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Green & Healthy HOMES Maine

Purposefully Repurposed

*Reused, reclaimed &
recycled materials*

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NONTOXIC HAVEN

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Purposefully

This soulfully designed home is the work of Patrice Cappelletti of Live Solar Maine and Emily Mottram of Mottram Architecture. The design inspiration for this solar farmhouse was a Monson slate sink that Patrice had rescued from a Freeport farmhouse (see also the vanity on pg. 38). Her affection for slate continues into the living room with the vintage slate chalkboards pulled from an old schoolhouse that she used for the wood stove hearth. The wood beams were rescued from a Bowdoin College fraternity house, the corbels from yet another Maine farmhouse. The modern Bari wood stove is made with Vermont soapstone from Hearthstone.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL D. WILSON



Repurposed

PURPOSEFULLY REPURPOSED

BY JUNE DONENFELD



Reclaimed white oak treads from Longleaf Lumber add warmth to contemporary stairs.

COURTESY PHOTO

Creating a beautiful, one-of-a-kind home by giving new life to reused, reclaimed or recycled building materials

W

HEN IS A BARN NOT A BARN? Or a bottle not a bottle?

When it's been reused, reclaimed, repurposed, recycled or otherwise given new life in our homes.

Whether you're embarking on a new build or renovation, furnishing your home from scratch or updating it, you can do it in ways that are better for the planet, better for your health, better for your pocketbook, and will result in a one-of-a-kind look that will stand the test of time.

When we think of our homes in relation to planet-warming greenhouse gases (GHGs), many (or most) people picture operational energy, or what we consume when we turn on the heat, take a hot shower, bake a cake, or plug in a laptop. Less commonly considered, though, is another source of GHGs associated with building or renovating a home and that's embodied carbon, which includes the "cradle-to-gate carbon," or the carbon emitted when we extract raw materials, manufacture finished products with them, and finally transport and install them onsite. Products that have already been created have gone through this process, so they don't exact the same sort of environmental toll as new ones.

And then there's the all-important waste reduction argument: Every time you give something new life, you keep it from taking up precious space in landfills. Enough said.

But you certainly don't have to sacrifice beauty when you reduce your carbon footprint by one of the four Rs. By using

materials and objects in new and unexpected ways, you can create a distinctive look that will have a timeless quality that is hard to achieve if you limit yourself to the flavor-of-the-month styles in interior design. Even if we don't know the detailed backstory of a rough-hewn wooden ceiling beam or repurposed toolbox, we can feel its history, and with that history comes a sense of place, continuity and connection that can be difficult to realize otherwise.

With the application of a bit of imagination, and maybe some elbow grease, these materials and historical finds are versatile enough to be used in a range of settings, from traditional to contemporary rooms, where they can add both warmth and the freshness that comes from juxtaposing the old with the new.

There is also increasing awareness among people looking to build or alter their homes of the health benefits of using salvaged, antique materials, because they do not off-gas in the way that many of the newer furnishings or finishes do.

Julien Jalbert, an architect with the Knickerbocker Group in Portland and Boothbay, says that more and more of the firm's clients are asking for "reclaimed products, to give something new life, because of their visual and textural character and that they have a story to tell." He says, "Only a couple of years ago it was a rare treat to have clients bring up issues of sustainability and health, but now, at least four or five clients out of the 30 we're working with are actively seeking to build homes that respond to these concerns."

So let's go on a house tour of some of these possibilities, inside and out.



This master bath vanity was created by attaching barn board veneer to a vanity that Patrice Cappelletti of Live Solar Maine found on the side of the road, pulled from a house being renovated in Cumberland. The top is custom-cut marble to match a French sink she had seen in a photograph years prior.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL WILSON



A repurposed antique wooden door creates a focal point for this Cumberland home and acts as a screen for the washer and dryer.

Architect: Mottram Architecture.

Builder: Patrice Cappelletti/ Live Solar Maine.

PHOTO COURTESY MICHAEL BERUBE, MAINE VIRTUAL HOME TOURS



Reclaimed redwood slab vanity top by Longleaf Lumber.

COURTESY PHOTO

Wood

Maine has abundant choices when it comes to wood from trees felled generations ago, from weathered antique barn siding to pristine, reclaimed timber from the bottom of the Penobscot River. Wood that has been exposed to the elements for decades will have the innate character that only comes with the passage of time, while timber that's been pulled up from deep in the water

may look as fresh as the day it was cut down.

Aesthetics aside, old-growth wood is denser, stronger, harder and more stable than most of today's lumber—which comes from trees cultivated for rapid growth—and better able to resist rot and termites.

This wood can be used to create anything from a cabin to a floor, a staircase, or closet built-ins, or simply a single element, like a countertop or sliding doors to hide a washer and dryer.

RESOURCES

Longleaf Lumber: longleaflumber.com

Maine Heritage Timber/Timberchic: maineheritagetimber.com

Goodwood Reclaimed Lumber: goodwood-reclaimed-lumber.business.site

Bingham Lumber: binghamlumber.com/wood-recycling-for/Saco/Maine

Down & Back Wood Salvage: downandbackwoodsavalue.com