

15 Products for Greening an Old House

Going green with a historic restoration is easier than ever, thanks to products that blend eco-friendly technology with timeless forms. By [the OHJ Editorial Staff](#)



The Galveston Historical Foundation gave this 1890 Folk Victorian cottage a green makeover, blending high-tech products (solar panels, a wind turbine, heat-resistant window film) with preservation practices, earning a LEED platinum certification.

In the early days of the “green” movement (i.e., a few years ago), eco-friendliness went hand-in-hand with the newest of the new: cutting-edge buildings with sharp angles rendered in cool, clean, and often soulless concrete, steel, and wood. Despite all their charms, old houses were deemed drafty, inefficient relics by green crusaders.

But slowly, folks started getting wise to what preservationists knew all along: Old buildings *are* green. Thanks to the concept of embodied energy, restoring an old house is often greener than building a new one, even one with all the eco-minded bells and whistles. And now manufacturers are getting in on the act, too, churning out products that are kind to the environment (think recycled and sustainable components) *and* appropriate for historic homes. We’ve rounded up 15 of our favorites for every stage of the restoration process.



Insulation and old houses go hand in hand; Bonded Logic’s Ultra Touch Denim Insulation adds new benefits to this old-house standby. Made primarily of recycled denim, the cotton batt insulation is free of formaldehyde and VOCs. No protective clothing needed during installation—just a dust mask. It’s available in R-values ranging from 13 to 30. (480) 812-9114; bondedlogic.com



If you’re aiming to patch missing slates or replace a worn-out roof with a lightweight alternative, EcoStar’s Majestic Slate is a budget- and eco-friendly solution. Made of 80 percent post-industrial recycled rubber and plastic, these faux slates come with a Class 4 Impact Resistance Rating and are available in 10 colors. (800) 780-9870; ecostartilellc.com



Some old-house products have always been green—take milk paint, for instance, which uses milk protein and biodegradable ingredients in lieu of harsh chemicals. [Old-Fashioned Milk Paint's](#) SafePaint line for walls contains zero VOCs and is free of plastics and synthetic preservatives. Available in 20 standard, mixable colors. (866) 350-6455; milkpaint.com



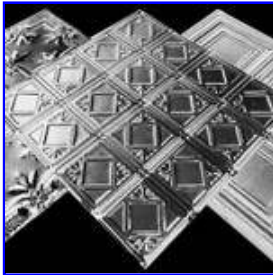
Restorers often need to coax century-old woodwork back to life. Sansin's Zero VOC Interior Penetrating Wood Stain and Eco Tone Color System offer an interior staining system that's free of odor and VOCs, with excellent penetration and easy application (wipe or spray) to boot. (877) 726-7461; sansin.com



Plastic sheeting comes in handy for a range of uses around the house, from dropcloths to hauling stuff around. These tarps, made of recycled billboards, are as tough as they are green—at 20 mils thick, they're nearly four times heavier than the standard blue tarps available at home-improvement stores. (303) 478-6193; repurposedmaterialsinc.com



Perfect for adding a pop of color to a kitchen or bathroom, Fireclay Tile's Crush Series is the company's most eco-friendly tile yet. The glass tiles—available in 40 colors and 17 shapes and sizes, from subway tiles to pennyrounds and hexes—are made of 100-percent recycled glass, sourced from within 20 miles of the company's California factory. (408) 275-1182; fireclaytile.com



Decorative tin ceilings were a mainstay of fine 19th-century homes, and are a fairly simple way to restore authenticity. [Outwater's](#) 2' x 2' unfinished ceiling panels come in a variety of Victorian-friendly patterns, but they've also got a modern green twist—they're made of 30-percent recycled steel. (800) 631-8375; outwater.com



If you're looking for fine wood floors with an aged patina, what could be better than flooring created from recycled barns and old warehouses? [Authentic Wood Floors](#) creates all of their products from reclaimed wood that's 100 years or older. Several varieties of wood are available, including heart pine and chestnut. (800) 765-3966; authenticwoodfloors.com



Aluminum wall tiles were *de rigueur* in kitchens of the 1950s. Today you can reprise the look using tiles created from 100-percent recycled scrap metal. Available in sizes from 2×2 to 12×12, the tiles come in four finishes (rough to polished). (866) 250-3273; ecofriendlyflooring.com



Finding replacements for missing panes of original cabinet glass can be a headache—never mind finding ones that are eco-friendly, too. Enter Bendheim's EcoGlass panels—made from 60-percent recycled material and fired in an oxygen-fueled furnace, they come in several vintage textures, such as the pebbly Gothic glass shown. (800) 221-7379; bendheimcabinetglass.com



This is recycling at its artistic best—cabinetmaker Stephen Staples takes salvaged components (reclaimed lumber, shutters, doors, hardware) and fashions them into one-of-a-kind cupboards that are both eclectic and historic. (508) 695-1155; staplescabinetmakers.com



Looking to accent your kitchen with some vintage industrial lighting? The Normandy pendant from Eleek is an instant classic—and it's got a feel-good green pedigree. It's available in either recycled aluminum or bronze, with an energy-efficient halogen or LED bulb. (503) 232-5526; eleekinc.com



If you've got a big family (or just a large dining room that needs filling), a spacious dining table is a must. Arhaus's hefty Kensington table delivers, with a classic trestle style that's crafted from 100-percent recycled pine. (866) 427-4287; arhaus.com



Don't let its traditional looks fool you—there's nothing staid about this outdoor Oriental rug from Viva Terra, made from recycled soda bottles and packing material. Durable, washable, and reversible, it's perfect for adding a touch of sophistication to casual areas, like a porch or mudroom. (800) 233-6011; vivaterra.com




Its appearance might be pure 1920s Deco, but the Cascade crystal chandelier from WAC Lighting has a 21st-century secret: Behind its hundreds of faceted miniature crystals are low-voltage LED bulbs that use just 5 watts of electricity to provide a decadent glow. (800) 526-2588; waclighting.com

Online exclusive: [Green your house the easy way with these 7 tips.](#)

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