

# flavors

The Forum for Atlanta Food Culture and Dining

Down to Earth

FOOD, WINE, ENTERTAINING, AND HOME

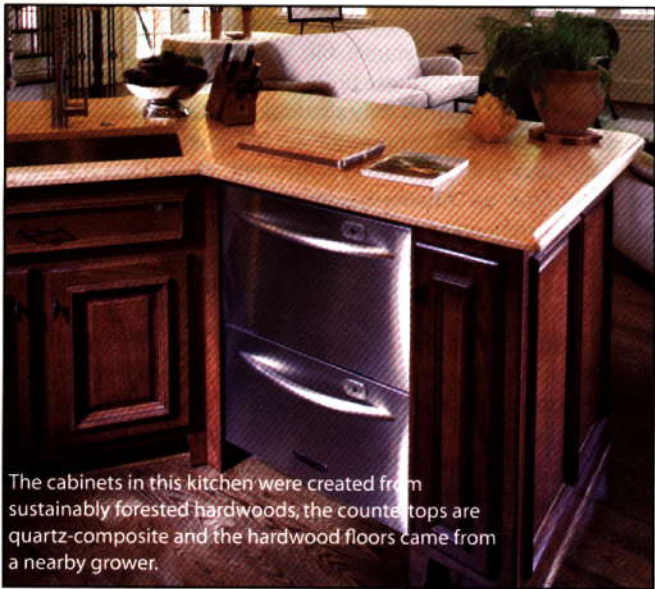
SUMMER 2008 \$4.95



Display until September 1

## #2 NEW AND IMPROVED

If you're in the market for an environmentally-friendly home, residences don't come much greener than the brand-new "Forrest Manor." Located just minutes from Chastain Park, this 5-bedroom, 4.5-bathroom home (currently on the market) is a model of just how eco-friendly you can get when you start from scratch. Take the kitchen, for example. The cabinets were created from sustainably forested hardwoods, the countertops are quartz-composite



The cabinets in this kitchen were created from sustainably forested hardwoods, the countertops are quartz-composite and the hardwood floors came from a nearby grower.

(which means they look like granite but don't emit harmful chemicals) and the hardwood floors came from a nearby grower. The Energy-Star appliances are top-of-the-line, and the KitchenAid pull-out dishwasher is divided into two sections so you can run a half-load of dishes without wasting water. The Wolf range features a hood that blows air outside (instead of into the roof or attic), and there's even a pull-out recycling center in which to toss empty cans. "This is an Energy-Star qualified home, and it uses 44 percent less energy than a house of a similar size would," says Jeffrey Dinkle, president of Eco Custom Homes, which designed and constructed the house.

### Eco-Friendly Features

- ✓ 1200 cfm external-mounted blower with stainless hood
- ✓ Cabinets created from sustainably forested hardwoods
- ✓ Central vacuum vac pan
- ✓ Energy-Star appliances
- ✓ KitchenAid pull-out double-drawer dishwasher
- ✓ Locally grown hardwood floors
- ✓ Quartz-composite countertops
- ✓ Recycling center
- ✓ Tankless hot-water heaters



Forrest Manor's kitchen is a model of just how eco-friendly you can get when you start from scratch.

## Other Great Amenities

Not only did Eco Custom Homes take the environment into consideration when they built this kitchen, they also applied feng shui design principles to it. "We made sure the windows allowed bright outside light to come in," Dinkle says. "We placed water fixtures and heating appliances near each other to balance them out. We did a lot of things to ensure the home has a positive energy to it."

## Why It Works

"A lot of people are interested in this house for health reasons," Dinkle says. "Part of creating a green home is creating an airtight house. Plus, with water restrictions and energy costs increasing, you don't necessarily have to be environmentally aware to appreciate what this house has to offer."

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## Ready to Go Green?

Whether you're renovating your kitchen or you simply want to take a few small steps in a greener direction, here are some helpful tips to keep in mind:

### CONSERVE YOUR ENERGY.

- **If you're buying new appliances**, look for ones with the Energy-Star logo, which means they use 10 to 50 percent less energy than standard models. Also note that stacked refrigerators and freezers use less energy than side-by-side ones, and gas ranges are more energy-efficient than electric. Sure, energy-saving appliances are generally more expensive than the standard models, but in the long run, they'll save you money. "Refrigerators, for example, run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," says Tommy Linstroth, head of sustainable initiatives at Melaver Inc., a property investment and management firm focused on sustainability. "If you get a unit that's 20 percent more efficient than a regular one, it pays for itself quickly."

- **Make sure to use compact-fluorescent bulbs** in your kitchen's light fixtures, as they use about a quarter of the power of standard bulbs. You can even buy ones that are dimmable and have a color that mimics daylight.

### DRAIN YOUR WATER BILL.

- **If you're in the market for a dishwasher**, look for an Energy-Star, double-drawer variety that allows you to run a half-load of dishes without wasting water. Even if you don't have an energy-efficient dishwasher, it's better to use the one you do have than to wash your plates by hand. "If you wash your dishes by hand after every meal, it uses substantially more water than simply running a dishwasher at full load," Linstroth says. "Think about it — if you have to fill your sink up, wash each dish by hand and then rinse each one, that can be pretty water-intensive."

### GET SOME FRESH AIR.

- **Peer inside your range hood and ask yourself, Where is that air going?** In many cases, it's actually just funneling from your kitchen into your attic or crawlspace, and it will eventually recirculate back into your kitchen. "Venting moisture generated

by cooking to the exterior is important to keep your living area healthy and free from mold and mildew," says Carl Seville, president of Seville Consulting, which helps homeowners and builders create healthy, efficient and durable structures. "Install a range hood that is ducted to the outside, being careful not to oversize the fan. Too strong a fan can cause fireplaces, water heaters and furnaces to back draft, bringing poisonous carbon monoxide into your house."

- **Another way to purify your air** is to use green cleaning products instead of ammonia-based ones, and if you're painting your walls, be sure to use low volatile-organic-compound paints.

### GET MATERIALISTIC.

- **When it comes to your countertops, cabinets, backsplash and floors, materials matter.** Choose products that are created from either recycled or sustainably harvested components, such as bamboo, recycled ceramic tile, concrete, cork and quartz-composite. Not only do these products emit fewer chemicals and keep items out of landfills, they also look spectacular. "Eco-friendly materials like recycled ceramic tile are becoming more and more popular," says Josh Duckwall, multifamily operations manager for Southface, an Atlanta-based nonprofit organization that promotes sustainable homes, workplaces and communities. "Not only do they have a great retro look, but they're not that much more expensive — and they're good for the environment!"

### BUT, OF COURSE

- **As you seek to "green up" your kitchen, don't forget the basics:** easy-to-access recycling bins, a composting center and a filtered-water pitcher instead of bottles. Turn off the lights when you're not in the kitchen, shut off the faucet if you're not using it and unplug appliances like toasters when they're idle. If it's hot, close the blinds; if it's cold, draw open the shades. Just following these simple steps will have you well on your way to creating your own eco-fabulous kitchen.