

DESIGN FOR THE WELL-LIVED LIFE

HOUSE & Garden

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Nuts & Bolts

AT THE HEART OF BUILDING A HOME BY DAMARIS COLHOUN

STUCCO EVOLVES

Natalia Bianchi wanted to restore her sister's Milanese apartment ("Sister Act," page 124) to its "original self," so she had the walls plastered in a kind of stucco made from marble dust and lime, for a "deep, traditional patina." But materials easily found in Milan are often hard to secure elsewhere. That's why Carol Sorensen-Baumgartel, a potter and interior designer, and her three sons started American Clay, in Albuquerque. Their goal was to create something nearly impossible to find in the United States: European-quality stuccos using eco-friendly, American materials.

AUTHENTIC STYLE Stucco, a durable plaster, is made from water and various aggregates, which can include sand, chalk, and materials like acrylic, gypsum, and cement. Suitable indoors and out, stucco surfaces range in texture from polished Venetian styles, which contain lime, to coarse Tuscan ones.

CLAY ALTERNATIVE Sorensen-Baumgartel's plasters are made from recycled materials consisting of 60 to 75 percent reclaimed aggregate. American Clay's original plaster, Loma, made with marble dust for "strength and flexibility," nods to European methods. Sorensen-Baumgartel's favorite plaster, Marittimo, contains crushed oyster shells, which lend walls a burnished glow. The plasters are toxin-free (the team has created a new, all-natural binder that includes casein, a milk protein), and the clay in the stucco, she adds, "is bio-resonant—so, unlike acrylic plasters, it actually repels dirt." Available in 43 colors, or in custom options, the plasters can be applied to any interior wall surface except plywood. 866-404-1634. americanclay.com.



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