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SUSTAINABLE STYLE

CASA VERDE SHOWCASES GREEN APPLIANCES

By Mason Riddle

Thinking of growing a greener footprint, but don't know where to start? Try Casa Verde, the new custom kitchen and bath design showroom in south Minneapolis. Spacious, casually elegant and uncommonly friendly, the storefront space is anchored by two stylish kitchens outfitted with appliances by Sub-Zero, Wolf, ASKO and Gaggenau, one of which features counters made from soapstone and eco-friendly Lyptus wood.

The brainchild of Susan Jacobs, Susan Brunn and designer Rosemary Merrill, Casa Verde's three partners understand that a green aesthetic is not antithetical to good design. According to Merrill, many luxury appliances are the most energy efficient around, due to their materials and construction. She points out that induction cooktops by Wolf and Gaggenau are energy efficient with their ability to quickly heat up and cool down. "It's all about performance and design," states Jacobs. "These appliances are easily understood and used. And they clean up very nicely."

Casa Verde endorses Sub-Zero refrigerators because of their many energy-efficient features; in fact, seven of their lines have EPA Energy Star ratings. These units are well insulated and feature a sophisticated compressor system, but perhaps more importantly, they are also designed with a fully integrated door, whether it is made from stainless steel, platinum, carbon or wood. "A glass door is not nearly as energy efficient," comments Merrill. "Sub-Zero also makes column and under-the-counter units which are efficient, practical and space-saving."

ASKO, which specializes in dishwashers, is based in Sweden. Sporting a stainless steel interior, the machine's interior racks can be



Photography courtesy of Sub-Zero

adjusted so just a single rack is washed. "The ASKO dishwasher uses less water than if you fill up the sink and rinse," comments Merrill. The ASKO display model uses a modest 3.8 gallons.

"Some people come in looking simply for good design in their luxury kitchens and end up getting energy-efficient or sustainable products and appliances whether they know it or not," explains Merrill. "They like good design, which also happens to be energy efficient. These appliances are such a dream to design with."

In addition to appliances, Casa Verde seduces with a range of green products including custom-designed chairs and sofas upholstered in natural biodegradable fabrics like cotton, linen and flax, or a trestle table constructed of reclaimed wood from a Finnish cabin. A ceiling fan by Big Ass Fans measures twelve feet in diameter, moderating warm air in the winter and cool air in the summer without making a sound.

The store also advocates eco-friendly accessories that are beautifully designed and locally sourced, minimizing energy and shipping costs. Following the food world's "farm to fork" mantra, Casa Verde features products made by Twin Cities artists such as Lisa Eliason's handcrafted metal fireplace tools, clothes hooks and trivets, or Marin Kloppman's minimalist ceramic ware. Chemical-free Paddywax Candles fill a teak hutch, and luxurious throws made from natural, undyed wool drape casually over chairs.

"You can be sustainable in your lifestyle and still be surrounded by luxurious and beautiful design," states Merrill. "Good design can be sustainable — in most everything."✦