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Trista and Ryan Green Their nursery

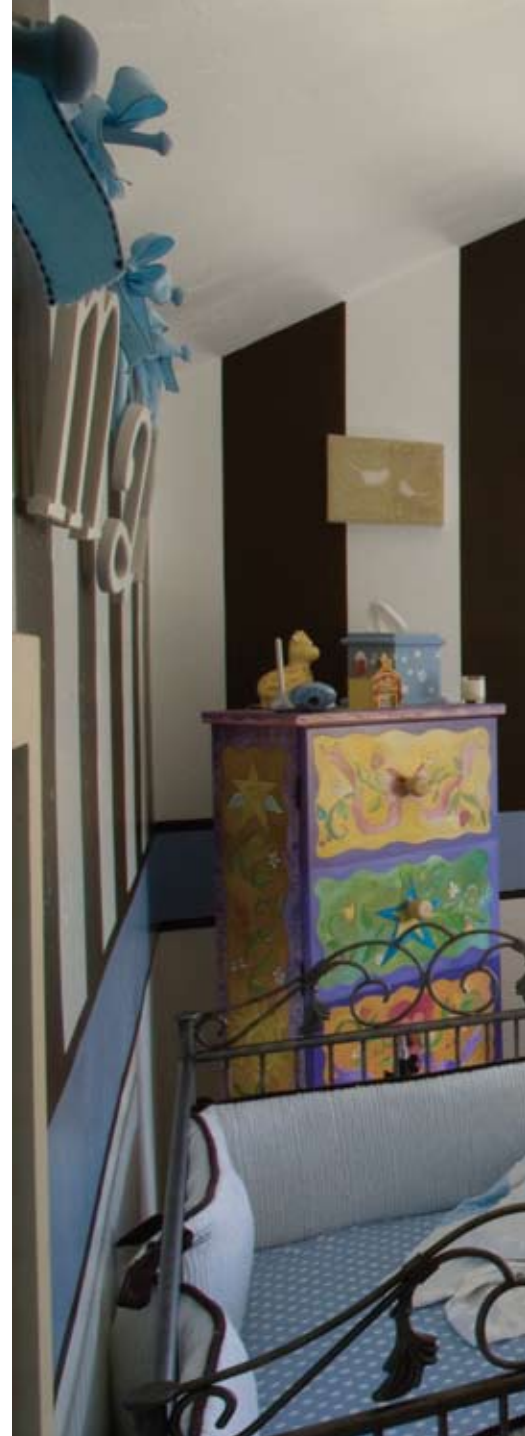
Trista and Ryan famously first met on the set of ABC's "The Bachelorette" in 2003, and they married in one of the most beautiful weddings in television history. The satisfaction in Trista's voice is obvious when she talks about how they got together, and it's beautiful to hear. Now, as they make their lives together, they are also learning to live as environmentally friendly as possible.

If you follow celebrities, you already know about Trista and Ryan Sutter's two-year struggle to become pregnant, and the premature birth of little Maxwell Alston. But you may not have heard about their commitment to living green, which now extends to making sure their home is as healthy as possible for their little bundle of joy, Max.

Why go green? Both Trista's and Ryan's careers now have green aspects to them. Ryan is on the Green Team for the television show, The EcoZone Project, hosted by Daisy Fuentes. He is credited as a LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) environmentalist. Trista is throwing herself wholeheartedly into being a green mommy — working from home, she designed a whole new line of chic, eco-conscious diaper bags with eBags.com to help other mothers easily green their new lives. They also have many sustainable practices incorporated into their daily lives, such as using Seventh Generation cleaning products, using a high-efficiency washer and dryer and other Energy Star-rated appliances, and buying organic clothing as often as possible.

However, Trista and Ryan's main motivation for living an environmentally conscious lifestyle is the new addition to the home — Max. When Trista talks about Max, it's obvious that he is their number one priority. Trista says, "Giving Max a clean, safe environment is part of their responsibility as parents, and we definitely want to give him that."

The Sutters had help greening their firstborn's new life from green experts Ron and Lisa Beres of GreenNest.com. "They were great, because I've never had the need for a nursery before, so Lisa was really helpful," declared Trista. "We knew about our paint options, and purifiers are pretty well-known, but



we learned about our options for mattresses and all the rest too."

Both Lisa and Trista believe that it's not absolutely necessary to achieve a perfectly green home. "You don't have to go to extremes, but if everyone does a little bit it will make a huge impact on the environment," says Trista. Lisa agrees, cautioning, "Don't feel bad about not going all the way. It can be expensive and difficult, so it's OK to take baby steps."



