

EXQUISITE FURNITURE DESIGNS USING LOCALLY HARVESTED URBAN LUMBER.

The Formlab Design Studio is now accepting new commissions for custom furniture using locally harvested urban lumber. All of the trees have been culled by nature or by development, and are typically between 80 and 110 years old. Many of the trees were planted around the time when our southern California streets and neighborhoods were created, between the turn of the century and the 1920s.

At Formlab, high-caliber designers and artisans come together to explore form in product design, furniture design, and architecture. For this project, we take our inspiration from these remarkable trees themselves: the unique patterns in the wood, the shape of growth.

Visit our site (formlabdesignstudio.com) to see examples of our designs.

WHAT A FORMLAB “COMMISSION” MEANS FOR YOU:

We listen to your needs and design custom furniture for you, inspired by the form and history of the locally harvested wood. You are encouraged to select the wood based on where the tree grew (we mark each one) or the type of wood you prefer. Each piece is unique, beautiful, and meticulously crafted by local designers.

The cost of production and design will vary according to the wood and materials used and the custom design that is desired. Please contact us to discuss.

WHY NOW?

We are at a stage where the first large batch of Los Angeles area wood harvested has been air-drying for over two years and is ready for milling and fabrication. Each batch of planks and boards is tagged to the location where the wood was grown. We have completed several design projects using this unique lumber, and we are excited to create the next set of unique pieces.

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE WOOD:

California Live Oak – San Rafael and Lower Arroyo

Cut from fallen street trees about 100 years old, the plank-cut oak gives a variation of grain across the table, which is quite astounding and beautiful. The air-dried wood has been seasoned for two to three years, and has developed splits, checks. Boring larvae love the near-bark wood of the cut trees, and create insect-bored pathways. These features give the tables an early American rustic hand-made feeling. We select planks, then create the flatness required for utility as a working surface, fill the boreholes with clear epoxy resin, and leave the underside rough and in its original shape as a reminder of the process. We have created a unique table for seven and a three-legged coffee table from this wood.

Eucalyptus – Johnson’s Pond in Pasadena and Montecito Heights

Italian Stone Pine – Bel Air, Bellagio Place

This blonde yellow wood has broad striping patterns in the grain and wavy curved edges resulting from the species' propensity to curve and lean out as it grows. Pine is a soft wood, but this species has a moderately hard surface. We have produced a 5' wide x 12' long conference table from this wood, in four sections. Each section splices together the wavy edge of the initial plank with a custom cut sister piece that joints along the curve, creating a hard and clean edge with evidence of the live edge embedded in the grain.

Monterrey Pine – Sierra Madre Foothills, Valle Vista

This wood is sap rich and dries straight and true. It is a softwood species, but moderately hard. We have a console table planned for the owner of the site where the tree was harvested.

Chinese Elm – Bel Air Bellagio Place

Similar to the Aleppo Pine, the wood of the Chinese Elm is a milky white fine grain with yellow tints. The species is recognizable by its very thin and multi-colored bark. We have not used this wood for any projects yet, but have a large stock of significant planks.

OUR PROCESS

We collect the wood, process it into rough planks and let it dry naturally for 2-3 years. We carefully mark each plank with the location where the tree grew and the wood type.

When we receive a commission, we work with the client to carefully to assess your unique wishes and help you pick the right wood for the project. Based on your commission, we assign a project manager, a designer and artisan who will design and create your unique piece.

We then select the appropriate planks and create the flatness required for utility as a working surface, but generally leave the underside closer to its original form.

The wood components of finished furniture are treated with natural oils and environmentally friendly products such as Linseed oil, Osmo oil, and Penofin. The final finish is resistant to water stains and cleans well with soap and water.