

# WHERE GREEN MEETS CUISINE

*Remodeled kitchen puts environmental friendliness squarely on the front burner*

By Gerald M. Gay

SPECIAL TO THE ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Judy Krausser's recently remodeled kitchen is a green dream come true for the Rancho Vistoso resident. Krausser is a talented cook. On any given night, the Weight Watchers consultant is throwing together a tasty meal, a salad or pasta dish, to enjoy with her husband.

So when the Kraussers found they had the budget to renovate the space a couple of years ago, making it more efficient for her and safer for the environment, Judy went to work.

"I wanted it to be as green as possible," she said.

Judy and husband Dieter Krausser have always been conscientious when it comes to conservation. They watch their water consumption, recycle and turn off lights when they are not in a room.

The kitchen was a good way for them to make an even bigger impact.

They replaced the drab fluorescent tube lighting installed in the ceiling with mood-setting, multicolored LED lights, meant to last longer and use less energy.

The old microwave, refrigerator and

stove were replaced with sleek, white Electrolux units. Electrolux has long been a known leader in eco-friendly appliances. The Bosch dishwasher, Waste King waste disposer and Swanstone sink were purchased for similar reasons.

"I did a lot of research," Krausser said.

The most noticeable change in the kitchen are the IceStone countertops, where Krausser prepares her meals.

The smooth, speckled counters, which run along both food-prep walls, are made of concrete and recycled glass originally designed for landfills.

The Kraussers purchased the IceStone from Spectrum Stone in Tucson, but the actual slabs were shipped in from Brooklyn.

Judy Krausser said the cost of the countertops was more than she was quoted for granite, but she enjoyed the look enough that she thought it was worth the price.

"I fell in love with it," Krausser said. "We know we are going to stay in this house for a while, so we went ahead and bit the bullet."

The eco-friendly elements complement some of the other



Maple cabinets and full-extension drawers provide enough room for all of Judy Krausser's cooking supplies and glassware.

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features the Kraussers had redone in the kitchen, including new, 20-inch floor tiles, maple cabinets and full-extension drawers with enough room for all of Judy's cooking supplies.

A mesmerizing copper-colored,

mosaic-tiled backsplash runs the length of the counters, while a custom pantry, with pullout shelves for easier access and halogen lighting, sits in a prebuilt closet near the front entrance.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- IceStone recycled glass countertops and Swanstone sink from Spectrum Stone — \$8,569.
- Mosaic backsplash glass from Home Depot — \$316.
- Electrolux microwave, refrigerator, stove and Bosch dishwasher from Sears — \$6,927.
- Maple cabinets and drawers from Dura Supreme — \$8,962.
- LED lights and fixtures — \$745.
- Closet pantry shelves and light — \$510.
- Delta Pilar Touch Faucet with soap dispenser — \$335.
- Waste King L-8000 Legend Waste Disposer — \$114.25.
- 20-inch-tile floor from Sonoran Sunset Tile — \$1,969.
- 37 stainless steel Top Knob Princetonian handles for the cabinets and drawers — \$375.
- Labor — \$35 per hour through a handyman for most of the work.
- Total remodel time: Approximately 110 hours.

A stenciled trim, made of brightly colored purple, red and yellow flowers, surrounds the ceiling's LED lights, as well as the dining table near the kitchen's back window.

Krausser stenciled the flowers herself.

"I wanted something that didn't look quite so plain," she said.

The changes in the kitchen have led to other additions, including a full, raised garden in the backyard, where Krausser grows tomatoes, cucumbers,

lettuce, onions and a variety of other veggies for her salads.

Krausser said the kitchen is only the beginning.

"We have a downstairs bathroom we are thinking about remodeling next," she said.

"We are going to try to include as many green features in there as we can."

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## EASIER THAN YOU MAY THINK

Thinking green on remodeling jobs has never been easier, thanks to businesses like Originate Natural Building Materials, near downtown at 526 N. Ninth Ave.

Owner Natasha Winnik said the building supply company, providing non-toxic, durable materials produced from renewable resources since 2003, has managed to survive the economic downturn. That's partly because the materials offered by the showroom can just as easily be used in remodeling and renovation projects.

Winnik said recycled glass countertops like the Kraussers' are popular items, if people can make it past the cost. The price range for a slab of recycled glass can run from \$47 to \$112 per square foot, based on color.

"Cheaper products are made in China where the cost of living is completely different," Winnik said. "These companies are manufacturing in the United States, paying American wages and using green facilities. They are walking the walk, which is why costs are higher."

Other popular products at Originate include:

**Cork flooring:** Made from the bark of the cork oak tree, the flooring has a quick-lock middle layer with cork in the wear layer and underlayment. Winnik said this type of flooring has been popular in housing and commercial projects because of the way it feels underfoot, especially "in something like a kitchen where you stand a lot." Cork flooring, at \$5 to \$8 per square foot, also is good for absorbing cold and noise.

"If you have a room with high ceilings and hard walls, where sound can bounce and echo, cork floors dampen that."

**No-Volatile Organic Compound Paint:** Originate sells both clay and acrylic no-VOC paints, which "gives someone super-sensitive to chemicals a way to paint where they couldn't paint before," Winnik said.

No-VOC paints are \$36 to \$55 a gallon, based on color.

**Soy-based concrete stains and sealers:** These stains and sealers are created by a company in Phoenix called EcoProCote and sell for \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Winnik said the stain is a penetrating stain, so it won't just sit on the surface as a water-based stain might. It is also do-it-yourself friendly. "A lot of people coming in to buy this stuff are not contractors," she said.

Call 792-4207 for more information.



When designing their kitchen makeover, the Kraussers included this Swanstone sink and touch faucet with eco-friendliness in mind.



The IceStone countertops are the most noticeable change. They are made of concrete and recycled glass from landfills.



A dazzling copper-colored, mosaic-tiled backsplash runs the entire length of the counters.



New drawers slide all the way out to maximize the space available for storage in the Kraussers' new kitchen.



LED lights have replaced the kitchen's mundane fluorescent tubes. The LEDs last longer, too.



The old refrigerator was replaced with this energy-saving Electrolux mode. The microwave, dishwasher and stove are new, too.