



INSPIRED HOME

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A FRESH APPROACH TO HOME & LIFE





Naomi Neilson Howard, founder and CEO of Native Trails

Forging Native Trails

Bring eco-friendly, artisan heritage to your home

BY ASHLEY FERRAGUT JOHNSON | IMAGES COURTESY OF NATIVE TRAILS

“I founded Native Trails with a dream of bridging cultures, of combining artisan heritage with innovative design and sustainable materials.

Bringing the beautiful work of undiscovered artisans to homes all over the world is a passion I gratefully live out every day.”

—Naomi Neilson Howard,
founder and CEO of Native Trails

Naomi Neilson Howard, founder and CEO of Native Trails, grew up in San Jose, California, a city now known as the capital of Silicon Valley. Howard’s passion and zest for life, however, has much earthier roots than that of her high-tech birthplace.

At an early age, Howard became enthralled by the raw talents of artisans she met while traveling with her family in central Mexico, the birthplace of her stepfather.

“He’d show us the villages there,” she said. “I was always fascinated by the marketplaces. The people were so talented and worked so hard. I started to dream about how people’s lives would change if I knew how to sell their beautiful work.”

Determined, Howard set out to do just that. In 1996, just out of college, she founded Native Trails and has been an advocate for undiscovered artisans from central Mexico to central California ever since.

Today, Native Trails leads the industry in artisan-crafted, sustainable products for kitchen and bath design, including copper sinks, copper tubs and bathroom vanities that are sold in more than 1,300 showrooms throughout the United States, Canada and beyond.

Native Trails coppersmiths use recycled copper pipes and wires to create their artisan

sinks and bathtubs. All of their products are made using techniques that have been passed down from generation to generation. Each of the thousands of hammer dents is painstakingly hand pounded with great purpose.

The furniture craftsmen use reclaimed wood as their medium and gather materials from old barns or forgotten wine barrels and staves from the central California coast. Their woodworking traditions date back hundreds of years. The deliberate selection of the raw, reused materials and the careful purpose with which these local men and women craft their products set Native Trails apart from any other bath or kitchen corporation.

Howard cares deeply about people and about where her products come from. She makes sure her company leaves behind a small footprint on the earth while providing people something beautiful and lasting for their homes.

Howard says she is not just offering her customers furniture or goods for the home but something striking, unique and made from the heart. Like a true visionary, what she loves most is how handmade things can bridge cultures. She wants the people of Native Trails to keep doing what they love. "It ensures that the families and legacies are going to go on," she says. "I want to give them an outlet for the work so the next generation can carry on their traditions."

*To learn more about Native Trails, visit nativetrails.net. To see these products locally, visit the Ferguson Showroom, 1602 45th St. N., Fargo, or the JW Kitchens showroom, 5675 26th Ave. S., Fargo. **