Photos courtesy of ©Tim Hancock

Baby Steps

Lisa was happy to help guide Trista's first steps through the green purchasing process. "There are three major aspects to being green — indoor air quality, energy efficiency and conservation," Lisa says. "It's particularly important to focus on health aspects for a nursery, and that's what Trista did."

Trista and Ryan already had their big furniture, such as crib and day bed, so Lisa advised them to start making the room healthier immediately by putting an air purifier in the bedroom. Trista has bad allergies and Ryan had them as a child, so they knew there would be a good chance their child would have them. As Lisa says, "An air purifier is like an umbrella — all the things you bring into a room are probably outgassing." So, the air purifier will protect Max even before birth from

some of the invisible side effects most newly manufactured items come with. Plus, according to Lisa, babies sleep 16-17 hours a day and breathe more air than adults, pound for pound. So, if you can't afford to buy everything natural or organic for the nursery, the purifier is an extra layer of protection for your child.

The Baby's Breath air purifier boasts a four-stage filtration system. The first stage is a large, round particle filter wrapped around the second stage, a

Health Warnings

The Environmental Working Group lists several issues families should take into account when they are preparing to conceive and during pregnancy.

- If your water is fluoridated, use a reverse osmosis filter to keep fluoride out of your baby's reconstituted formula.
- Don't microwave plastic bottles or containers to avoid leaching bisphenol A into the foods you and your baby eat.
- Take your shoes off at the door so you bring in less dust, pollen and other allergens.
- Avoid using Teflon-coated pans; use cast iron instead so there are no worries about toxic offgassing from Teflon.
- Avoid perfume, cologne and products with added fragrance.
- Buy products with natural fibers, like organic cotton and wool, instead of manmade fibers treated with fire-retardant chemicals.
- Seal outdoor wooden structures such as decks, tree houses and playsets so arsenic and other chemicals don't leach out onto your children's skin.

www.ewg.org/babysafe
www.ewg.org/solutions



Organic cotton toys keep Max safe.

small particle filter. Inside those filters is a medical-grade HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter, which will capture 99.97% of the hardest-to-filter 0.3-micron airborne particles (0.3 microns is approximately 1/100th of a hair wide). The last stage is an activated military carbon cloth that soaks up gases, chemicals and odors. When investing in an air purifier for your home, at minimum always make sure it has a HEPA filter.

Next Trista and Lisa considered the place Max will be sleeping for those 16-17 hours a day. The Bratt Décor crib Trista has was manufactured after 1978 so they didn't worry about lead contamination. However, Trista is allergic to wool so the mattress couldn't be made entirely from that naturally fire-, moisture- and dust mite-resistant material. Fortunately there are natural latex rubber mattresses available with the same benefits. Natural latex comes from the rubber tree, while synthetic latex is manmade. The mattresses also don't have metal springs, which some experts say strengthen the electromagnetic fields that disrupt sleep.

The mattresses that the Sutters bought from GreenNest.com are certified to the Oeko-tex 100 Standard. Oeko-tex' 100 Standard and 1000 Standard ensure transparent, compatible and global textile safety standards, according to their site. They test for chemicals such as fire retardants that are classified as harmful to humans and/or the environment.

Baby Max's bedding — linens, moisture pad, comforter, pillow, topper and sheets — are all organic, meaning they are made from natural materials that weren't grown with pesticides. Trista worked with a company called New Arrivals to design the room, including custom bedding, window coverings, and lots of fun stuff for the walls in chocolate brown, baby blue and white. The nursery is also decked out in the bright, bold colors that appeal to babies, from the highly decorated bookcase to the vertically striped walls.

Infant Exposure

Babies grow and develop very quickly, so it's important to limit their exposure to unsafe substances.

- Babies sleep 16-17 hours a day. (GreenNest.com)
- Babies breathe more than adults, pound per pound. (GreenNest.com)
- Babies born in the U.S. can already have 287 chemicals in their bodies at birth. (ewg.org)
- Babies start sucking their thumb between two and three months old. (WebMD.com)
- Babies gain between 0.5 and 1.0 oz. every day in their first six months. (WebMD.com)



Safety First

Since Max's sex was a surprise, they bought custom-mixed cans of pink and blue paint from Green Nest and painted a horizontal stripe around the room after his birth. The clay-based paints don't offgas volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) like regular paints, so Trista and Ryan weren't worried about affecting Max's health when he came home from the hospital. This was very important to them because he was born a month before his due date, so they took special care to avoid taxing his immune system.

