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ARTICLES

Sustainable New York

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By: M K Bateman

When you were young, you probably heard your mother say things like: "turn off that light - don't waste electricity." Or "Eat your dinner, don't you know there's starving people in Africa." Well, in today's world of diminishing resources and inconvenient truths those remarks from your formative years have never seem more true. How does a New Yorker, surrounded by caverns of concrete, vegetation corralled into a few city blocks, and fur clad Upper East Side Dowagers live up to those old ideals? Well, the truth is that New Yorkers have one of the best track records for "carbon footprints" - the measure of the impact our activities have on the environment - in the United States. One store that helps us keep this title is **Sustainable NYC** (212.254.5400).

Sustainable NYC is a tiny store in the East Village that's filled to the brim with what they refer to as "eco-friendly versions of everyday products and gifts." They are definitely not kidding, either. Think of a product that you would find at any local store and you will find it here. Start with shoes. You may be a vegetarian and dislike the idea of leather, but you've never been able to find nice shoes that don't use animal hides. Sustainable NYC carries of full assortment of men's and women's shoes (and baby booties) from the company Simple - whose entire purpose is to create cool shoes that are 100% sustainable, using materials like hemp, bamboo, and recycled car tires and intertubes.

If you're looking for cosmetics that are 100% guaranteed to be free from chemicals or testing on animals, then Sustainable NYC is the place to go. You can find all sorts of products from skin care by Organic Apotek, nail polish by Priti Polish, hair care products by John Masters Organics and even a full line of cosmetics by Pure Mineral Cosmetics.

Have you ever heard of the term fair trade? Well, if you haven't Sustainable NYC will give you excellent insight into what that phrase means. You will find all manner of products made from things like old magazines, maps, etc. Everyday products like wallets, purses, boxes, bowls and vases all made from recycled materials. Genius.

They also have a full line of products made from Bamboo, a wood that is both fast growing and easily replenished. With some natural lacquers, bamboo holds up well in your kitchen. At Sustainable NYC you'll find plates, bowls, spoons, and a utensil set that comes in its own cloth carrying case.

For those of you who hate the plastic bags that you get EVERYWHERE, Sustainable NYC has some great products that will bring a little style to your eco-conscious lifestyle. They have nylon bags in various styles and colors that can be stored away easily in their own personal pouches. If you are more of a cotton fan, then they offer a tote with the Sustainable NYC logo (really cute!). Carry those groceries in style.

If you're in the mood for some reading, Sustainable NYC offers a nice selection of books with a socially conscious slant.

Sustainable NYC is located at 147 Avenue A (between East 9th and East 10th Streets) in the East Village. They are open Sunday - Wednesday from 12-8, and Thursday - Saturday from 11-10. <http://www.sustainable-nyc.com/>

