

# designing

# with soul

Keep Earth and ethics in mind to create  
a beautiful, healthy living environment

By Donna Kato

In an era where we care deeply about our vegetables being locally grown, investigate the mining conditions of our diamond engagement ring and seek out organic cotton onesies for baby, we often aren't as diligent about the source of our home design choices.

Buying tiles, flooring, bedding or carpets with the Earth and ethics in mind has not been as intuitive as walking into a store to choose hormone-free milk. But once we decide to create a home that is ecological and socially responsible, there are a growing number of sources that provide products and materials that can help us attain living environments that are beautiful, comfortable and healthy.

"I've seen this trend coming for quite a while, and it's especially big in California," says Carol Spence Carr, president of the Peninsula chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers.

With more than 40 members who specialize in

designing interiors that make sustainability and fair trade high priorities, the chapter hosted an industry event earlier this year at longtime family-owned mattress maker McRoskey's Palo Alto store, a local business they support.

The seminar explored what it means to design with soul and how to guide those of us who want to practice responsible consumption in our homes as part of our overall commitment to good living.

"The choices we make have a ripple effect," says Lisa Staprans of Staprans Design in Menlo Park, who believes in questioning where products come from and buying local or from companies that support fair trade.

But, Staprans adds, it doesn't have to be all serious considerations that zap the fun and frivolity out of design. She says we're doing our part if we buy glassware in Murano or a sculpture in Paris, as long as we know we're patronizing local artists or helping to keep a culture alive.



After a cancer scare six years ago, designer Lisa Staprans sought spiritual solace in India, including at a girls school (above). She was inspired to work "with ethical intention and compassion." Left, Staprans' fireplace beam from reclaimed fir, along with a custom long bowl by a local artisan and an 18th-century olive jar.

Courtesy Lisa Staprans



