST NORTHEAST OF EDINA, the showroom of Casa Verde Design greets you with refined elegance and calming simplicity. While focused on award-winning kitchen and bath design, the sophisticated yet welcoming showroom also displays custom-crafted cabinetry and fine home furnishings.

As the name implies (translation: green house), Casa Verde's team is passionate about sustainability and eco-friendly design. What sets them apart from the rest, however, is how they address these concerns—their seamless approach incorporates their aesthetic principles. According to Rosemary Merrill, president and designer at the firm, "Good design is green design."

Founded by Edina residents Merrill, Susan H. Brunn

and Susan Jacobs, Casa Verde opened its doors in November 2008. Their thoughtful approach to design emphasizes collaboration with clients, business partners, architects, contractors and vendors. Brunn feels that the synergetic nature of their business creates the "best end result."

Casa Verde's stylish and eco-conscious approach defines their showroom space, from its kitchen settings and the furnishings throughout, right down to the hardware pieces, all of which are made from 90 percent recycled bronze. Their designs employ classical elements, as well as the more contemporary aesthetic generally associated with green design.

The sleek contemporary kitchen at the front of the showroom is furnished with Forest Stewardship Council certified



Learn more about Casa Verde, and what sustainability really means, online at edinamag.com.

cabinetry. The countertops are made of ¾-inch marble, as opposed to the typical 1½-inch application (using half the thickness requires less material, hence less energy to manufacture and transport).

The inviting traditional kitchen—voted Best National Sustainable Green Kitchen in a Sub-Zero and Wolf 2010 kitchen design contest—has white custom cabinetry with glass inserts, wire scrollwork, paneled insets and hand-cut fretwork. All of the appliances are Energy Star-rated, including the Wolf induction cooktop. The soapstone countertop and sink are heat- and stain-resistant and, best yet, when conditioned with mineral oil they don't require the toxic sealers that granite surfaces demand. The kitchen island is made of Lyptus wood, a blend of two types of eucalyptus, which has the same characteristics of slow-growing mahogany but rapidly renews itself every 15 years.

What prompted the team's concern for sustainability? "It was an interest to all three of us," says Jacobs. "There are more choices available now than there have ever been," Brunn adds. As more options have become available and demand has grown, green resources, according to Merrill, are no more expensive than less energy-conscious choices.

Merrill also explains that custom work is not inherently more expensive, but it is more thoughtfully designed. "If something is designed well, it will last for a long time."

Casa Verde's location itself was thoughtfully chosen; "We

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—Susan Jacobs

wanted a different presence," Merrill says. "We deliberately chose a neighborhood over a design center, so we could be part of that community." Their neighborhood has provided a warm welcome, and Jacobs, for one, loves when people walk in and respond to the space, declaring, "I want *that* kitchen."

Taking local sourcing to heart, Casa Verde supports local artists, representing an oil painter, potter and iron sculptor in their retail showroom. Their personal office space also walks the walk—with cabinetry constructed of a wheat stalk-based material, topped by dark countertops fabricated from recycled paper. Even the floor covering, subtle striped carpet tiles, is composed of plant stock.

All of the materials at Casa Verde provide a rhythm and texture to the space. Surveying the stylish showroom, Merrill states, "The final product is so unique. It's like giving birth, but better behaved." //

Casa Verde Design
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