

WHICH SURFACE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Natalie Freidberg, a green building consultant with All Shades of Green, a sustainable living center in Los Angeles, suggests asking yourself the following questions before you buy any material.

- **WHERE IS IT MADE?** "You want to find, if possible, things that are sourced and manufactured locally," Freidberg says.
- **HOW WILL YOU USE IT?** Are you willing to use a chopping board or put a drip tray under a bottle of olive oil or red wine?
- **IS IT POTENTIALLY TOXIC?** "Make sure it's nontoxic and not outgassing anything into your home," Freidberg says. "It doesn't matter how beautiful it is if it makes you sick."

CRADLE TO CRADLE

Far too often, old countertops wind up in the landfill. You can avoid that by thinking ahead when you install new countertops, says Debbie Hindman, co-author of *Sustainable Residential Interiors* (Wiley, 2006) and marketing manager with Associates III in Denver.

"When you order a new countertop, have it installed so it can be easily removed in one piece and salvaged for reuse," Hindman says. In addition to making your removal more efficient, this allows you to avoid mastics and adhesives, which frequently contain formaldehyde. **NH**



EcoTop Surfaces countertops are made with a blend of bamboo and post-consumer recycled paper fibers.



Kirei bamboo countertops use little or no formaldehyde to bind the wood.



Avonite Surfaces Kaleidoscope is made from reclaimed solid-surface materials.

RESOURCES

3FORM
(801) 649-2500
www.3-form.com
100 percent post-consumer recycled HDPE (plastic) countertops

AVONITE SURFACES
(800) 354-9858
www.avonitesurfaces.com
countertops from reclaimed solid surfaces

ECOTOP SURFACES
(253) 507-4622
www.kliptech.com/ecotop.html
bamboo and recycled paper countertops

ICESTONE
(718) 624-4900
www.icestone.biz
recycled glass and concrete countertops

KIREI
(619) 236-9924
www.kireiusa.com
agricultural fiber, wheat, bamboo, sorghum and coconut countertops

PAPERSTONE
(360) 538-9815
www.paperstoneproducts.com
100 percent post-consumer recycled paper and cardboard surfaces

RICHLITE
(888) 383-5533
www.richlite.com/countertop
recycled paper countertops

SHEKASTONE
(507) 357-4177
www.shelkastone.com
recycled paper countertops

TORZO SURFACES
(800) 770-7523
www.torzosurfaces.com
surfaces made from wheat straw, sunflower seed hulls, recycled wood chips and other fibers

VETRAZZO
(510) 234-5550
www.vetrazzo.com
recycled glass countertops

LORI TOBIAS, a regular Natural Home contributor and a staff writer for The Oregonian, lives on the Oregon coast with her husband, Chan, and their three dogs.