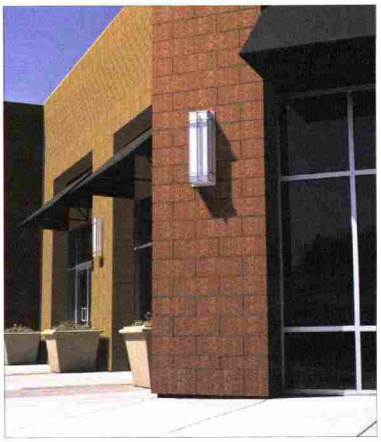
ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS

Date: Wednesday, October 01, 2008
Location: PALATINE, IL
Circulation (DMA): 30,000 (N/A)
Type (Frequency): Magazine (8Y)
Page: 38,39
Keyword: Oceanside Glasstile

breakthroughs & trends in

building green



'WASTE NOT' RECEPTACLE

Designed by Onadis of Spain, the Recicla waste receptacle from **Magnuson Group** is constructed of Syntrewood, a material consisting of 93% recycled paper, metal and plastic. The semi-liquid material is pressed into sturdy and durable curved panels and bolted together to form a three-sided round bin. Water-based dye gives the receptacle a dark green gray cast. The indoor/outdoor standing receptacles have an interior metal ring to hold heavy-duty 21-gallon waste bags. Visit www.magnusongroup.com or **Circle** (512)

ALTERNATIVE CMU

Integrity Block has released a sustainable alternative to standard concrete masonry units for use in architectural and landscape applications. The product is manufactured from more than 50% pre-consumer recycled content, and incorporates 40% less embodied energy than traditional concrete blocks. Visit www.integrityblock.com or **Circle** (511)

Specifying Green: It's Not a Black-and-White Issue

by **Chuck Ross,** contributing writer

"Sustainable design" has become a critical architectural goal over just the last decade. At a macro level, this philosophy calls on architects to revisit some building-design basics, like siting and the use of natural light. But it also requires architects to understand individual building products in a whole new way. Along with cost, performance, availability and appearance, they now must research a product's appropriateness in a sustainably designed project.

Finding products designed for green architecture isn't the hurdle it once was, as manufacturers increasingly recognize the marketing potential of environmentally friendly offerings. Instead, the bigger challenge for architects is identifying what, exactly, makes a product sustainable. It turns out, there's very little black and white—and an awful lot of gray—when it comes to specifying green products.

"You have to look at how to rate all the different impacts," says Jerry Yudelson, founder of the Tucson, Ariz.-based sustainable-design consulting firm Yudelson Assocs., noting how such decisions can quickly balloon into much larger questions. "So then you get into the whole issue of life-cycle assessment. At this point, there is no one definition of 'green'."

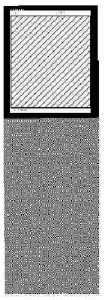
Or, as Doug Farr, president and CEO of Chicago-based Farr Assocs. Architecture and Urban Planning, puts it: "The perfect material, coming from China, comes at a cost."

Manufacturers have not always made this decision-making process easier. Makers of everything from carpet to ceiling tiles understand that marketing green can add plenty of black ink to their bottom lines, and some have engaged in "green washing," with marketing claims that might overstate environmental benefits. But architects, eager to adopt new products that mesh design sophistication with environmental claims, also haven't always taken the time to look more closely at suggested benefits.

"You attribute 'green' to anything attractive, and then just get out of the way," Farr says. "There's really no one slapping hands—people are delighted that anyone is doing anything at all."

But even those designers who want to learn more about a product's green credibility can find the chore a challenge. There are few resources offering the ability to compare building materials side by side, so architects often have to do some detective work to find the best options for their projects.

"The bigger firms have an edge," Yudelson says, because they can afford research teams to explore sustainability claims, but designers in smaller firms must do this digging on their own. On top of understanding the data and—where available—certifications backing up a product's green marketing statements, Yudelson says these architects also need assurance a green product will perform as well as traditional alternatives. "If I put this in my building, is it going to work?" is how he phrases this question. "There is a conservative bias toward things I already know."

