

## REAL ESTATE

# The extra green mile

By Max Gross

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Tiles: Made out of recycled glass  
Cabinets: Made of bamboo, which grows back quickly  
Compost: NatureMill PlusXE from Williams-Sonoma, \$299  
Zandy Mangold

When Jesse and Amanda Glickenhous were first settling into their apartment at the Visionaire in Battery Park City, Amanda laid down the law for her husband: “You can find a composter without worms.”

Jesse, who teaches NYU students about climate change, had used real worms in his compost when he was a student at Dartmouth, and he wanted to try the same thing in the new apartment.

His father put it more succinctly: “You can compost with worms — or you can have a wife.”

So, Jesse bought a worm-free NatureMill composter, which he installed in the kitchen, and married Amanda last year.

Not too bad a compromise. Especially when you consider that the Glickenhouses have not only bought an apartment in one of the most eco-friendly buildings in the city, but also decided to go the extra green mile. The three-bedroom, 1,700-square-foot condo (which cost around \$1,850 per square foot) is a living, breathing temple to earth-conscious living and design.

The Glickenhouses decided to outfit the apartment with green furniture and materials, but realized the task would be quite daunting.

“It would be a full-time job,” Jesse says.

So, they reached out to Robin Wilson of Robin Wilson Home ([robinwilsonhome.com](http://robinwilsonhome.com)), an interior designer who helped the Glickenhouses create a place where they could “entertain their friends in a comfy environment — not a museum,” she explains.

Wilson scoured Ligne Roset, Holly Hunt, Maurice Villency and Room and Board to find green treasure. At ABC Home, she came across ottomans made out of canvas recycled from fair trade coffee bags. She found leather chairs for the living room that were tanned not with

chemicals, but with vegetable oil. Even the coasters and picture frames are made out of recycled magazines.

“I think Amanda had a perception that everything would be made out of hemp,” Jesse says. “Or bamboo.”

“My view was it can be green,” Amanda says, “but it has to be nice, too.”

It's impossible to argue that their apartment isn't nice. Aside from jaw-dropping views of the Statue of Liberty and Hudson River from their floor-to-ceiling windows 27 stories up, the apartment is tasteful in an unshowy, minimalist way.

Along the walls are framed underwater photos, which Jesse took when he was in Palau and are back-lit with LED lighting. “It's a way to throw a lot of light into the living room with very little electricity,” he says.

And while the furniture is carefully screened for its carbon-neutral bona fides, the chairs and couches are still comfortable and stylish.

“It's probably 10 to 15 percent more expensive,” Jesse says. “No more than 15 percent. It's a little bit like comparing apples to oranges; the question is, are you buying at IKEA, or are you buying nice stuff? If you're looking at the nice stuff, it's no more than 5 percent more expensive.” (However, Jesse adds, IKEA does some very eco-friendly stuff.)

And, Wilson adds, since starting the project in 2009, eco-friendly products have only gotten cheaper and easier to find.

The Visionaire is itself a great monument to green living. When a reporter with severe dog allergies enters the Glickenhause apartment, he is immediately greeted by their blond mutt, Molly, who erupts in a mighty shake, shedding hair on the floor. (The floors are made from Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood, of course.) But the air at the Visionaire is double-filtered, and two hours later, the reporter has not sneezed or coughed once. (Molly was not feeling well during NYP Home's tour, and later threw up. Jesse immediately seized Green Home Cleaners products to wipe away the mess.)

The building has what a buyer has come to expect from an LEED-certified building (the Visionaire's rating is platinum). It means bamboo wood for the kitchen cabinets (bamboo grows quickly and is easily replaceable), recycled glass tiles in the bathroom and Energy Star appliances. (“The only thing bad is the dishwasher — it's so quiet I don't know when it's done,” Jesse says. “I go, ‘I guess it's done.’”)

The building's roof collects rainwater to use in its plumbing, and a good chunk of its electricity (35 percent) comes from renewable energy sources. Plus, half the building's materials came from within a 500-mile radius, further reducing its carbon footprint.

Back in the Glickenhause household, the decorating continues. Over the next couple of weeks, they're getting plants, pillows and a hand-woven carpet from India made out of nontoxic vegetable dyes.

“This is not done yet,” Amanda says about the process.

Given all that the Glickenhouses added to their pad, one wonders, is this the greenest apartment in the city?

Wilson has seen many eco-friendly apartments. The most she'll concede is, “They were an informed consumer. They still had questions, and they very much did their own research.”

So, get ready to start thinking creatively about your compost.

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