

The World of Veneer

English Translation



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Experts voice: Lea (34), Interior Design, Hanover, Germany

Trend veneers

Currently popular are brushed, rough-sawn, rough-fibred, wavy-planed and chopped looks - often individually printed according to customer specifications. When it comes to printing inks for veneer, ecological dyes made from natural materials are scoring more and more points. For example, powdered grasses and herbs, colourful flower fibres, coloured roots, crushed stones and charcoal are increasingly being used to colour the surface of veneer. Charcoal turns veneer dark grey to black. Black is a colour that is back in fashion for furniture. Black is the most achromatic of all colours, which is why it divides opinion. About half of all interior design experts consider black to be discreet and elegant. The other half of interior designers consider black to be obtrusive, dominant and sometimes dreary. The fact is that black furniture and furnishings have an unobtrusive effect, are not perceived as disturbing and do not constrict the room. Rather, they make it seem infinitely vast, like a night sky. Black furniture and furnishings also combine well with all bright colours, patterned upholstery fabrics on upholstered furniture or curtains. In addition to colouring with natural materials, so-called ash oak veneers are also popular in the black colour spectrum. Here, the veneer surfaces are burnt with real fire, giving them a black and burnt look. The surface is then preserved so that it becomes abrasion-resistant.

Experts voice: Ludwig (43), Interior Design, Music, Germany

Trend veneers

Not by its colouring, but by its traditional but today industrially and thus economically feasible composition, comes a new trend of geometrically arranged veneer surfaces. The mathematically precisely coordinated different veneer tiles are combined to create ever new surface designs. Surprising design possibilities are created for floors, walls and ceilings, but also for pieces of furniture, in the handcrafted covering technique of inlay. Another innovation transforms veneer into an unprecedented dynamic natural material with incredible softness. This micro-perforated veneer is most comparable to finely woven elastic natural fibre. The soft wood is suitable for a wide variety of applications. In interior design for soundproofing elements or as a covering material for upholstered furniture, in the lifestyle sector as a vegan leather substitute for shoes, handbags and clothing.

Experts voice: Mathilde (34), Environment activist, Paris, France

Veneer in trend

More and more end customers prefer natural materials, because the ecological fingerprint of products is increasingly being questioned. The high media profile of the Corona pandemic is only an apparent distraction from this issue. On the contrary, Corona has even exacerbated many an ecological issue, such as the meaningfulness of air travel to meetings or even the appalling production conditions in the meat industry. People are increasingly concerned with buying products that are made of renewable natural materials and that release less or no toxic material in the production process. And it is about buying less energy-intensive products and being responsible for smaller amounts of waste. Thus, veneer, a material rich in tradition, is gaining in attractiveness, because veneer is an authentic, natural and ecological material. Classically, veneer is used as a surface material in furniture construction and interior design. But also in the lifestyle sector there are more and more products such as spectacle frames, handbags, lampshades, mouse pads, smart phone covers, hotel room, bank and customer cards or tableware and cutlery made of veneer. Veneer is absolutely in vogue.

Experts voice: John (29), Architect, Brussels, Belgium

Architecture

Yes, our modern architecture no longer relies solely on steel and concrete, but increasingly on the renewable raw material wood. As a renewable raw material, wood is not only sustainable, but also has outstanding properties by nature. It stores CO₂, which is harmful to the climate, and it regulates the humidity in the room, for example. Wood is a super heat insulator and it is healthy to live with. Wood is used in the entire house construction. This applies to single-family and two-family houses as well as to apartment buildings with several storeys. But wood is just as useful for interior fittings. If you want to act in a particularly resource-saving and environmentally friendly way, we recommend veneer, i.e. the thinly cut carpaccio of the wood, as a multi-layered support material or surface for floors and furniture. The veneer pattern is always individually unique, because no two trees grow exactly alike. And another thing on the subject of wood: since there is already clothing and bed linen made of wood fibres, it is only a matter of time before home textiles, such as carpets and curtains, are also made of fibre-rich beech wood, for example. Such fibres are more environmentally friendly than petroleum-based synthetic fibres. Whoever wants to act actively for our environment today can do so in all architecture and interior design, and can do so as a customer and buyer. After all, we ourselves bear the responsibility for our future. The climate is changing, why not us?

