

# Bring the outdoors in with eco-chic wood furniture, rustic home accessories



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Chantal Hospodar, owner of Serenity Stumps and Cutting Boards, makes live-edge tables, mirrors and cutting boards. Julie Oliver / Ottawa Citizen

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Rich woods will always be in vogue, but with the current focus on sustainable, eco-chic decorating, more homes are being outfitted with furniture and accessories made from salvaged pine and thick slabs of walnut, maple and oak — many with the bark still intact.

“I think it’s just comforting for people to have the feeling of wood in their homes,” says Chantal Hospodar, a designer who makes tables, benches and stools out of fallen trees. “They’re getting away from the processed woods and bringing the outdoors in.”

Today, we spotlight three local companies that create clever, quirky and stunning pieces from reclaimed woods.



Rustic meets contemporary in this coffee table made from a stump top and metal legs.

## **Serenity Stumps & Cutting Boards**

Chantal Hospodar can't avoid the puns.

“As you get older, you go back to your *roots*,” says the owner of Serenity Stumps & Cutting Boards, a Carp-based company specializing in live-edge wood furniture, mirrors, and stump side tables.

Growing up on a tree farm in nearby Perth, her backyard was a responsibly managed forest, where her dad, Richard Lalande, still operates an eco lodge for hunters and produces maple syrup certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

“It’s my dad’s passion and I guess it’s *whittled* down to me,” says Hospodar, who sources wood for her custom tables, benches and cutting boards from Ontario farms, mills and the family homestead.

But *branching out* into making sustainable wood furniture and accessories happened by accident for the Ottawa interior designer and commercial property manager.



Slabs of wood with the bark still intact are sealed in natural beeswax to highlight the grain.

In 2002, she took a stump from a neighbouring cottage, stripped off the bark and sanded it velvety smooth. She then posted the eco-chic side table online and in one day, got 1,000 hits. This prompted her to refinish 100 more stumps and set up a website to sell them. “All sold within three weeks.”

She now ships her one-of-a-kind products to homes and businesses, including spas and barber shops, across Canada and the United States. She recently decorated a dressing room at Shepherd’s Fashions in the Ottawa Train Yards with a large live-edge custom mirror and stump stool.



Chantal Hospodar decorated a dressing room at Shepherd’s Fashions with a stump stool and live-edge mirror. James Park / Style Magazine

All of her wood products are sealed with a natural beeswax that she says is gentle enough to use as lip balm. Whenever possible, she works with the natural shape and appearance of the dried slabs and salvaged logs.

“They have so much character. I don’t create it. I just embellish on nature’s beauty,” says the single mom, who prefers to

highlight knots, worm holes and deep grains with light stains or clear sealants rather than covering them with paint. “The more rustic, the more beauty.”

**Prices:** Live-edge round mirrors, \$55 to \$100; stump side tables, \$175 to \$275; black walnut, maple and cherry cutting boards, from \$50

**Info:** 613-277-5165 or [serenitystumps.com](http://serenitystumps.com)