

1. Compact fluorescent lighting. 2. Energy saving windows 3. Low VOC lacquer 4. Caesarstone counterops
5. Sustainable wood cabinetry 6. Energy Star Sub-Zero Fridge. Photo courtesy Advanced Kilchens, inc.



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Atlanta's Green Roofs



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Inman Park Festival & Parade



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Spring Tour of Homes

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From Green to Gold Eco-living saves money and the planet



COURTESY PARK AT EAST PACES

The townhomes at Park at East Paces have an old-world feel about them.



COURTESY MONTE HEWETT HOMES

Townhomes in the West Village community, being marketed by Monte Hewett Homes, are EarthCraft certified.

By Carly Felton

With new tax incentives for “green” home upgrades, Atlanta homeowners and those looking to buy are becoming more and more aware of the benefits of eco-friendly living. From reducing energy bills to saving the environment, greening your home is not only the “in” thing, but the smart thing.

Developers and real estate agents have picked up on this trend as well, and new green condos and homes are being built around the city. There’s even a special certification for the eco-brokers who sell these specially designed homes.



Randal Lautzenheiser

“When people have the choice of two products, they are naturally leaning toward the choice that is healthier for them and healthier for the environment,” said Randal Lautzenheiser, a certified eco-broker

with Atlanta Intown Real Estate Services. “[Eco-living] is easy, it’s fun and it saves money.”

Inman Green (www.inmangreen.com) is a new, LEED-certified condo development in Inman Park. Priced at about \$209,000 for a one-bedroom with a two-car garage and \$429,000 for a two-bedroom 3.5-bathroom also with a two-car garage, these green units are no more costly than other area condos.

Plus, they come equipped with Energy Star appliances, recycled glass countertops, water-conserving plumbing fixtures, dual-flush toilets, tankless water heaters and more. These green assets are hot commodities in the market. According to Pamela Ahern, principal/partner of The Care Team of Sanctuary Real Estate and an eco-broker and realtor herself, the eco-friendly Inman Green is the fastest-selling condo development in the city.

“People are becoming more mindful, and it makes them feel good that they will have left the planet better than when they came into it,” Ahern said, noting that appraisals of green homes are higher because of energy savings.

Trends in green construction include the decrease in home size. “People realize that excessive floor space wastes materials, costs more to maintain and is often used



COURTESY INMAN GREEN

Inman Green on DeKalb Avenue is a LEED-certified condo development that comes fully equipped with eco-friendly fixtures and finishes.

as a substitute for good design or desired amenities,” said Dennis Creech, executive director of Southface, an organization that offers information, online training programs and workshops on green design, construction and building products.

Eco-friendly milk-based paints, recycled insulation materials, renewable resources such as bamboo floor coverings, thermal pane windows, low-flush toilets, high-quality indoor air filters and water-efficient landscaping techniques are among other popular eco-living trends.



Dina Gundersen

“With the uncertain economy right now, knowing you will be consistently saving on energy bills while living in a healthier home can be a major relief,” said Dina M. Gundersen, director of marketing for Monte Hewett Homes, a company that has been building EarthCraft-certified homes since 2003 including West Village (www.westvillagega.com) and Stonehaven at Vinings (www.montehevetthomes.com). “The techniques and products we use create a quieter living

environment, a home with healthier indoor air that costs less to heat and cool.”

To be officially green, an independent third-party such as EarthCraft must certify homes. Certification criteria include: green site planning, energy-efficient building envelope and systems, resource-efficient design, resource-efficient building materials, waste management, indoor air quality, water conservation (indoor and outdoor), homeowner-education builder operations and innovation.

In addition to buying new green homes, many people are pursuing “greenovations” for their home. “The number one way to make any building more eco-friendly is to seal the air leaks in the building shell,” Creech said. “[Sealing the air leaks] can often save 10 to 30 percent on energy bills and is the most important step in reducing the greenhouse gases that cause climate change.” Gundersen advises greenovators to check all around their home, especially the entrance to their attic, to see if it needs more insulation.

Every little change helps. Those who may not be in the market for a new home

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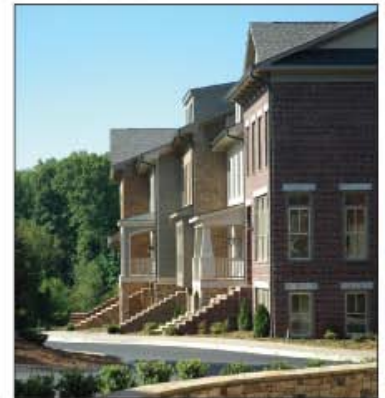


COURTESY RILEY'S WALK

Riley's Walk in Smyrna, above, is made up of 26 classic homes, and the neighborhood is full of pocket parks and playgrounds for children to play. The townhomes at West Village, below, have a traditional, southern look about them.

or can't afford major renovations can start by putting rain barrels on their downspouts, collecting this rainwater and using it to water the plants. The water is free, permitted for landscaping even in times of drought, and its chemical-free nature makes it better for the plants. Other eco-living tips include walking to farmers' markets and nearby restaurants that serve local fare, in order to save on gas and pollution and support local businesses, Lautzenheiser said.

Whether you're in the market for a new home or just looking to make some small changes, the time to go start greening your living space is now. Just think of the money you'll save on energy and taxes and the difference you'll make in the environment. **IN**



COURTESY WEST VILLAGE

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