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Moe Furniture: Reclaimed Simplicity

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Furniture designer Andrew Moe has traveled a complicated journey to simplicity. Following in the multi-generational footsteps of his Norwegian forebears, Moe studied studio art and furniture making at Princeton and the Massachusetts College of Art before detouring into dance and the Argentine Tango. In 2003 he returned to woodworking and opened [Moe Design Studio](#) in New York.

Moe builds his furniture from resawn hardwood beams salvaged from dismantled buildings across the country – barns, warehouses, old mills – any of the approximately billion board feet of wood that is removed from buildings in the U.S. every year. “Each beam has a story and carries its history in its grain,” says Moe. “By reusing this material we reduce the impact on our landfills, eliminate the need to harvest trees, and are reminded of the simple beauty inherent in old wood.”

Andrew Moe, by the way, is the son of Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The plank doesn't fall far from the barn.

This year Moe introduced Oslo, his first collection of 12 pieces. Cleanly designed with a minimalist purity and reasonably priced, the furniture received a lot of praise at ICFF 09. East coast ash, an indigenous hardwood, is the primary species, though others are available, and each piece is crafted by hand. Modern in design, Moe builds his furniture using traditional wood shaping techniques and joinery. He uses some non-toxic glue and his finishes are a water-based polycrylic.

Beginning in 2009 Studio MOE will donate 3% of its annual profits to [The Alliance for International Reforestation \(AIR\)](#), a non-profit organization which plants trees, establishes tree nurseries, and works with local communities in Guatemala and Nicaragua to help restore the health of the land. Since 1993 they have planted over 3 million trees.

Good stuff.