



Material Guide

for your conscious home



NEW COLLECTIVE



Hey there!

I'm Amanda Tharp, an Interior Designer and Architect, dog mom, aunt, sister, daughter, partner, optimist and proud founder of the New Collective.

I've provided Interior Design and Architectural services to clients in the Residential and Commercial markets for over 10 years. From powder bath renovations to high end custom homes, Passive House apartments, to off-grid mountain cabins to a Net Zero International Airport, my work has taught me that

at any scale or budget, a beautiful, thoughtfully designed space has the power to improve my clients' daily lives.

This is what drives me every day!

Congratulations on making the decision to renovate your space! Whether you are embarking on a massive addition or renovating a 20 square foot powder bath, you have made a daring leap towards reaching your home goals, so kuddos to you. Better yet, you are now taking the initiative to plan out your future project thoughtfully, with which I am excited and proud to assist you!

In this guide, I'll provide you with insights on materials with sustainable, durable, aesthetic and healthy attributes. I'll also arm you with some basic tips on what to look for when considering products for your project.

There are an enormous number of material options available in the market. Some have great attributes and a wonderful company mission, others have only great marketing... My goal is that this guide will assist you in deciphering the difference between the two so you are able to make educated decisions and the best investment for you and your loved ones.

Good luck with your project! Although it can be daunting in the beginning, it's worth it. A space designed specifically with you and your loved ones in mind has the power to improve your life every day in big and small ways. So let's get to it!

Amanda



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Let's get to the good stuff

The Basics

Before we dive into product specific information, here are some tips and best practices. Use them as a lens through which to compare options.

1. The most sustainable *Insert whatever you'd like here*, is the one that already exists.

For this reason, generally speaking, renovating is better than building new; refinishing is better than replacing; recycled content or reclaimed finishes are better than using virgin materials.

2. The future is circular, and you can be an early adopter!

The building industry, like so many others, is a wasteful one... We are on the cusp of a much needed transition to a circular economy rather than a linear one; an economy in which the products we use today can be upcycled into valuable new products for the next generation, and the next one and the next one. Be an early adopter by investing in products which can be reused as valuable raw materials when you're done with them rather than being sent to the landfill.

The Basics

3. Shop locally whenever possible.

For so many reasons... among them, shopping locally supports and builds community. In addition, decreasing travel distances for heavy building materials can significantly decrease your products' carbon footprint. Last but not least, although not a guarantee of good practices, shopping locally provides transparency regarding the land conservation and workers' rights regulations which the manufacturer needed to abide by while creating your product.

4. Shop for your lifestyle, but as naturally as possible.

Stainproof, waterproof, pet proof, toddler proof (I doubt it)! Manufacturers understand how busy our lives have become and how attractive these qualities can sound. Rather than relying on chemical finishes which often pose significant health risks to us and our families, opt for natural products which are durable enough to survive you and your loved ones!

For more on this, read my article on [Quality Interior Materials in MadeTrade Magazine](#).

Material Rundown

The Format

The following pages present a curation of materials in a “consider this, instead of that” format. These have been selected based on their alignment with The Basics list from previous pages. You’ll notice that products available in a variety of formats are listed with star ratings. 3 stars*** indicates a particularly great product.

Example:

CONSIDER...

- *** FSC certified
- *** Reclaimed
- ** Solid wood
- * Engineered
- * Bamboo
- * Cork

INSTEAD OF...

- Vinyl products
 - LVT (luxury vinyl tile)
 - LVP (luxury vinyl plank)
 - VCT (vinyl composite tile)

Flooring Products

CONSIDER...

Natural fiber carpeting

Wood

- *** FSC certified
- *** Reclaimed
- *** Solid wood, local
- ** Engineered, recycled content
- * Bamboo (*typically an international import*)
- * Cork (*typically an international import*)

Ceramic, Porcelain, Glass Tile

- *** Locally made
- *** High recycled content
- * Internationally imported (*due to weight*)

Natural Stone

- ** As local as possible
- * Internationally imported (*use sparingly*)

Concrete

- ** Concrete with recycled aggregate + fly ash admixture
- * Concrete without recycled aggregate or fly ash

All concrete takes a great deal of energy to manufacture, but is very durable and long lasting.

INSTEAD OF...

Virgin plastic fiber based carpeting

Exotic and endangered wood species

Vinyl products

LVT (luxury vinyl tile)
LVP (luxury vinyl plank)
VCT (vinyl composite tile)

Animal hide rugs

Why? Due to the environmental issues surrounding factory farming, how ethically the cattle were treated, how environmentally friendly the chemicals used during the tanning process were.

Wall Products

CONSIDER...

Low VOC paints and coatings

Natural clay plaster

Wood cladding

- Reclaimed planks

- FSC certified

- Locally sourced

- Veneer

Non-vinyl wallcovering

Ceramic, Porcelain, Glass Tile

- *** Locally made

- *** High recycled content

- * Internationally imported *(due to weight)*

INSTEAD OF...

High VOC paints and coatings

Vinyl wallcoverings

Vinyl, epoxy tile products

Counter Products

CONSIDER...

Stone slabs

- *** Recycled content
- ** Locally quarried
- *** Remnant slabs

Recycled, upcycled non-stone slabs

Eg. Icestone, Paperstone, Richlite, Vetrazzo

Wood butcher block

Tiled

INSTEAD OF...

Petroleum based and non-recyclable
solid surface slabs

Laminate

Parting thoughts

- This document is a curation of materials with some positive attributes, not a guarantee that any of the included materials are perfect products or that they will be perfect for your specific project requirements.
- Be kind to yourself while planning your project. There are a wide range of options out there, each with their own quirks, attributes and price points. Your budget may not allow for you to invest in the most sustainable material out there. We do what we can with the resources we have available. Knowledge is power and often, it is free. Use it to make the best investment you are able to.
- Reach out if you need assistance with your project. The design process is messy but I love it!! Whether you need assistance in selecting materials, brainstorming your interior or exterior space design, lighting layouts, custom millwork or more, it would be my pleasure to help you make your space uniquely yours.



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