

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The Cushman Design Group has been serving clients since 1981. “Our clients are excited about how design can make their lives better, more carefree, safer, and healthier,” says Milford Cushman. “Clients seek us not only for our quality of workmanship but also for our environmental consciousness, which includes knowing the chain of custody of the materials we use. We often use locally sourced materials, but there are marvelous renewable resources from other parts of the world,” Milford explains. “We look at the impact of harvesting these materials and make sure that the local, indigenous people are being paid for their labor.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CUSHMAN DESIGN GROUP BY SUSAN TEARE





TREND 1: HIT THE REFRESH BUTTON

According to Milford, environmental awareness and consciousness are playing a part in the decisions both homeowners and design professionals are making. “They want to know where materials come from and what impact they have on the environment, such as how do they affect indoor air quality, will toxins leach into the ground or into my garden or where my children play, and so forth,” Milford says.

“One client wanted to use natural stone, but it’s nonrenewable. When she saw the many choices of man-made quartz, which is made by bonding stone remnants, she chose that option over mining a slab from the earth.” When you decide to hit the refresh button to make your living space cleaner, more modern, and more functional, keep these points in mind as you’re choosing materials.

TREND 2: ENERGY EFFICIENCY— JUST BIG ENOUGH

Homes today are being built to make more energy than they use. These net-zero homes are incredibly green, and the use of local materials results in saving even more energy.

“It is our core belief that extraordinary energy efficiency, craftsmanship, and beauty are not separate concepts,” remarks Kelley Osgood, project manager. “They are





instead complementary parts to a single whole, and having one without the others is an incomplete gesture.

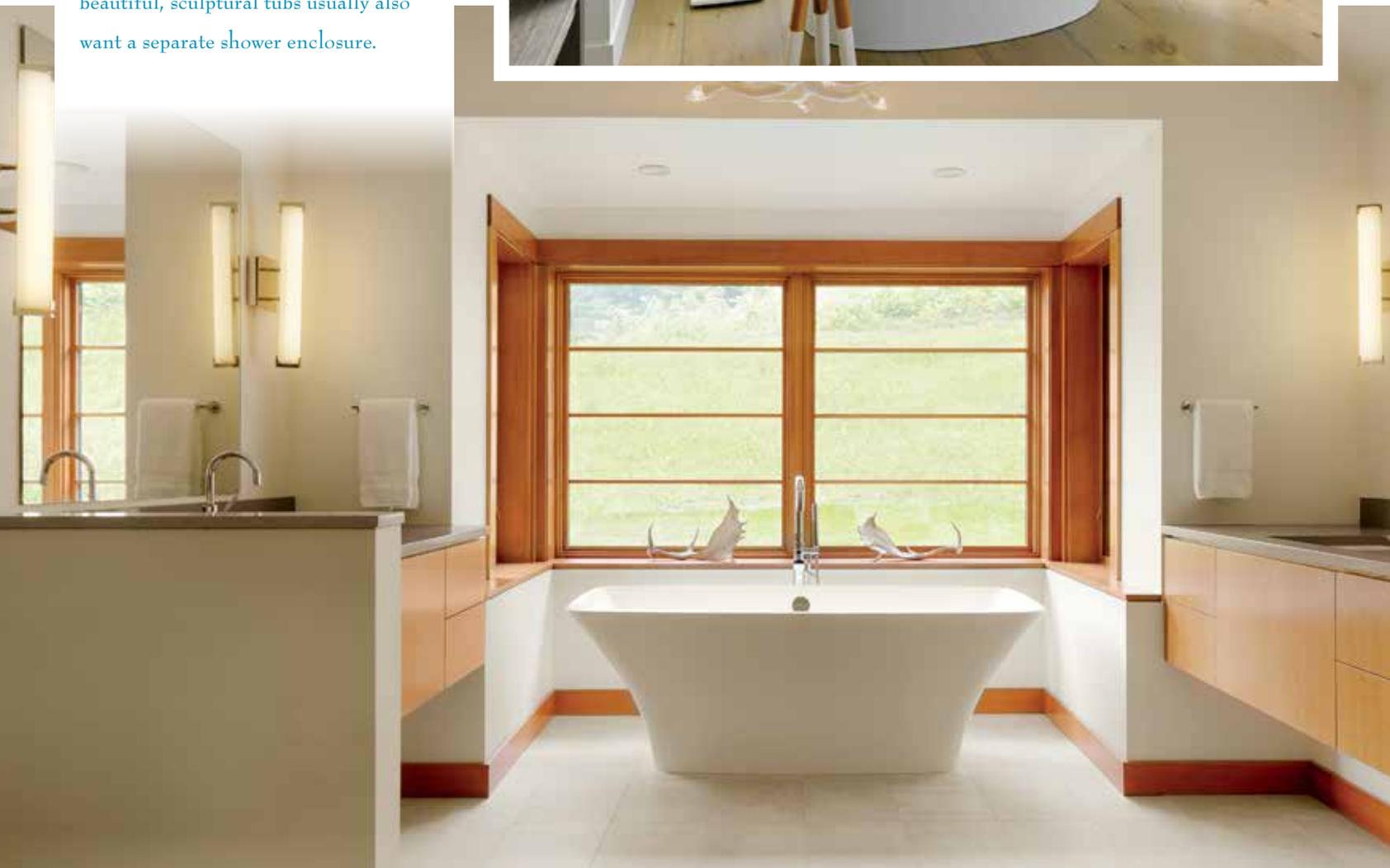
“One major component of designing for extraordinary energy efficiency is building smaller homes with less volume to heat and cool, which in turn results in lower loads for alternative energy sources,” Kelley explains. “We enjoy providing incredibly space-efficient designs for our clients who believe, as we do, that less is more. Although our ‘just big enough’ homes have smaller footprints, they live ‘big’ and provide all of the comforts of homes that are much larger.”



TREND 3: FREESTANDING BATHTUBS

Bathrooms are also being refreshed with sleek, modern fixtures and finishes. The goal is clean design with the ultimate in personal comfort.

“The move is away from bathtubs set into a big deck,” Milford says. “The new freestanding tubs are like vessels and have their own beauty and shape, and there are many shapes and sizes to choose from.” Clients opting for these beautiful, sculptural tubs usually also want a separate shower enclosure.



TREND 4: BUILT-IN BUNKS

As kids, all of us loved bunk beds, and we usually fought over who got the top bunk. The good news is that now, as adults, we can love bunk beds again. “We’ve seen the resurgence of built-in bunks, which clients sometimes request because of intergenerational visits by their families,” says Milford. “Lots of fun goes into thinking about a bunkroom, which can be rustic and reminiscent of cowboy bunkrooms or more contemporary, such as our modern white bunks shown here. Today’s bunk beds are not style specific, and they’re for adults as much as kids,” Milford states.



TREND 5: INTEGRATE THE OUTDOORS

“Our personal experience of the architecture of a home of course extends beyond the insulated building enclosure,” says Chad Forcier, project manager. “It often includes screened-in porches, open porches, decks, and patios. We often design these spaces to provide comfortable, beautiful areas to enjoy a more direct experience of the outdoors within the comfort and enclosure of the designed environment.”

Chad continues, “These types of spaces are wonderful areas in which to connect with friends and family, enjoy a meal or a fire, or to simply soak up the precious and sometimes reclusive rays of the Vermont sunshine. By thoughtfully designing these spaces, we enhance the home and the experience of living or visiting there.”

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