

THE LONDON TREE AND WOODLAND AWARDS 2018

CASE STUDY – THE LONDON WOOD ENTERPRISE AWARD

WINNER – GOLDFINCH FURNITURE



The London Tree and Woodland Awards celebrate the work of individuals, communities and professionals to protect, improve and expand the capital's tree and woodland cover.

The London Wood Enterprise Award is for a wood product made in London of sustainable timber from London's urban forest. Winner of the 2018 Award was Goldfinch Furniture

Goldfinch Furniture:

Goldfinch Furniture and London Reclaimed are producing fantastic furniture using sustainable timber, including trees from London. Their work is particularly important because of its charitable objective to provide employment opportunities for young people.

As well as providing employment and skills development, Goldfinch has shown innovation in its development of timber kilns converted from former refrigeration units and processing timber to convert into furniture.

The organisation mills its own timber from sustainable sources, dries it in on-site kilns, designs and constructs stunning furniture and plants new trees to complete the cycle. All of this, within a few miles of its workshop in Bermondsey.



Activities:

Goldfinch Furniture is run by London Reclaimed, a Southwark based charity that helps 16-25 years olds in South East London who are struggling to step up into employment, by providing job-specific training, employability skills, mentoring and paid work. A paid trainee programme is run in London Reclaimed's two charity owned businesses - Goldfinch Furniture & the Lumberjack Café. Young people stay for one year at the Goldfinch Furniture workshop or six months at Lumberjack Café, before they are helped to transition into their next job, course or training.

Goldfinch creates ethical furniture of outstanding quality and provenance and take great pride in their craft, designing furniture which is built to last and created to be admired.

They source already fallen or ethically felled (had to be taken down) hard wood trees from managed woodlands. Chainsaw mills are then used to cut the trees into usable and uniform thickness boards ready to be dried. By using small mobile mills, Goldfinch are able to access trees in even the most inaccessible locations.

Once the boards are transported back to the workshop, they are stickered and stacked under cover in the yard to air dry. After that, they go into custom built kilns to get the moisture content down to around 12% – perfect for indoor furniture. The drying process for timber being used to make outdoor furniture is slightly different.

To have a truly sustainable process, Goldfinch completes the cycle by planting trees. For each new piece of furniture they create, Goldfinch commit to planting a tree to be enjoyed by future generations. They partner with other organisations to ensure that these new trees are planted in the most useful places and are looked after properly.

Entrants for the award had to provide evidence of the wood's provenance and that it was felled legally and sustainably as well as details of the product itself.



Outcomes:

Goldfinch sources the majority of its timber from within the M25 and the day bed (pictured) submitted for the award was made from London grown Oak, which Goldfinch processed from tree to finished piece. The tree was taken down as part of a wider management plan in place for a small woodland in Lewisham, South East London, which is enabling a long forgotten London gem to be rejuvenated and secured for future generations to enjoy.

Since the business started in 2011, Goldfinch's mission has been to pass on furniture making skills and knowledge to young people in its local area. The team is proud to be part of a small movement of companies and individuals in London who undertake the whole process; from milling trees in the woods to designing and creating furniture. Its products are sustainably sourced, expertly chosen and created with a deep understanding of the timber and its provenance.

For more details: Goldfinch Furniture, Unit 2, 7 Spa Road, Bermondsey, London SE16 3QP
T: 0207 2377831 www.goldfinchfurniture.co.uk

2018 Awards ceremony:

The London Tree and Woodland Awards were presented at a ceremony hosted at City Hall on 10 July 2018 by Shirley Rodrigues, Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy and Forestry Commission Chair, Sir Harry Studholme.



The photo shows (left to right) Sir Harry Studholme, Shirley Rodrigues, Mike Biddulph and Fred Crouch from Goldfinch Furniture.

Fred designed and made the day bed submitted for the award. He came to Goldfinch Furniture several years ago to join the employment course, progressed fast and after less than a year was employed full time. Fred has recently been accepted onto Kingston University's product and furniture design MA course.

Further photos from the event are available on the Forestry Commission's [Flickr page](#)

2018 Award Sponsors:

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