

AMERICAN HARDWOOD NEWS



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2008 set to be record year for US hardwood exports to India

US exports of hardwood logs, lumber and veneer to India are well on track to surpass the record achieved in 2007 and reached a total value of \$1.6 million during the first four months of 2008, rising by 121.0% from \$727,000 in the same period last year. Of this total, lumber accounted for the greatest value at some \$596,000, while log and veneer shipments reached a value of \$591,000 and \$420,000 respectively.

Massive increase in demand for lumber

Exports of American hardwood lumber to India reached a total volume of 865 m³ during the first four months of this year, marking a rise of 454.5% on the same period in 2007. Furthermore, the volume shipped during the January to April period has already surpassed the total volume shipped to India during the whole of last year.

A switch from logs to lumber?

Historically, Indian buyers have only really been interested in importing hardwood logs from the United States and processing them in their own mills. However, a look at the most recent import statistics would suggest that this trend may be changing. AHEC has invested a lot of time in trying to get the message understood that buying logs for sawing is often uneconomical and that importing kiln dried and graded (to the NHLA standard) lumber gives a far greater yield of clear, usable wood.



Maple and white oak proving most popular species

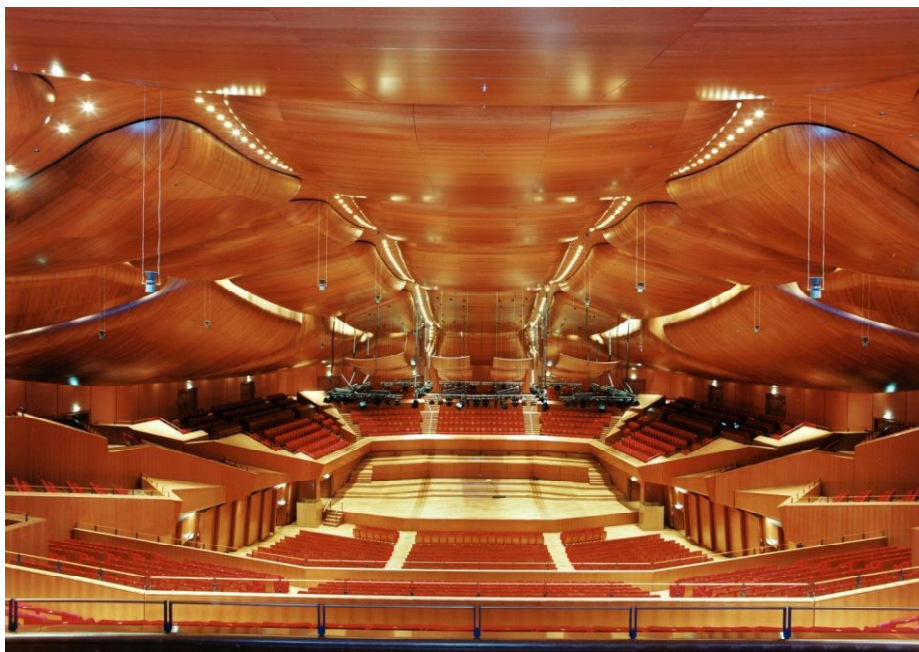
While a wide range of American hardwood species were shipped to India as lumber during the January to April period

of this year, the bulk of the volume was accounted for by maple and white oak at 384 m³ and 218 m³ respectively. In addition, volumes of hickory, ash and tulipwood were also included in the mix.



American Hardwood Export Council
3 St Michael's Alley
London
EC3V 9DS
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 20 7626 4111
Fax: +44 20 7626 4222
melissa.green@ahec.co.uk

www.ahec-india.org



The charm of cherry

Favoured by some of the world's leading designers, including Renzo Piano and Rafael Moneo, American cherry (*Prunus Serotina*), also known as American black cherry, is a shining example of the sustainability of American hardwoods. It grows throughout the states of the Eastern USA, including Virginia, West Virginia and New York States, with much of the commercial supply coming from private land. In the federal-owned Allegheny Forest, which spans parts of Pennsylvania and New York States, the species has benefited enormously from the extensive programmes of regeneration that began in the USA over one hundred years ago. The statistics speak for themselves. By 1900 forest cover in the state of Pennsylvania had been reduced to less than 10% of the land and 4 years later fire and disease increased the damage. Sixty or so years on, 68% of Pennsylvania was covered by forest as a direct result of the careful management of natural regeneration, forest graduate training and legislation. The state is now one of the largest annual producers of hardwood lumber in the USA. The American cherry, with its prolific power of regeneration, has proved to be a perfect species for good forest management because it does not need to be replanted.

With a heartwood that varies from rich red to reddish brown, American cherry wood is used for a wide range of applications including furniture, panelling, flooring and joinery as well as musical instruments and consumer goods such as toys.

The simple lines of the Shaker furniture of the 19th century show off its distinctive, fine and uniform grain and smooth texture.

And these are the qualities which have attracted designers of the stature of Renzo Piano, whose legendary love of wood is exemplified in the use of American cherry for one of the most remarkable public buildings in Europe - the Rome Auditorium.

