



BC2013

Upcycling vintage wine barrels

Austrian artist and furniture maker Christian Bittner has become a household name amongst design experts due to his outstanding creations made of reclaimed wooden wine barrels.

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In his BC2013 Gallery in Traun, just south of the town of Linz, Bittner exhibits unique objets d'art made of decade old oak and fruit tree wood. Coffee tables, chest of drawers or seating furniture items feature names such as Chardonney LA 6 or Pinot Noir T 80, hinting at their origin. Reclaimed wood is the most sustainable raw material with the advantage of great character. No surface is like another and years of usage have added a striking patina to the durable material. Thus every single piece carefully hand-crafted in Bittner's workshop is totally unique. The fully qualified carpentry master always had a passion for reclaimed timber, but it was the old wine barrels that brought him success with his bespoke creations. "I was looking for a different kind of raw material, when a few old oak wood barrels sparked my inspiration," he says. "They totally embodied my core values. It had to be

wood, and it had to be sustainable, so up-cycling the old barrels just seemed perfect," the artist explains.

Traditionally only the finest oak wood has been used for the creation of wine barrels. "The barrels that I bring to life often have been used for over a century as wine storage. In almost every case the wood is still in prime condition, which allows me to create extremely high quality furniture from it," Bittner says. Giving a wine barrel a new lease of life as a piece of furniture couldn't be any more rewarding for the artist. "It is such an exciting moment when I open a new barrel for the very first time and it fascinates me over and over to see what the wine did to the wood over decades in terms of colour and pattern," Bittner says. It is exactly this colour and pattern that add the very special character to the finished prod-

uct and Bittner's constantly growing client base proves that he is on the right path. Apart from a new dining set and storage solutions for the living room, 2015 brings a new outdoor collection. So enjoying good old wine from the 1930s in the garden could well have happened on the barrel it came from, just in the form of a table.

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