



FINE GRAIN

JACKEL ENTERPRISES TRADES IN SPECIALTY WOODS
WITH A STORY

By **TRACI HUKILL**

A former applesauce factory in Watsonville is not the place you'd expect to find one of the Bay Area's premier collections of specialty lumber. But there it is, on display in a cavernous showroom under fluorescent lights: live edge slabs of golden Monterey cypress, lustrous red elm and pink-tinged Eastern cherry, grain rippling like silk ribbon, edges rough with bark. Even in the marginal light their beauty is undeniable. They're works of art. They practically glow.

Wander through the rest of the warehouse and you'll find industrial-sized shelving groaning under loads of milled wood waiting for the carpenter's hand: black acacia, claro walnut, poplar and cedar, as well as exotics like teak, mahogany and Brazilian cherry, all certified sustainable. In the back lot, massive sectioned trees, delivered by truck, lie like fallen monuments surrounded by the neatly stacked remains of old barns, fences, even a big redwood water tank.

"Sometimes I go out and I just get inspired by what they have there, not really knowing what I'm going to use it for,"

← A staircase made of eastern walnut and claro walnut from Jackel adds elegance to a corporate headquarters in Capitola.



CHIP SCHEUER

Live edge slabs on display in the Jackel warehouse in Watsonville.

says Timerie Gordon, a designer with Nielsen Studios.

For 25 years Jackel Enterprises has dealt in high-grade wood remarkable for its beauty. Founder Steve Jackel puts it this way: “We buy and sell lumber that’s meant to be seen.”

Jackel woods have made their way into Silicon Valley boardrooms and onto university campuses. They’ve lined the walls of trendy coffeehouses and been fashioned into fancy bars. They’ve been sculpted into cabinetry, flooring, ornate trim and box beams in countless custom homes.

“We’ve been working with them for years,” says Cliff Jeans of P.A. Bet, Inc., an architectural casework and millwork outfit that specializes in high-end residential projects, mostly on the Peninsula. “When you can’t get it anywhere else, you can get it from Jackel.”

A recent example: a pool house that needed cabinets. “We needed a solid teak—not veneer—and the grain needed to match so the cabinets would match.” Jackel delivered.

TIMBER WITH A TALE

If you walk through the warehouse with Steve Jackel or his son Noah, you’ll hear stories about the wood. That’s partly because Jackel sources reclaimed wood (weathered lumber from torn-down structures) and wood salvaged from the urban environment, like trees on streets and in parks that have aged and have to be removed for safety purposes or for development.

Red elm trees salvaged from a park in Santa Clara built an elegant Japanese-style entrance gate at the Yale University Art Gallery. This slab right here was from a 180-year-old cypress tree that stood in San Mateo. All this black walnut came from Spreckels. This Douglas fir was reclaimed from pilings supporting the TransBay pier in San Francisco’s Embarcadero (the wooden pilings were replaced with concrete and rebar).

This is the part that Timerie Gordon finds exciting. “There’s always a desire for authentic materials in certain projects,” she says. “The thing that’s unique

about Jackel is the wood comes with a story. And you can get species that are unique or local to our area. So it’s not just a trend.”

For the Annieglass store in Santana Row, Gordon chose Monterey cypress slabs for shelving and a centerpiece live edge slab table that runs down the middle of the shop. “That live edge table, that was sourced locally and locally built,” Gordon says. “So it really supports [Annieglass founder Ann Morhauser’s] entire business model. It would have been inappropriate for us to go and buy a run-of-the-mill table for an artisan business like Annieglass.”

“It’s not an average product,” says Noah Jackel. “It’s a high-end product. Most of the time it’s exposed. That’s why a lot of our wood goes to luxury homes.”

Gorgeous wood—warm, elegant, comforting—will always be an excellent design choice, says Gordon. “Natural materials done well never go out of style.”

Learn more and view a gallery at jackelenterprises.com.