

**a letter from  
Rita S. Wilkins, President:**

Hello, and welcome back to another issue of our newsletter. We've received such great feedback and compliments on our newsletter so far, and I want to thank you for that. We hope that we can continue to provide you with helpful design information that you can incorporate into your lives and homes.

In this issue, I want to continue showing you several ways we can all incorporate good design in every part of our lives, with a special focus on "green" or "sustainable" design. The principles of green design are very basic, and refer generally to choosing products that support energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Like so many other industries, sustainability is an increasingly important segment of architectural and interior design, "green" design has also gained a great deal of local notoriety as the new Comcast corporate headquarters battles for the title of the tallest "green" building in the United States.

We also want to show off some of the great spaces we've been working on over the past few months. Hopefully you'll see something you like and we can help bring to life in your home or office.

On a personal note — I want to share with you that I am getting married! Jim and I are also building a new house, so we'll be going through the same design decisions as you.

Enjoy,

*Rita*



**look inside**

- glass tile mosaics . . . . . 2
- get the most out of your space . . . . . 2
- kitchen and bathroom design trends . . . . . 2
- bring "green" into your home . . . . . 3
- weekend trips . . . . . 3
- bath showroom. . . . . 4
- refer your friends. . . . . 4

**some hot new colors to show off your wild side!**

We're seeing colors and trends gravitating towards a "Moroccan" feel with vibrant

**reds, yellows, and oranges. Browns** are getting a little softer by shifting away from strong Earth tones towards softer caramel or pecan shades.

The big surprise is that **purple** is back. The purples are sophisticated tones with hints of red and blue mixed in, and beautiful grayed and smoky violets.

Try experimenting with these colors — it's just paint!



at your service

spring  
summer  
2006

## a new favorite: glass tile mosaics

Glass tiles are a great way to add some visual interest to a space like a patio, kitchen floor or counter, and even your entry. It's not just for the bathroom, so keep an open mind and look for new ways to use materials in uncommon settings. Glass tiles work great as a backsplash in your kitchen, or as a focal point on a wall. Try back-lighting them — adding yet another dimension. Have a look at the mosaic glass tile samples shown here.



## are you getting the most out of your space?

A renovation isn't just about replacing the old with the new. It is one of the best times to completely rethink how your space fits your lifestyle, and how you want it to work for you. Proper space planning and design improve your lifestyle by improving the function, traffic flow, and even available storage within a space. Don't be afraid to move walls, or even eliminate them. It's the best way to really make a space your own. Don't know how to approach planning your space? Just ask us, and we can help you visualize the possibilities.

## here's a rundown in growing kitchen and bathroom design trends:

Kitchen and bathroom renovations continue to be the most popular and profitable projects for homeowners. They cover two of the most popular living areas in our homes, and offer the most return not just for resale and value, but lifestyle and quality of life for us all. Here are a few quick facts on both:

### Kitchens:

Consumers are looking for luxury at every price point. Once there is a good space plan, it is the details (moldings, countertops, cabinetry, lighting, and appliances) that can be used to create a very attractive family living space that looks and feels luxurious.

- Professional stainless steel appliances help to "pick it up a notch" (as Emeril would say).
- Great lighting is a must. Instead of pendants, try a crystal chandelier above your island.
- Instead of a standard island, try retrofitting an antique cabinet or credenza.
- Concrete counter tops are an interesting new choice for a contemporary look. Try combining it with granite or other natural stone material.
- One of the age old requirements for every good cook — the pantry — has found new ways to be integrated into the cabinetry itself.

### Bathrooms:

- Heated floors and towel racks are now everyday luxuries for us all.
- The most popular upgrade in bathroom designs are multi-headed shower fixtures, so we can replicate the spa experience at home.
- Walk-in showers are the most popular trend in bathrooms.
- See our photos, on page 4, of the Kirk showroom where they feature some of the newest bath fixtures in the industry.



here, an interesting vessel shows one of the new looks

For the ultimate in luxury, try a fireplace in either your kitchen or bath.

## ways to bring some “green” into your home today

Green design doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. There are several options readily available for most everyday construction and design products and furnishings, with more offered every season. Like all good design, sustainable “green” design is focused on discovering an intelligent balance of aesthetics and technology to produce the best products. For more information on green design and sustainability, you can visit the U.S. Green Building Council at [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org).

There are so many simple ways to incorporate sustainable design into any project, big or small. Simply choosing a water-based paint, or simply ask your designer to specify materials with as much recycled content where available. Here are a few specific products and tactics we suggest for starting down the road to sustainability.

### Reface and Repurpose:

When you're renovating your kitchen, don't just throw away old cabinets—unless they're really, really old. You might be able to simply reconfigure the boxes in a new layout and reface them with new doors. Not only do you save space in a landfill, you save considerably on your bottom line. You're now free to spend your money on other luxuries in your renovation, like a surround sound system for the kitchen, or appliance upgrades which boost your returns tremendously when reselling.

### Bamboo Flooring:

Bamboo is a grass and replenishes in about 4 to 5 years, instead of the typical 10-15 necessary for most hard

woods from our forests. There are nearly 1,000 species of bamboo, allowing infinite choices of grains and stains. Bamboo is a very attractive yet durable floor.

### Composite Decking:

You've seen the park benches made from recycled soda bottles. Try TREX for your next project. Many contractors are offering this as a great alternative to hard woods, but that's not the only benefit. Most of these products are made from recycled plastics that otherwise clog landfills for centuries. Now you can save money up front, do something great for the environment, and reap the lifestyle benefits of an outdoor living space.

### Carpet Tiles:

Increasingly more popular and stylish, carpet tiles allow for easy reconfiguration and relocation. These tiles incorporate all the necessary pieces from the bottom up, and simply fit together. With varieties available from most suppliers, it's easy to find a style you'll like.

### Seating:

The “Life” chair by Knoll. This award-winning and innovative office chair highlights the best of “green” design. It's made from environmentally sensitive materials, and incorporates advanced ergonomic science in a stylish and attractive package.

Feel free to contact us for more information on any of these products mentioned. We will be happy to assist you by including them in your next project.



### who doesn't like a weekend trip?

Want to check out the coolest designs and latest developments in “green” design and architecture while you're at it? There's an upcoming exhibition at the National Building Museum, just down the road in D.C., titled *The Green House: New Directions in Sustainable Architecture and Design* running May 20th to June 3. You'll be introduced to the basics of sustainable interior design and architecture from material selection and land use, to energy efficiency. You already have a head start, so why not? We'll see you there.

For more information, visit the National Building Museum website at [www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org).

**read all about**

**wild colors**

**glass tile mosaics**

**design trends**

**“green” design & more**

**refer your friends!**

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your name: \_\_\_\_\_

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would they be interested in

residential design       commercial design

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what type of projects may they be interested in?

- renovation                       custom furniture
- second home                     new construction
- kitchen remodel                 space planning
- custom cabinetry
- other design services, please describe:

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• • • • •

May we use your name when contacting them?

Yes                       No

**bath showroom to visit**

In the last issue you saw the concept for the design of an exciting new bath showroom here in North Wilmington.



Well, now it's time to stop in and see our friends at the new Kirk's Bath & Kitchen Showplace. You can check out some of the newest bathroom innovations.