Max already has a stockpile of phthalate- and bisphenol A-free baby bottles such as those from BornFree and Adiri. Those chemicals are associated with several hormonal, immune system and behavioral concerns, which scientists are still studying.

These chemicals can also leach from many soft plastic toys such as teething rings. To be safe look to toys made from natural materials such as wood or organic cloth. According to Lisa, 25% of the world's pesticides, herbicides, insecticides and chemical fertilizers are used on cotton, and that's not a burden babies should have to shoulder. The organic cotton teether Trista picked up from Miyim will come in handy, and Max can cuddle up to the harmless organic bunny rabbit and monkey every night. They've also added a friend's gift of custom wooden blocks to Max's room.

Trista had no problem deciding on the décor for Max's nursery. Ryan is a firefighter, so they received lots of firefighter-related gifts like a stuffed Dalmatian and a firefighter's backpack. They even found a fire engine-red Radio Flyer wagon. One of their neighbors gave them a gorgeous stained glass window with four panes. One pane has an M for Max, one has a fire truck, one says Dream with whimsical images, and the last says Laugh, Play with natural, fun images. Trista gushed, "It was so sweet! It's such a unique and fun piece." She plans to design his room around it in the green home that they will start building in the spring.

The rest of their house is also becoming greener. Trista bought several other zero-VOC colors from Green Nest to update other rooms without jeopardizing Max's health. She uses green cleaning products and bought nontoxic, soy candles for the house. It's pretty obvious, Trista and Ryan are very happy with the green developments their little Max has brought into their lives. 🌿

By *Monica Marsicek*

This Baby's Breath air purifier protected Max before and after birth.



Trista & Ryan painted a blue horizontal stripe around the room with clay-based paints that don't offgas volatile organic chemicals.

RESOURCES

Adiri, www.adiri.com
 BornFree, www.newbornfree.com
 EcoZone Project, www.ecozone.tv
 Green Nest, www.greennest.com
 miYim, www.miyim.com
 New Arrivals Inc., www.newarrivalsinc.com
 Oeko-tex, www.oeko-tex.com
 Trista Baby, www.tristababy.com



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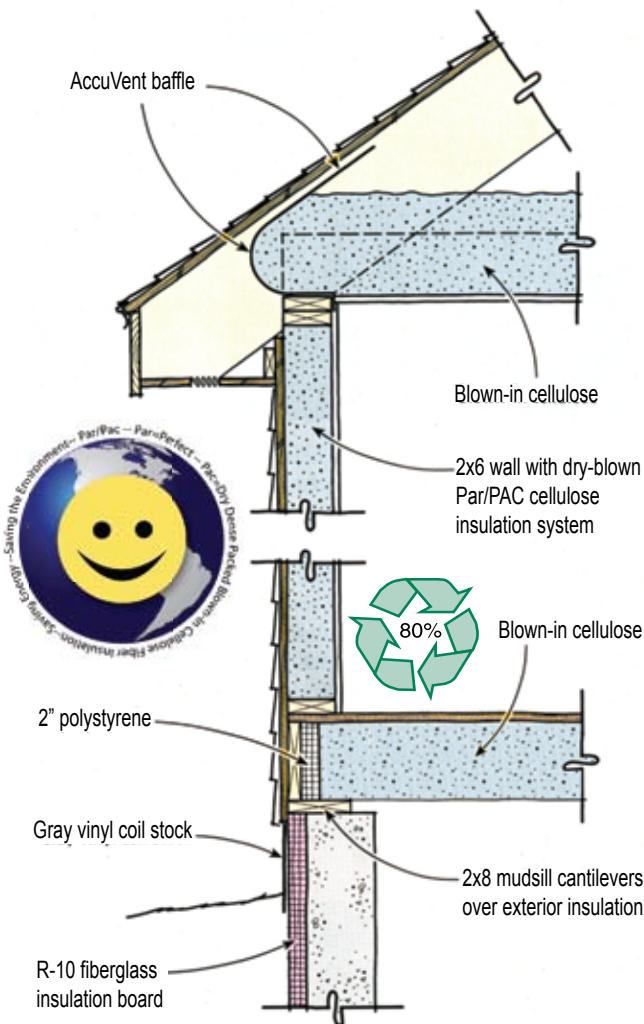
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