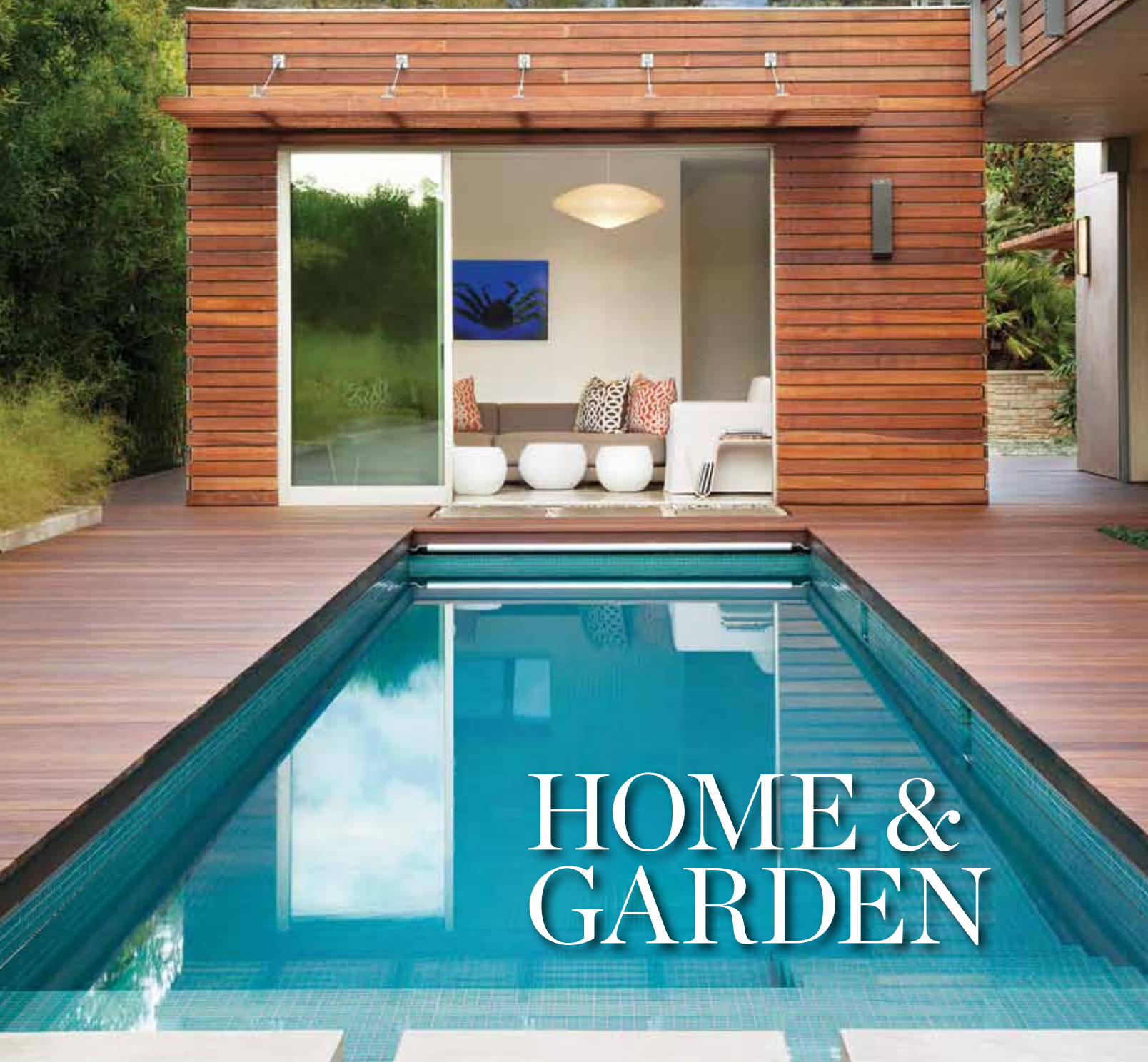


HOME DINING RECREATION TRAVEL COMMUNITY HEALTH STYLE

805 LIVING

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HOME & GARDEN

DOWN-TO-EARTH DESIGN

Sustainability and luxury don't have to be at odds.

BY MALLORY McCREARY

KEEPING TRACK of which woods are fast growing, which countries support fair-labor practices, and which companies reuse and recycle can be a full-time job when trying to go green in home design. That's why reading labels is so important, says Maureen Fisher, who, along with business partner Joan Vaccaro, established **Design in Real Life** (designinreallife.com) in Calabasas last year. The duo focus on stocking sustainable products that look good and are thorough in their labeling, telling customers what the materials are, who made the product, and where it originated.

Though "committed to living working green" (one of their mottos), the pair approach their practice with a friendlier vision. "We know people aren't perfect," Fisher says. "To proselytize and say that everything should be green isn't us." She points to the importance of sustainability and conscious choices when buying: For example, one set of luxury cotton sheets can last longer and be gentler to the earth overall than buying multiple sets of cheaper sheets that will need to be thrown away.

"We feel that [going green] is becoming a part of our culture," Fisher says. "[In 10 years] I don't think people are going to have to choose. Most products will incorporate much more sustainability."

Design in Real Life is a retail store and an online shop, but it strives to be a community. Monthly classes on home design agendas (as varied as controlling clutter and choosing paint color) gather a maximum of 10 people for a discussion focusing on specific issues the attendees want to solve. Upcoming seminars tackle window treatments (April 19) and creating outdoor rooms (May 10). Customers can make an appointment for a free consultation at the "design bar" to solve personal design challenges—green or not—and get insight into how the design process works.

"We offer access to the best in design," Fisher says. "We wanted people to be able to have wonderful things and have people look at their world in different ways. Your environment has a huge effect on you."



Pro Picks

"We're the only people outside of Cisco stores in LA to carry Cisco Brothers furniture," Fisher says, adding that the company uses sustainable wood, water-based glues, natural latex and down, and vegetable-dyed fabrics in their furniture. Cisco Brothers **BETULA CHAISE** (below left; starting from \$1,835) and **REINA CHAIR** (above; starting from \$1,075); Design in Real Life, Calabasas, designinreallife.com



Natural **JUTE TASSELS** (\$75 each) are handmade with vintage pearls and recycled gold thread; Design in Real Life, Calabasas, designinreallife.com. >





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Editor's Picks

1. Stone Forest DROP-IN BAMBOO SINK from the modular Sync series (\$940); Santa Barbara Plumbing Supplies, 805-965-5291; or stoneforest.com.

2. The ALEGRA DRESSER (\$1,525) from Dovetail Furniture is made from reclaimed elm with a smoked-wood finish; Vintage Villa Home Collection, Westlake Village, vintagevillahomecollection.com.

3. Sustainably harvested DuChâteau HERITAGE TIMBER EDITION FLOORING (MSRP \$15 per square foot) replicates the distressed patina of reclaimed barn wood and also uses a plant-based, low-VOC, preservative-free finish; Reed Floors, Carpinteria, reedfloors.com.

4. It's the mix of recycled glass and natural marble and limestone that create dimension and interest in the AVANI HERRINGBONE TILE IN CHILL BLEND by Mandala (\$71 per square foot); Canyon Tile & Stone, Agoura Hills, canyontileandstone.com.

5. KIREI BOARD (\$10-\$14 per square foot) is made from reclaimed sorghum straw that would otherwise be burned or thrown away and no-added-urea formaldehyde adhesive. The boards can be used for custom cabinetry, casework, and furniture, as in the headboard display shown here; Ecologic Life, Ventura, ecologiclife.com; or LivinGreen, Santa Barbara, livinggreen.com. ♦