



casual concepts

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— Carey Metheny

Outdoor upgrade

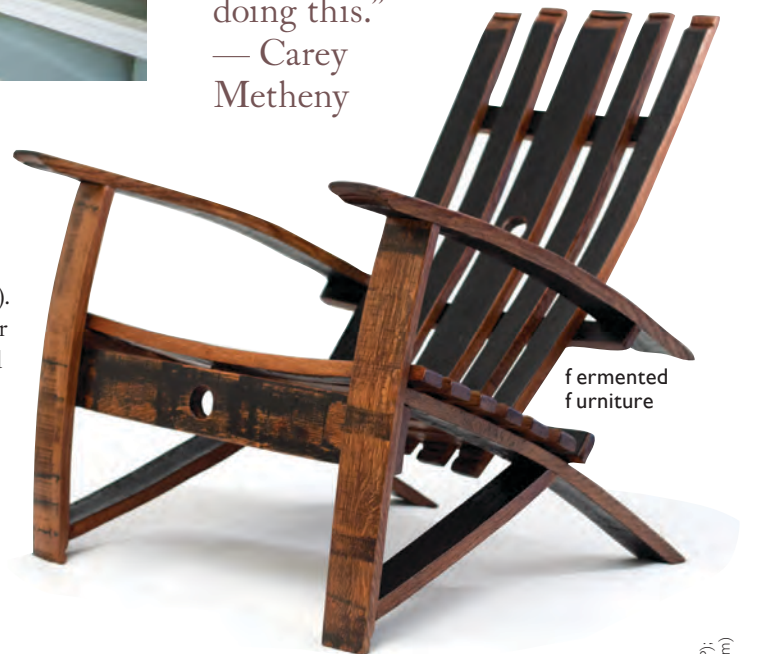
SPRING’S WARMER WEATHER heralds a welcome return to outdoor living. If your docks, decks, patios and pergolas are looking more shabby than chic, get ship-shape by summer with furnishings crafted from recycled materials.

Fermented Furniture (fermentedfurniture.com). No, you don’t get to drink the bourbon or Chardonnay before the barrels they came in are made into the company’s unusual offerings, which range from Adirondack chairs and pub tables perfect for patio sipping to oak barrel planters and tables, some with original distillery markings.

You do get to enjoy the recycled results, says Carey Metheny, who owns the Holly-based company with partner Craig Irish. The pair got the idea after seeing similar products in California’s wine country. While they make some pieces with wine casks, they turned to bourbon barrels when shipping from California proved prohibitive (Michigan is closer to Kentucky’s bourbon produc-

ers, Metheny points out). They’ve exhibited their offerings at wine and food festivals around the state since founding the company in 2012.

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fermented furniture



Bell Tower outdoor living co.

far as I know we’re the only people in Michigan doing this.” While pieces feature a heavy-duty finish with ultra-violet protection, Metheny adds, it’s always better to keep wood pieces out of direct sunlight to ensure long life through many summers to come.

Barn Again. Love the look of rustic barn wood dining tables? Wish you could use them outside? Now you can, say the folks at Woodland Creek Furniture in Kalkaska and Traverse City (woodlandcreekfurniture.com). “Newly developed outdoor finishes allow our recycled barnwood tables, sideboards, con-

Photography Courtesy Polywood in C./Z/Casual Concepts (top); Heather Heffley (middle); Bell tower outdoor living Co (Bottom)

soles, end tables and more to be used outside under a pavilion, porch or awning,” says the company’s Robert Evina.

The water-based, environmentally green finish provides UV resistance and is water repellent, plus defines low-maintenance: Just wash, air dry and apply a coat of finish when wood starts to fade.


Got Milk? Jack Kosin, who co-owns Bell Tower Outdoor Living Co. (belltoweroutdoorliving.com) in Richland with his wife, Ashleigh, says products made of recycled milk jugs are increasingly popular. Created in the U.S. by Seaside Casual using high density polyethylene (HDPE), this full line of furniture — permeated with UV-stabilized coloring — is one of Bell Tower’s biggest sellers, he says.


“It’s great for people who want lake furniture, especially for docks and high-wind areas,” Kosin notes. “Pieces start at about 40 pounds, so rarely do you have to go into the water to get your furniture.” Bonus: You can feel good about keeping milk jugs out of landfills, too.

MaryAnne Dery, owner of Casual Concepts in Rochester (casualconceptsinc.com), couldn’t agree more. Ranging from Coastal and Nautical to Euro and Mod, Poly-Wood Inc.’s solid dimensional HDPE designs — fastened with stainless steel hardware and likewise impervious to all types of weather year-round — are popular with her many waterfront customers. More than a dozen stock Sunbrella fabric hues to choose for comfortable, marine-grade cushions are also available designs such as the Club Collection.

Meanwhile, minimalistic and durable aluminum available in several finishes makes other Poly-Wood lines like Mod equal outdoor pleasers. “When paired with one of three easy-maintenance seat slat and table surface options, you get more than just furniture,” Dery says. “The Mod collection is a true work of art.”

— *Khristi Sigurdson Zimmeth*





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