

Wood That He Could

Written by Janet Blaser
Monday, 30 November 2009 19:00

Roger Clark's salvage companies turn trash into treasure



When Roger Clark moved to Mazatlán with his family about three years ago, he had no plans other than to fix up the gigantic old house they'd stumbled upon and bought.

"The house was missing basically everything," he said. "The biggest issue became how difficult it was to get stuff to replace the original parts."

In the process, he learned a lot about Mexican construction and old houses. He also developed an appreciation for the fine old woods used in building these turn-of-the-century homes, and also in most of the old furniture.

"I spent all my time walking around, and I kept finding stuff," Roger explained. "In the course of salvaging, I ended up getting lots of old furniture that needed fixing up or repair."

Eventually, he and his partner-in-construction, José Miguel de Haro Llamas, started two businesses: Equipo 26, for design, restoration and construction, and Hace Mucho, for sales of vintage and antique furniture. A sale of restored and re-built furniture is Dec. 5-6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Casa Azul, on the corner of Belisario Domingues and 21 de Marzo in Centro Historico.

You can't beg, borrow, or steal this type of wood anymore.

Roger didn't have any interest in wood before coming to Mazatlán; in his words, "I'm a washed-up record producer." Nonetheless, he was inspired and moved.

Wood That He Could

Written by Janet Blaser

Monday, 30 November 2009 19:00

“The old hardwoods here are magnificent,” he said. “They’re indestructible and gorgeous.”

Ebony, cedar, *venadillo*, mahogany, rosewood, and even redwood from British Colombia can be found in Mazatlán, Roger said - when you see squared-off beams in the old houses, most likely they’re redwood.

“They’re so beautiful,” he said. “You can’t beg, borrow or steal this type of wood anymore.”

Nowadays, new wood is often rushed to market green; it looks nice, but it’s expensive and won’t hold up, he explained. The old wood is stone-dry, solid, native hardwoods that have already been around for 100 years and will survive for another hundred more. While it’s not necessarily cheaper to use old wood, in the long run, Roger said, you’ll be better off.

Roger offers a bit of advice to folks who want to fix up an old home or embark on any construction project here. While North Americans want their services and lifestyle to be equal to what they were up north, that’s not always easy – or possible - with an old home.

“The minute you open something to fix up, you find a bunch of other things that need fixing,” said Roger, chuckling. “It’s much easier to buy a new house.”

Most importantly, he said, is due diligence – standard in the States but not always practiced in Mexico, where often everything is “as-is.”

“Another common and understandable error is to mistake a good grasp of English as some sort of security when it comes to skill or ethics, whether Mexican or gringo,” said Roger. “In the absence of a Better Business Bureau, folks also need to ask their prospective contractors or architect about pending lawsuits and work closures - and have the deal in writing.”

The way he sees it, there are only a finite number of old houses and that number is shrinking.

Wood That He Could

Written by Janet Blaser
Monday, 30 November 2009 19:00

“My approach is different than most people,” he said. “If people want a modern house, they should just buy a modern house.”

But for him, it’s different story.

“I love the old houses,” said Roger. “Love ‘em, love ‘em, love ‘em.”

Contact Equipo 26 Design, Restoration & Construction at 6699-29-6652 or www.equipo26.com . Info about Hace Mucho is at www.hacemucho.com