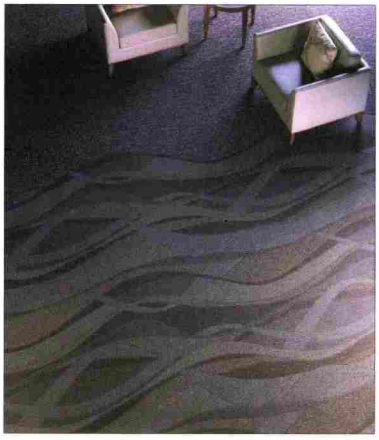


ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTS

Date: Wednesday, October 01, 2008
Location: PALATINE, IL
Circulation (DMA): 30,000 (N/A)
Type (Frequency): Magazine (8Y)
Page: 38,39
Keyword: Oceanside Glasstile

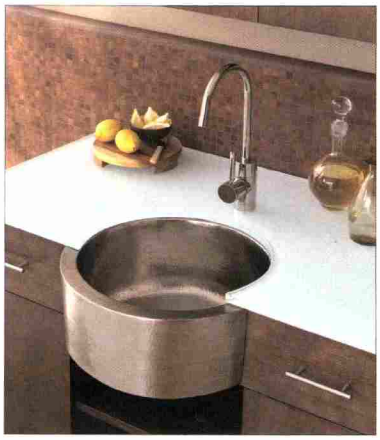
HANDCRAFTED GLASS TILE

A new matte finish is now being offered in all colors across all seven of **Oceanside Glasstile's** lines of handcrafted tile. Made from silica sand and materials containing post-consumer recycled bottle glass, as well as glass recycled from the company's manufacturing process, the tiles are most sustainable. Visit www.glasstile.com or Circle (510)



BEAUTIFUL BY NATURE

Evoking elements of nature, Glade and Surf broadloom carpeting from **Shaw Contract Group** is designed for commercial and healthcare spaces. Constructed with Eco Solution Q nylon and EcoWorx Performance Broadloom backings, the carpeting is completely recyclable. Visit www.shawcontractgroup.com or Circle (509)



WATER AND WIRES

Typically thought of as a dangerous combination, electrical wire and water come together in recycled copper sinks from **Native Trails**. The sinks are made from recycled copper found in electrical wire, pipes and construction materials. The company also makes vanities using reclaimed wood. Visit www.nativetrails.net or Circle (508)

One positive move is the growing realization among architects—and a concomitant shift among manufacturers' marketing departments—away from claims that a product, on its own, will add specific LEED points. And, as the sustainable-products market is maturing, new resources are coming on hand to help specifiers make some side-by-side product comparisons on a range of sustainability-related issues.

The Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) is launching one such effort in November, at Greenbuild. The new "GreenFormat" is planned as an online, standardized reference for specifiers seeking information on a product's ingredients, origins and certifications. Roger Grant, CSI's director of technical services and development, says the project grew out of frustrations the group was hearing from both architects and manufacturers. "A/E firms trying to comply with LEED were having to go to manufacturers, because the information they needed wasn't available," he says, noting that each inquiry involved a separate questionnaire. "Those questionnaires were all a little different, and they were starting to become an issue for manufacturers, because they were starting to get a lot of them."

GreenFormat follows CSI's MasterFormat categories and the information manufacturers supply about their products will be self-reported, although CSI will do periodic random checks to "see that there isn't anything glaringly obvious," Grant says. Additionally, users will be able to submit feedback on manufacturers' information, so the database will be somewhat self-policing. The database will support the four common methods for specifying: descriptive specification; reference standard specification; performance specification; and proprietary specification.

Grant notes that providing the kind of information specifiers need to ensure LEED compliance can pose a business quandary for manufacturers. "It can open up information that hasn't been that open in the past," he says, citing data on formulations and sources as potentially sensitive information. "Some of that can be proprietary, competitive information. And some of the manufacturers also feel that this information doesn't necessarily guarantee them the job."

What's Next?

Simple LEED certification, just a few years ago, was seen as the pinnacle of sustainable architecture. Today, delivering even a LEED Platinum building is not so extraordinary. As a result, challenge-seeking architects are looking at ways to push building performance even farther. Initiatives, such as Cradle-to-Cradle certification and the Living Building Challenge (see sidebar p. 60), are highlighting the importance of product recyclability. Farr says he's starting to see a small industry develop specializing in building dis-assembly, so materials can be captured for reuse. If this trend continues, "new" products, he says, may become a rarity in manufacturers' catalogs, because, as Farr notes, "The truest green material is one that already exists."