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Originally published Saturday, June 28, 2008 at 12:00 AM

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Green Market | Northwest products that tout green credentials |

For some companies, green may be a trendy term to hype products, but many Pacific Northwest entrepreneurs make ecoconscious practices a core element of their business plan. Here are a few companies who say they're helping make the retail world a greener place.

By Mary Rothschild

For some companies, green may be a trendy term to hype products, but many Pacific Northwest entrepreneurs make ecoconscious practices a core element of their business plan. Here are a few companies who say they're helping make the retail world a greener place:

Child's play, not work: Most of the sports balls American children toss or kick around are made by poor children in Pakistan sweatshops. A Bainbridge Island company sells soccer balls, rugby balls, basketballs, footballs and volley balls made by adults who earn fair wages and work in healthy surroundings. The balls' inner, rubber air bladders are the first nonpaper/wood products to earn Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. Premier soccer ball: \$59.99. Fair Trade Sports: 206-855-8222 or www.fairtradesports.com.

Yes we came! Jeff Dunnell uses mature, sustainably harvested bamboo to craft elegant, super-durable sinks in his Issaquah workshop (and no longer has to commute to work). Sinks are sealed with water-based polyurethane resin; the only solvent in his shop is water. Sinks from \$580 — \$900, depending on options, plus more for cabinetry, countertops and other components. Modern Vessel: 206-619-2226 or www.modernvessel.com.

Midas touch: Presto, change-o, castoff car-seat belts and old inner tubes collected from Seattle bicycle shops are stitched into handsome messenger bags and handbags — some with valve-stem zipper pulls — by the alchemists in this SoDo workshop. The Urban bag: \$148. Alchemy Goods: 206-484-9469 or www.alchemygoods.com. **Cottage industry:** A Port Townsend team is designing small (440- to 880-square-foot) energy-efficient modular homes with big options for green living — solar power, gray-water recycling, healthy interior furnishings, pier foundations — and marketing them as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), recreation or off-the-grid cabins, houseboats or for those who simply want to downsize. Basic pod price starts around \$125,000. Greenpod Intelligent Environments: 360-301-9686 or www.greenpoddevelopment.com.

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CHRIS JOSEPH TAYLOR / THE SEATTLE TIMES Fair Trade Sports(Premier) soccer ball in size 4 for kids 8-12, \$59.99.

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Green gone wild

Yes, it's a jungle out there when it comes to the proliferation of green products, green stores, green catalogs, green Web sites. With such a dizzying array of choices, you might feel greenish all right, that is, overwhelmed and somewhat queasy. Of course, buying less, not more, is the best way to go green. Ask yourself, do you actually need this? Where is it made, what is it made from, how is it made, who makes it, how far is it shipped? Is it less energy-wasting or less polluting than something you would buy anyway? For help sorting the green from the greenwashed, as well as an evaluation of shopping Web sites, go to seattletimes.com/pacificnw

Mary Rothschild

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Pin ups: An innovative foundation out of Gig Harbor can lessen excavation, concrete pouring, soil compaction and other site impacts of new home construction by supporting structures not on a slab but on sturdy, pier footings pierced by crisscrossed steel rods. Pin Foundations: 253-858-8809 or www.pinfoundations.com.

Uncommon colors: Seattle brother and sister Paul and Leah Weinstein's clothing fabrics use plant-based dyes, like turmeric, onion, indigo or pomegranate, so clean that effluent from their fair-trade, India manufacturer can be used for crop irrigation. Cowboy shirt: \$92. Truly Organic Apparel: 206-930-6713 or www.truly-organic.com.

Clean living: The contemporary furniture in Aimeé Robinson's Ballard showroom is made locally (the factory is at North 96th Street and Aurora Avenue North) with traditional techniques, such as hand-tied coils, and nontoxic materials that don't off-gas chemicals. Square love seat, \$3,810. Greener Lifestyles: 206-545-4405 or www.greenerlifestyles.com.

Light on the planet: Electronic-compact fluorescent (ECF) bulbs cast a warmer glow than curly-bulb compact fluorescent (CFLs), plus last longer and turn on instantly with no hum or flicker. Vintage Hardware & Lighting, an online/catalog retailer of reproduction-antique lighting, sells several fixtures with ECF sockets and bulbs. The Port Townsend-based manufacturer has also built a prototype for a light-emitting diode (LED) bar kitchen light that uses almost no electricity. Schoolhouse fixture: \$115 (shade sold separately). Vintage Hardware & Lighting: 360-379-9030 or www.vintagehardware.com.

Port Townsend-based freelance writer Mary Rothschild is a former Seattle Times editor.

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