


# GREEN CHAMPION

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## NATASHA WINNIK CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH NATURAL BUILDING MATERIALS

BY HAILEY COLBRUNN

Using her 15 years of experience working with natural building materials, business owner Natasha Winnik hopes to educate people on how to make eco-conscious decisions about the products they incorporate into their design and build projects.

Winnik received her bachelor's degree in Architecture from the University of Miami. While she was pursuing her master's at the University of Arizona, she was involved in an internship through which she studied and researched green building materials for the Presidio Trust. This experience led her away from architectural design and into working with the environmentally-sound building materials she showcases today at her Tucson-based showroom, Originiate.

Originiate, established in October 2003, serves as a showroom and community resource for environmentally-friendly interior finishes. "The focus has been on materials with recycled content or renewable content, and less chemicals and lower toxicity," said Winnik. These materials are displayed at Originiate along with art from local artists, a succulent wall, and an outdoor courtyard space.

"Up until then you could really only see the materials online or you could request a SMALL sample," said Winnik, who has served on the boards of WAMO and the Dunbar/Spring Neighborhood Association. "The idea of being able to come in and see materials in person, being able to talk to somebody who had experience with them, and being able to find people who knew how to work with them has allowed

more people to be able to use these materials in their projects."

According to Winnik, over half of Originiate's materials are made in the United States, and a large portion are produced in Europe, including paints, sealers, and stains from Germany and cork from Portugal. Originiate's product selection includes countertops, tile, cabinetry, flooring, paints and plaster, stains, sealers, adhesives, fireplaces, and salvaged building materials.

Winnik has not only created a place to acquire natural building materials – she's creating an entire network of resources to help people more easily complete projects in a way that promotes a healthier living environment. She has connected people to materials through education, and has helped drive creativity, knowledge, and environmentally-friendly, sustainable projects to their lasting fruition. "I like that I'm helping people improve their own environment through the choice of their materials," she said. "I view a lot of it as education; sharing knowledge with other people so they can make decisions for themselves about what works for them."

Originiate serves southern Arizona. Visit Originiate's website at [www.originateenbm.com](http://www.originateenbm.com) to learn about products, services, and projects, or visit the showroom in Tucson to see the materials and meet the people working to bring it all together.

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Hailey Colbrunn moved to Arizona from Minnesota two years ago and finds continuous inspiration from the eclectic landscape and the opportunities for exploration.