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## DEPARTMENTS ARTICLE

### MY NEW BEST FRIEND: GREEN GODDESS

How to create an eco-friendly home

BY JANINE WHITE

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**INTERIOR DESIGNER LILI** Wright is on her way to my house, and I'm a bit nervous. I try to find comfort in the notion that my anxiety is absolutely normal. After all, anyone who's ever made this kind of appointment — basically inviting a stranger with an expert eye into your home to scrutinize your taste — would feel the same way.

But this time, there's a bit more pressure. Since this Chestnut Hill interior designer is well known for her environmentally friendly focus — and because I've specifically asked for her "Wright Shade of Green" consult — she won't just judge how well (or not) I mix and match - patterns; she'll also assess my eco-consciousness.

I fixate on my wood-frame windows.

My windows are standard for a circa-1903 Philadelphia home: They rattle with the passing of every car; they leak heat in a steady stream December through March. They're certainly not the model of energy efficiency. I think of them, and of Lili. And I worry.

Later into our meeting, Lili will admit she tends to inspire this sort of pre-meeting handwringing among new clients. But then, they must all realize what I do when she appears at my front door, smiling warmly, dressed in crisp, professional clothes with an organic edge (not a tie-dye or divining rod in sight). One look, and I know: She will be gentle. She'll also be stylish. Her portfolio — filled with projects that range from timelessly European-inspired to coolly contemporary — proves that eco-sensibility can be chic.

As we're sitting down to go through her client questionnaire, Lili compliments my home's more-classic-than-trendy furnishings, saying classic design is "sustainable in a way that endures beyond trends. Even if it no longer fits into your life, a classic piece will be more transferable. Keeping things in circulation, out of landfills, is a greener choice."

Wow, I think, I'm already scoring planet-friendly points; this is going to be a breeze! But then "breeze" just reminds me of my windows.



Illustration by Tatsuro Kiuchi

**Green Today: Here are a few ways to DIY green right now**

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Lili’s questionnaire gets right at my green design priorities. Under “What features would you be willing to spend more for?,” I check yes to: “Ones that will save me up to 65 percent in utility costs” (again, the windows) and “Ones that protect my family from toxic exposure” (hoping the question refers to cutting down on lead paint, not cutting back on *The Real Housewives of Orange County*).

Once we’ve settled on what I’m willing to do — and not — to be greener, we go for a walk-through. In my kitchen, she points out where I’m doing very well (my IKEA kitchen cabinets aren’t so bad, because IKEA tries to cut down on packaging waste) ... and where I might easily improve. (Next time, I’ll choose a low-VOC wall paint.)

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