

The Argus

Carpenters breathe new life into Palace Pier's old decking

Monday 8th Jan 2007.

Forget mahogany, pine, teak or cedarwood.

The hot new trend for all your home furnishings is the Palace Pier.

Wood ripped from the Brighton landmark is being recycled and used to make kitchen worktops, garden decking and bespoke furniture.

The tropical hardwoods and expensive purpleheart are being sold by the Wood Recycling Project in Circus Street, Brighton, after a deal was struck with pier managers.

Christian Bernard and his team regularly collect old pier decking before it is scrapped for landfill.

Arthur Bosence, 28, who designs furniture at his studio at Earwig Corner in Lewes, is one of about a dozen regular beneficiaries of the deal.

He has recently finished designing a kitchen using the pier's wood and makes one-off pieces such as the lamp and coffee table, incorporating the wood with other pieces of reclaimed materials.

The £300 coffee table is made using purpleheart wood for legs and a table-top made from a circular saw found at a quarry in East Grinstead.

The lamp was made using guitar-making techniques to cut purple heart into thin flexible strips which are soaked and stuck together in complex joints. It is being sold for £200.

He said: "I've done all sorts with the pier's wood. It's really nice stuff which is hard to get anywhere else. I always think twice about getting this sort of wood from new as you don't know where it has come from and if it's ecologically sound. But this is recycling for a good purpose.

"I'm always down at the project keeping my eye out. I'm a compulsive hoarder."

Purpleheart wood can be bought from the project for around £2 per foot - about five times cheaper than the normal price.

Decking is stripped from the pier when it becomes old and needs replacing or when new rides are installed.

Peter Smith, pier operations manager, said: "We let them know when we are getting rid of decking and they come down with a van before it goes in the skip.

"The last lot in December came from changing decking but when we put the booster and superbooster rides in there was loads."

The Wood Recycling Project estimate they have received about four tonnes of pier decking in the last 12 months.

They say some customers buy it to use as their own decking and recreate a piece of the pier in their own gardens.

Mel Hickford, at the project, said: "We collect about a van-full each time, wood which would otherwise end up in landfill.

"It's lovely wood and people have that added benefit of knowing where it came from."