

## It's Not Easy Being Green

By Andi Peterson Brown

Along with family road trips and outings for ice cream, summer is synonymous with home improvement time. If you want to do some value-add projects to your home this summer but tearing up your dated bathrooms sounds way too intense, you might want to consider doing a little bit of "greening" instead. Compared to other house-related projects, greening your home can be much easier, can immediately lead to utility savings, and can still create some long term value. Below are a few ways to easily go green.

- Switch to low flow showerheads and dual-flush toilets.
- Replace lights with CFLs or LEDs.
- Seal gaps and cracks around windows and doors and install weather stripping where necessary.
- Install solar landscaping lights and motion sensor porch lights.
- If possible, replace some grass square footage with native landscaping/low water plants.
- Install a programmable thermostat.
- Plant your own vegetable and herb garden.
- Lower the temperature setting on your water heater to 120 degrees.
- Replace an outdated HVAC system with a newer, more energy efficient model.



andi  
PETERSON  
brown

A CB Top Producer  
AndiBrownHomes.com  
925.818.4588



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## Stylish Solutions

# Four Steps To Creating Your Future Dream Home Now

By Ann McDonald



*Simple clean lines for an outdoor kitchen make room for life and people. Many Lamorinda homes were built in the 50s and have brick outdoors. This showcases an easy way to work around that for an updated look.*

What an incredible time of year. We are so blessed to live in Northern California. I absolutely love the seasons, and am particularly enjoying the summer blooms following our recent rains.

This month, Stylish Suburbanite, I wanted to share helpful tips from "Behind the Drapery" as many in Lamorinda undertake remodels, refreshes and other updates to properties and homes this time of year. Even as the world swirls around us, there is something sacred about home. It does not matter if our abodes are big or small, the spaces and places we call home set the stage for so much of our lives.

As we look toward the summer months and consider what to undertake, may these tips help us create beauty and

invite peace into our living spaces.

First, an encouragement for any who are feeling overwhelmed at the prospect. As a veteran of the Design Industry, I am often asked to speak encouragement to my peers. I don't know if it's just because I'm old or what, but as I say to them, "Stay the course!" The beauty you create and steward in your home will pay off in more ways than you can count.

One of my most requested presentations is what I call "Present Future Design." This has to do with truthful evaluations of what space is currently emphasizing in ones' life and how to systematically go about changing those spaces without trashing the entire set-up.

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