



Look, and touch: Bill Hess's tiles are made of shards of glass, but fired so they're smooth.

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## Tile it in

Recycled-glass tiles are local twice over

Throwing bottles and cans into the big containers at the McIntire Recycling Center is a must for satisfying one's environmentalist conscience. But where the heck does that stuff go, anyway? In the case of some glass items, the answer is "your bathroom wall"—if you happen to buy tile made by Bill Hess in his Afton studio, that is. **Hess uses glass reclaimed from McIntire to make a line of tiles** suitable for kitchen, bathroom or outdoor use.

A longtime glass and metal sculptor who's also worked as a product designer, Hess started experimenting about six months ago with using a ceramics kiln to make glass tiles. The process involves cleaning glass bottles, breaking them into shards, putting the pieces into a special

mold and then firing it until the shards fuse to form tiles. The glass's sharp edges become smooth in the process, so no worries about walking on broken glass.

"It becomes a 3D painting," says Hess of the designs he creates using various colors of glass. "Most of the tile you buy from recycled material is very monochromatic, and the tiles I make are more of a mosaic look." The tiles can be used in just about any application for which you'd normally choose ceramic tile: walls, floors or outdoor pavers, as well as decorative spots like the border of a window or within a glass-block shower wall. Look for them locally at Wainwright Tile & Stone on Preston Avenue or Virginia Tile on Allied Street, or call Hess directly at 996-6850.—*Erika Housare*