

Nitty Gritty

FURNITURE DESIGN

The Character of Reclaimed Wood

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Detail shot of a reclaimed wood coffee table -Vaughan Corporate Lobby

Over the years we have been asked many times to build furniture with reclaimed woods. We show here a number of different examples. They all have one thing in common; they ooze character!



While we often think of reclaimed woods as hand hewn timbers and rustic barnboards, reclaimed woods include many other forms of recycling such as underwater log salvage, and urban wood salvage, even reclaimed furniture. And while we often think of barns as a major source of reclaimed wood, lots of old timbers come out of buildings and factories built over 100 years ago.



Old timbers often display their history with nail holes and stains



Some customers like to see the old mill marks from bandsaws or large circular saws. However, in many situations we plane the timbers to remove the character, and reveal the tight grained, beautifully coloured woods underneath. The most common timbers we find in Ontario are Pine, Fir, and Hemlock, but interestingly we also find Cherry, Maple, Ash, Oak, and other woods.



While on occasion we will use barnboards themselves, more often we use reclaimed floor planks and timbers to create our furniture. Barnboards are thin and often too damaged from exposure to the elements, but when we find nice ones they make for beautiful table tops. Grainery boards from inside the barn are often wide and also make beautiful table tops. Floor boards develop great surface texture from the hooves and tractors running over them, while barn beams often have their original hewing marks like the coffee table above left.



Legs - from left to right; cut from a beam keeping all the mill marks, a reused set of original old legs, reclaimed wood milled smooth then antiqued, a new Jacobean turned leg from reclaimed barn floor boards.



We were asked to create a custom finish and apply it on-site for this reclaimed ice-box style built-in pantry in a Forest Hill contemporary kitchen - a stunning contrast.

We repurposed this antique dresser as a vanity, only cutting part of the top drawer, leaving 2 storage areas, plus the bottom drawers fully usable. Then we added a character finish.

This distinctly different 8'tall x 5'wide armoire resides in Muskoka. It has 1/2 logs for drawer fronts and Birch branches as door and drawer handles.