

RIVERCLAY CONDOMINIUMS

Denver, Colorado
 Klea Jones, IIDA
 JONES DESIGN GROUP
 Broomfield, Colorado

Photography
 by Paul Kohlman

INTERIOR DESIGNER KLEA JONES' MOST RECENT project is green... and green. It's a model for the RiverClay Condominiums near downtown Denver that is both green in the use of sustainable furnishings and accessories, and literally green in terms of the color of some of the walls, furniture and rugs. "The color is a memory point," explains Jones, who specializes in model-home design. "We wanted potential buyers to remember they were looking at a sustainable project."

The condominium designed by Jones and her team from Jones Design Group is one of the first sustainable model homes in the Denver area, but achieving that distinction was not without its challenges. The project was started in January of this year, completed in March and had a tight budget. And, as Jones discovered, it's not easy being green when it comes to interiors. "Green product choices are still rather limited when it comes to furniture and accessories."



Opposite: The sleek kitchen is accessorized with recycled or repurposed items.
 Below: A table made from reclaimed wood sets the tone for the dining area.



The punch of green to the color palette came about when the design team realized that the sustainable furnishings selected had a fairly monochromatic, neutral color scheme.

Above: The living room is accented with upholstered in bamboo and cotton, and a coffee table made from reclaimed wood. Opposite: A bamboo bed, recovered in bamboo and cotton sheets, while the chair is made from recycled seatbelt straps.

she explains, "especially at a more moderate price point, but the industry is catching up fast. Things were coming online even as we did the project."

Jones was asked to do the model in a two-bedroom, 1,454-square-foot unit within the condo project, which had been designed to LEED Silver standards and was being marketed for its sustainable appeal. The model, therefore, had to reflect the project's mission statement. "The target market was both the young professional with no children and the empty-nesters," explains Jones.

The scheme the design team suggested was one that mixed a sleek, urban appeal with touches of natural materials and textures. The punch of green to the color palette came about when the design team realized that the sustainable furnishings selected had a fairly monochromatic, neutral color scheme.

Finding and choosing the pieces for the setting took research. "We wanted just about everything we put in the rooms to be green," says Jones, "and as we went along, we learned things like the seagrass we wanted to use because it



was 'natural' was bottled in diesel fuel, so we chose seagrass boiled in palm oil, but that destroys habitats... and on and on. We decided to do our best to stick to our mission."

For the living room, the team chose a sofa and love seat made by a manufacturer that's a member of the Sustainable Furniture Council, upholstered in bamboo and cotton fabric. The coffee table was made from reclaimed wood, and the seating area is underscored by a lime-green area rug, made of 100 percent New Zealand felted wool, a renewable resource from sheep used for sustainable farms. The adjacent dining room's table was also made from reclaimed wood, and the Euro-style chairs were made with recycled leather.

The smaller bedroom was furnished as a study, featuring a chair made from recycled bicycle spokes, bamboo wall covering installed with water-based adhesives, and a bamboo desk chair. In the master bedroom, the platform bed is bamboo, also from a Sustainable Furniture Council manufacturer. The sheets are also bamboo and cotton. The curved, curvy side chair is made from recycled seatbelt straps.

The accessories are also green, recycled, repurposed or simply great finds from the design team's forays to everything from garage sales to secondhand shops. "We made a lamp with an old aspen tree from one of the designer's back yards," explains Jones. "We also made our own drapery hardware." For the living room, they found accessory pillows made with recycled polyester and created their own art, blowing

up photographs of a Denver roller coaster onto canvas, then painting the abstracted images with leftover house paint. Even the wine bottles on display in the kitchen were "repurposed," donated to the project by the design team after an enjoyable consumption process.

"We also used live plants throughout the model," says Jones. "That's something many builders won't do these days, but here we thought it was important because plants help interior air quality."

Naturally, the design team used low-VOC paints and finishes in the model and fitted the light fixtures with compact fluorescent bulbs.

Since the model opened in March, the response has been overwhelmingly positive, so much so that the designers and developer collaborated on a handout that walks visitors, room by room, through all the sustainable materials used in the condominium model. ■

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- Architecture:** Samuel Engineering, Inc., 8450 E. Crescent Parkway, Suite 200, Greenwood Village, CO | 303.714.2830 or www.samuelengineering.com
- Developer and builder:** Zocalo Community Development, Denver, CO | www.zocalocondos.com
- Sofa and loveseat:** Rowe Fine Furniture | www.rowefurniture.com
- Dining and coffee table:** Moe's Home Collection | www.moeshomecollection.com
- Bed and dresser:** Greenington, www.greenington.com
- Bicycle chair:** Bike Furniture Design | www.bikefurniture.com
- Seatbelt chair:** Phillips Collection | www.phillipscollection.com