

RENO HOME

INSPIRING AREA HOMES

Sustainable redesign

A LOOK INSIDE THIS
SOUTHWEST RENO HOME

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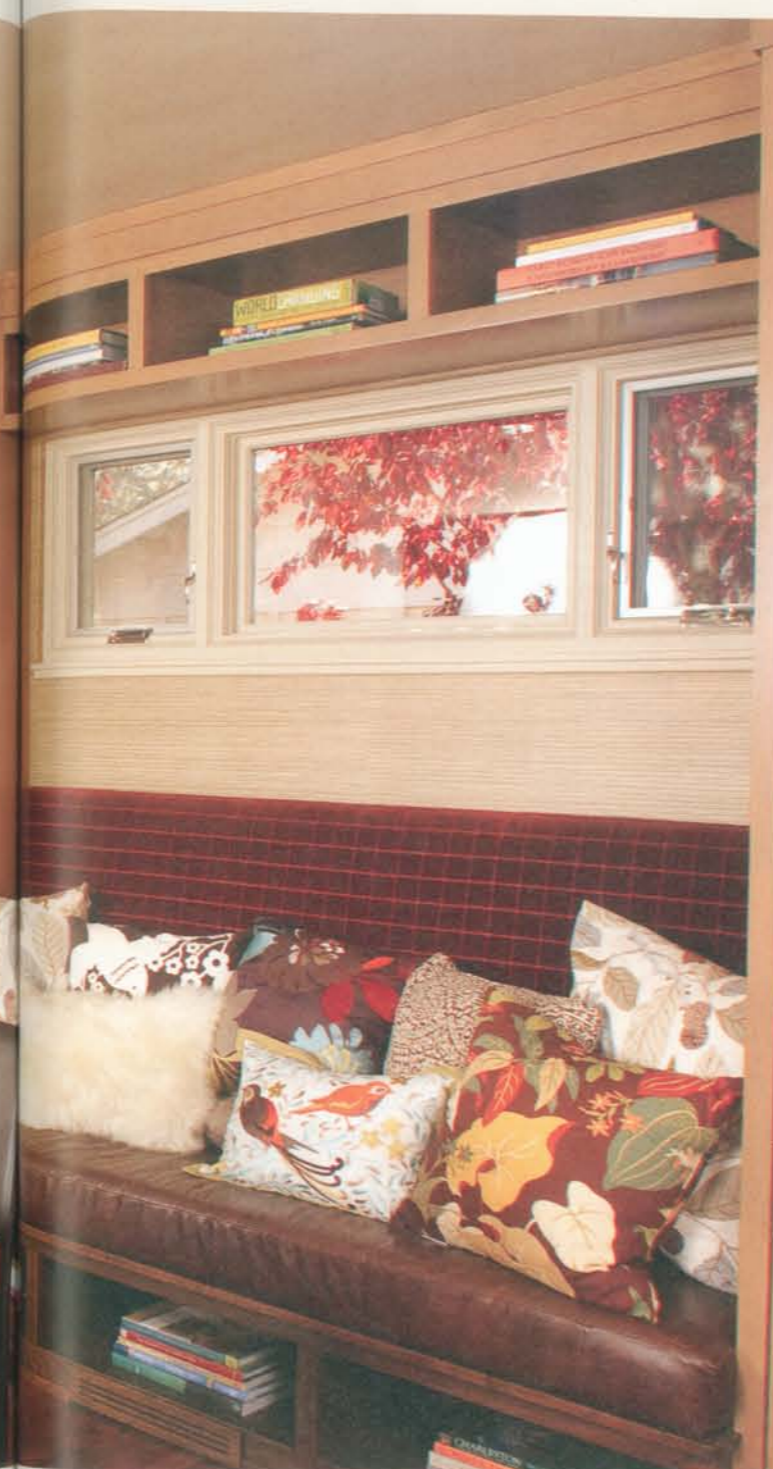
EARTH-FRIENDLY
OPTIONS

GARDEN DIARY

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NESTING PLACE



Nature is the inspiration for the blend of tones and textures in this green renovation



SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN The O'Briens use this corner nook in the living room as the perfect place to read the newspaper while sipping their morning coffee. "The green in the upholstery draws in the green of the outdoors," designer Kovac says.