It is a quite outstanding species, often with distinctive and unique markings which enhance its appeal and reputation as one of the most beautiful of American hardwoods. Gum pockets and pin knots, as well as sapwood found in cherry are permitted under the National Hardwood Lumber Association (NHLA) grading rules for this species. And it's these characteristics that can result in very individual pieces which are much sought after by designers and architects around the world.

A general description

American cherry's red to reddish brown heartwood will darken on exposure to light to contrast with a creamy white sapwood. This medium weight wood has a

fine uniform straight grain, sometimes similar to that of hard maple, which is less dramatic than in many other American hardwood species. It has a smooth texture and may naturally contain the brown pith flecks and small gum pockets which give it its unique appearance. It's hard and stable with a smooth texture that takes a finish very evenly, resulting in a silky lustre.

Working with American cherry

American cherry is of medium density and strength with good wood bending properties and shock resistance. It is easy to machine and its stability means that it nails and glues well, making it versatile across a range of applications from cabinet making to musical instruments.

When sanded, it stains and polishes exceptionally well, with a smooth result which dries fairly quickly. Shrinkage rate is moderately high, but it will stay dimensionally stable after kiln drying.

Rated as resistant to heartwood decay, the sapwood is liable to attack by the common furniture beetle and the heartwood is moderately resistant to preservative treatment.

Beauty & performance

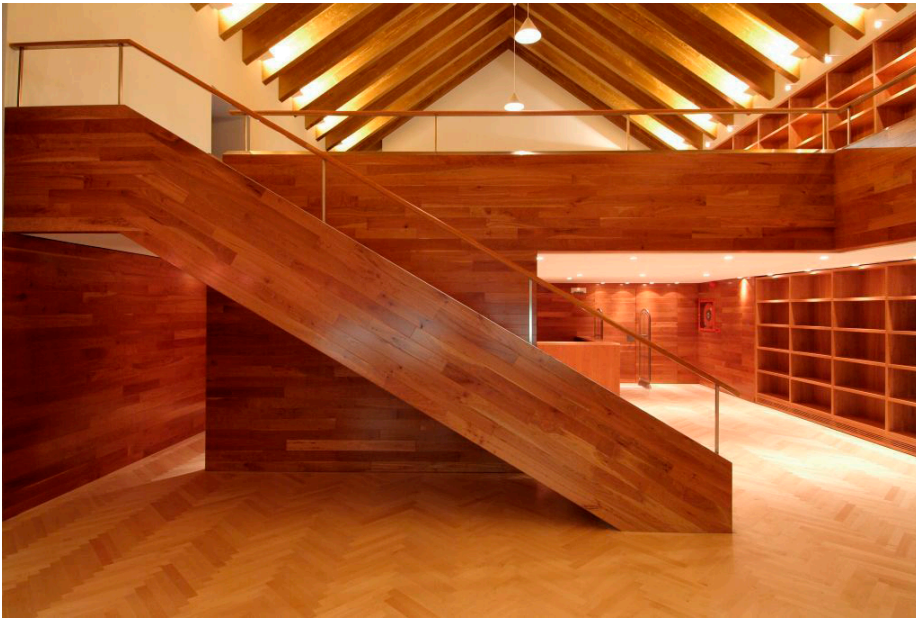
When designer Renzo Piano won his battle with the Rome City authorities to use wood in his designs for a new auditorium in Rome, he chose American cherry for the floors and walls throughout a group of performance venues which were part of the Auditorium complex.

With solid wood for the flooring and joinery of the venues and veneer for the acoustic and ceiling panels, the complex has become a showcase for the beauty and versatility of American cherry. Even the rehearsal rooms, one of them large enough for a full symphony orchestra and chorus, are like black cherry boxes, sealed from the distractions of the outside world.

For Spanish architect Rafael Moneo the rich red tones of American cherry made it a natural choice for the wall panels and furniture in a major renovation project for the Navarra National Archive in Pamplona. In stunning contrast with pale maple flooring, Moneo specified Ameri-

AMERICAN CHERRY - FACTS & FIGURES AT A GLANCE

Average weight (12% MC):	561 kg/m ³
Average volumetric shrinkage:	9.2% (green to 6% MC)
Modulus of elasticity:	10,274 MPa
Hardness:	4,226 N



can black cherry for its natural qualities, warm tones and unique colour variations which are enhanced by the building's lighting.

And its distinctive grain and intense colour also made it the natural choice for architects designing a new headquarters for the oldest watch manufacturer in the world, Vacheron Constantin, in the home of watchmakers, Geneva, Switzerland. The combination of two materials, wood and stainless steel, and the use of natural light gave the building, situated in natural parkland, a sense of space and form, with the warmth of American cherry floors throughout juxtaposed with the precise

lines and luminosity of stainless steel.

At a time when sustainability is the watchword for architects and the building industry, there is a great story to tell about American hardwoods and the natural regeneration which keeps American forests growing. American cherry, one of the fastest growing and most versatile and adaptable of species, is a great example.

It is widely available from American exporters in a full range of specifications and grades as both lumber and veneer for a wide range of applications. More information about this unique species is available from www.ahec-india.org.



