

DESIGN LINE

FALL 2008



WASHINGTON METRO

**HIGH TECH
PORCELAIN
ITALIAN STYLING
MADE IN THE USA...
AND IT'S GREEN!**

Architectural Ceramics' fabulous new collection of tile from Stonepeak is for both residential and commercial use.

The look of stone, Italian styling and the practicality and durability of ceramic is the perfect combination for this environmentally conscious line.

Stonepeak products are green! The tiles are made with 100 percent natural minerals, and all production wastes recycled back into the production cycle in an anti-pollutant environment. Both Architectural Ceramics and Stonepeak are U.S. Green Building Council members.

Today—as it was when the line was introduced three years ago—each piece of porcelain tile reflects the beauty and uniqueness of natural stone, including the subtlety of differences in tone, texture and graining. There are seventeen collections depicting such textures as leather, Native American stone, fashion fabrics, park land, lava, stone mosaic, limestone, marble, terrazzo, slate, and others.

For more information, including a list of Architectural Ceramics locations where you can find Stonepeak products, visit www.architecturalceramics.net.

Wood 101

A GUIDE TO CHOOSING FURNITURE THAT WILL LAST

By Mark Gatterdam

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE

AS A woodworker and furniture designer, furniture is a utilitarian commodity. What I mean by this is: form should always follow function, and furniture exists to be used—not just looked at.

Putting your feet up on the coffee table is not only acceptable, but expected. Dropping the pasta bowl on the dining table should be something you anticipate will happen when you are selecting a dining suite. I'm not saying that I endorse furniture abuse; I am saying that life happens, often times at the expense of furnishings.

FURNITURE BREATHES

Solid wood furniture is an organic thing in itself. Wood lives—even cut wood—it breathes, it moves and it takes in moisture. This a natural process that cannot be stopped, only planned for.

In quality furniture, lumber is kiln dried to 6 to 8 percent moisture content. This is to make it the most stable it can be during

construction. This level of moisture will diminish the likelihood that the piece will warp, crack or be damaged when changes in seasons, temperature and humidity occur.

Moisture content in wood is important because even properly dried wood expands and contracts, on average 1/32 of an inch over every 2 inches of the width of a board.

While this may not seem like a lot, when you are dealing with large spans of boards in furniture, such as dining room table tops, the resulting movement can make the difference between a piece that will continue to look good and perform beautifully for years to come, and a piece that the owner will want to replace in one or two seasons.

This movement can be controlled using proper joinery techniques. A table top that expands or contracts by these amounts must have been put together properly or a crack in the table isn't just a possibility, it's a virtual certainty.



ADVANTAGES OF OIL FINISHES

Once properly dried and constructed into a piece of furniture, solid wood furniture should be treated with an oil finish.

There are several advantages to oil finishes over other types of finishes. First, the oil develops and enhances the character and patina of the wood with time. Old scratches will blend into the surface and slowly disappear, like an old memory.

Oil finishes also have a function. They reduce damage to the wood caused by the furniture's surroundings, they minimize the effects of water (one of wood's worst enemies), and they minimize the expansion and contraction of the wood that can cause gaps and cracks over time.

The final advantage to oil finishes is that they have some of the lowest levels of toxicity of any finish. Not only is this better for the environment and the people applying the finish, it is better for the end user because of the minimized off-gassing.

PROPER KILN-DRYING

This brings us back to the principles of kiln-drying that we started with. When

furniture, or even lumber, is imported, there is a danger that the kiln-drying process will not have been as carefully observed as standards in the United States require.

No amount of proper joinery or oil finishes can prevent the movement that will result in lumber that has not been properly dried.

When considering furniture purchases for your clients, the color, form, style and placement of that furniture must be important concerns. But to ensure that their satisfaction will last long after the project is complete, ask the right questions of your suppliers.

If they don't know where their lumber comes from, to what percent moisture content that lumber was dried, how their furniture is finished or why it is finished that way, you might want to reconsider giving them your valuable business. ■

Mark Gatterdam is owner of Hardwood Artisans, creators of custom hand-made furniture for customers in Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC for 32 years.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS: SHARE YOUR DESIGNINTELLIGENCE

We want Industry Partners to contribute to the DesignIntelligence section in a future issue of DESIGNLINE. This is your opportunity to communicate to the ASID community and demonstrate your expertise in your field.

We're looking for technical, design and creative information to assist designers in their use of Industry Partners' products and services

in general, not an advertisement of your firm's offerings.

Submit your article and illustrative photos for our consideration to leslie@asiddcmetro.org. Address your questions or offer suggestions to Sheila McGovern at sheilamcgovern@bornitz.com or (703) 945-8464.



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