TODAY'S HOT DESIGN INDUSTRY buzzword may be "sustainability," but local designer Sheri Kovac has a whole new interpretation of the word.

It evolved when local couple Tim and Mary O'Brien approached her about a significant remodel that would make their two-bedroom, one-bath 1960s ranch-style home in Reno's old southwest a better fit for their family of three. Kovac worked for Cheryl Chenault Interiors at the time.

"There is a side to sustainability that is lesser known," Kovac says. "This couple easily could have put this house on the market and moved elsewhere. But instead, they were true to the space and aware of their family lifecycle, deciding instead to add on to the home instead of scrapping it and starting over."

Two years after the O'Briens first approached Kovac, the family now has the home of their dreams.

"When completed, my husband and I came and sat in our living room and just marveled at the change," O'Brien says. "She (Kovac) created our sanctuary, our nest."

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PREP PLACE

Sydney light fixtures define the boundaries and the focal areas of the O'Brien kitchen. A highlight: Vetrazzo countertops, comprised of 85 percent recycled glass from office glazing windows. And stained wood with a subtle horizontal grain lengthens the lines of the space.



MASTER RETREAT

Policelli sconces from Italy accent the master bath, as does the full-length mirror that hides shallow cabinetry behind it, ideal for toiletry storage.

The nest, as O'Brien calls it, is an appropriate metaphor, as the entire process began with a Tom Judd painting called *The Visitation*, featuring a vibrant bird peering upward against a blue sky, purchased at Stremmel Gallery.

"This piece inspired the entire renovation," Kovac says. "It sounds strange, but I'd literally go to Stremmel Gallery and spend hours just admiring the piece, absorbing the feeling, the palette, the textures."

In addition to the painting, Kovac notes that nature inspired much of the palette used in renovating the space into a three-bedroom, three-bath home reflective of the O'Briens' creative spirit.

In the kitchen, the Vetrazzo-slab countertops are comprised of 85 percent recycled glass from unsuspecting

places: Skyy Vodka, Corona, and other spirit bottles as well as office glazing windows among them.

"When the sun hits these countertops, the teal and turquoise colors are glorious," Kovac says. "And they are so much fun to investigate. There's even an embedded screw in one slab."

Kovac also invited the outdoors in through the living room redesign, with an entire wall of floor-to-ceiling Low-E Pella windows lining the back of the home.

"My favorite moment was after the entire project was done," she says. "I sat on the steps descending into the living room, and it was snowing. I honestly felt as though I was inside a magnificent snow globe."

The space is warmed by one of the most innovative sustainable elements of the home, an EcoSmart flueless, clean-burning fireplace that requires no utility connections for fuel supply.

"It burns on denatured ethanol," Kovac says. "It is completely safe and totally clean."

Wool carpeting, grasscloth wall coverings, reclaimed wood and a cold-rolled steel hearth, art ledges, and entry door complete the sustainable adaptation of this ranch-style home.

"They were true to the space," Kovac says of the O'Briens and how they approached the redesign.

"I'm a huge lover of nature," O'Brien adds. "And now our home is natural, organic, and comfortable. This is how the home was always meant to be." ■

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Designer Q&A:

SHERRI KOVAC

KOVAC DESIGN LTD.

1 What is the biggest source of inspiration for most of your projects?

That's easy — the clients. They live in the outcome of the design. It has to work for them, inspire them, and rejuvenate them.

2 What is the most unusual element you've incorporated into a design project?

A swinging bed. Don't ask.

3 Do you have a short-and-sweet version of your design philosophy?

Live in the present and honor what you have. A carte-blanche budget doesn't make good design. Rather, knowing what to do with what you have or can afford is key.

4 What one design tip do you think most people easily can apply in their homes?

Permission.

5 What is your favorite locally owned home/design store? Do you have a favorite "big box" type home/design store?



Interviewed by
Mikalee Byerman

I have to go with Red Chair, Functional Design, and Truckee River Tile & Stone for locally owned. For "big box" stores it has to be Earthstone Gallery and Cabinet & Lighting. They are locally owned, too, but they feel big. Really big!

6 Which renowned design professional do you most respect (or emulate)?

Locally, I have to give a shout-out to Cheryl Chenault. On the world stage it has to be Clodagh, Kelly Hoppen, and Lynette Jennings. ■

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