*Previous page: Rome Auditorium
Photo: Ali Parquet*

*Above: Navarra Archives
Photo: AHEC*

*Left: Vacheron Constantin
Photo: Gitty Daragar*

Hardwood Events in Europe, Middle East & India

(Black denotes AHEC participation)

2008

25-27 May	Domotex	Dubai
27-30 May	Meble	Poznan
27-31 May	Xylexpo	Milan
28-30 May	Carrefour	Nantes
18-21 Sep	100% Detail	London
19 Sep	IWSc Conference	Bath
7-11 Oct	Construtec	Madrid
15 Oct	Wood Awards	London
8-11 Oct	NHLA Convention	San Francisco
20-24 Oct	UNECE Timber Committee	Rome
26-30 Oct	Interbuild	Birmingham
26-29 Oct	W4	Birmingham
5-8 Nov	Salon Bôbat	Paris
13-16 Nov	Index Interfurn	New Delhi
15-19 Nov	Intermob	Istanbul

2009

12-17 Jan	BAU 2009	Munich
17-20 Jan	Domotex	Hannover
9-14 Feb	Bouwbeurs	Utrecht
13-16 Feb	Delhiwood	New Delhi
2-5 April	Panelexpo	New Delhi
21-23 Apr	Dubai Wood Show	Dubai
13-19 May	Interzum	Cologne
18-22 May	Ligna	Hannover
2-7 Nov	Batimat	Paris

If you would like more information on AHEC's participation in these events or would like to know how to attend, please contact Melissa Green at: melissa.green@ahec.co.uk

Furniture fit for a festival



The 21st Guardian Hay Festival marks the start of a new era for the event in which sustainable design and the environment will play an increasing part. The informal style and rural location of the event has inevitably led to temporary structures and short-term solutions to turn a field in the Welsh Valleys into a venue to host 477 events over 10 days. And it was a chance discussion between event organisers and the European Director of the American Hardwood Export Council that prompted the idea of a customised and permanent solution to one aspect of the event's infrastructure - the stage furniture. The result is stunning bespoke stage furniture pieces in American red oak - 10 chairs, a discussion table, 4 lecterns and 4 small tables - designed and made by renowned UK furniture maker Philip Koomen. Here Philip Koomen, 'avid follower' of the Guardian Hay Festival for many years talks about this special and personally satisfying commission for an event which is very close to his heart.

The Guardian Hay Festival commission is the largest public furniture project I have designed for. As a Guardian reader I've been an avid follower for years. It's an incomparable event - a cultural experience of unique proportions, so to be part of it is an exciting opportunity.

Festival Director Peter Florence and his team were very open-minded in our discussions about the design possibilities. One of the main requirements was that the discussion table should accommodate up to six speakers who would all face the audience.

There were also some key technical requirements, including cable management for the microphones and the stipulation that the furniture was light and easy to carry as it has to be rearranged quickly

for each performance. Each of the four stages had different furniture requirements, so a total of 10 chairs, 4 lecterns, a discussion table and 4 coffee tables was needed to meet the varying requirements of the different events. When we first met Peter and his team seemed to like my previous designs so I was pretty confident that I would be able to produce

way the furniture should be invisible but when not in use I hope it will have an understated and elegant presence: furniture with good manners!

Timber selection

This commission was an opportunity to specify North American red oak, a lesser known species. The wood is very attrac-



Top left: The Hay Lectern. *The lectern was the most difficult piece of design. The information I received on the requirements changed as I was designing it. I've previously designed lecterns which proved to be very helpful. My original idea was to create an elegant female form. As the information changed the final version became a bit squat by comparison; I still like it though. Photo: AHEC*

Above: The Hay Table. *The table is inspired by an opening book - a literary reference seemed to be a most appropriate theme for this design. The form of the table, with its elongated elliptical top, was dictated by the requirement to accommodate up to six speakers. Photo: AHEC*

designs that they liked and were tight for the brief.

My design philosophy is rooted in the Arts & Crafts ideal but not in the style: design, craftsmanship and materials are approached as an integrated whole. My preferred material is hardwood from temperate forest, usually English or North American. I try to pare my designs to a minimal form, to the essential elements, so that the character of the wood is celebrated through the design. The wood is oiled, waxed or finished in a clear satin lacquer. Attention to detail becomes very important in this approach so craftsmanship has to be of the highest standard. My designs only work if the craftsmanship is uncompromising.

It was important that the stage furniture designs for the Guardian Hay Festival would not distract the speakers or the audience from the important topics being discussed. When the events are under-

tive with its distinctive figure and salmon pink to light brown colour. The finishes bring out the subtle hues of the wood. As a designer I think it is important to specify under-utilised species and this project was an ideal brief to do so; the clients were particularly receptive to using wood from a well-managed sustainable source. I chose American black walnut for the details as it makes a rich dark contrast to the red oak.

Red oak is an under-utilised species and yet the dominant species grown in North America. In order to ensure a sustainable future for our global forestry resource we need to align demand for the timber products we use with what actually grows in the forest. At the moment wood choice is subject to the vagaries of fashion. If the Guardian Hay Festival furniture encourages designers and manufacturers to take red oak more seriously the project will be a success.