Experts voice: Gabriella (53), Architect, Caracas, Venezuela

Architecture in responsibility

As an international architectural practice, we act according to the principle of sustainability. The topic begins with the design. It is not seen independently, but in the context of the client's requirements and in the context of the requirements of the site. City or country and climate have their influence. In the design and implementation of buildings, we are also always concerned with regional possibilities. Civil engineering, cranes, staff, materials, etc. should be available where construction is taking place. A building should be 100 years old and have a modern standard during its predominant period of use. We aim for energy efficiency in heating and ventilation, barrier-free accessibility, the best possible shading, optimal lighting conditions and flawless equipment, if possible at the technical level of tomorrow. Sustainability is the central theme of the future. Together with interior designers, we decide on floors, walls, ceilings and on furniture and furnishings. Anyone who wants to act responsibly today uses natural and, if possible, renewable materials. Architects, interior designers and also designers prefer natural materials, because the eco-quality of industrial and handicraft products is becoming increasingly important against the background of global climate change. Veneer is a perfect all-rounder and is gaining in importance as a furniture surface, flooring, sound insulation element, design element or façade. In addition to its ecological qualities, veneer is always authentic and individual.

Experts voice: Paula (36), Master of History, Berlin, Germany

Saving the climate with wood

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) has been known to mankind for more than 250 years thanks to the Scottish chemist Joseph Black. Its effects on air and soil as well as on flora and fauna were then documented for the first time in 1798 by D. Johann Reinhold Forster. The fact that wood draws CO₂ from the atmosphere and stores it has thus been known for 223 years. Forests are the green lungs of our earth and act as a carbon sink in the climate system. Overall, forests extract considerable amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere; each individual tree stores carbon in the plant cells during growth and releases the oxygen back into the environment as a by-product of their photosynthesis. Therefore, the air in the forest is perceived as fresher and healthier because it has a high oxygen concentration. In order to relieve the atmosphere of the stored CO₂ in the long term, it is important to continue to manage the forest sustainably, to reforest with tree species adapted to the location and to produce wood products, and to spread this among the population - not only in Germany, but globally. It is fascinating and at the same time sobering how long mankind has been aware of this connection, but the forest and the sustainable use of wood have not yet been used and utilised to the extent necessary to counteract climate change. The material use of wood and veneer and sustainable forest management can probably make the most important contribution to climate protection.

Experts voice: Sam (42), Biological Scientist, New York, USA

I'll try it with a perspective view

The image of veneer has changed considerably in recent decades. In the past, it was considered inferior to solid wood, especially for furniture. This is no longer the case today, as the competition in the range has changed: Most cabinets, commodes and modular furniture today are made of wood-based panels with a foil coating. These may look like wood or lacquer, but are foiled and therefore not particularly ecological. At the end of its life cycle, such furniture cannot be separated into its components by type and thus cannot be recycled. Furniture with a veneer surface is different. As real wood, veneer is a quality product of special ecological quality. A thick tree is sliced thinly for veneer production, resulting in many square meters of real wood surface, which is then applied to wood-based panels. At the end of its useful life, this furniture can be sorted, recycled or even composted. This makes veneer the thinnest solid wood in the world.

Experts voice: Helena (43), Timber specialist, London, England

Nature is perfect

Veneering has long been one of the most important decorative techniques for fine surfaces and was already known around 3000 BC in tree-poor ancient Egypt. Here, bird's-eye maple veneer was considered particularly valuable. The veneer's grain, always individual and with the most beautiful image, was polished with rough ray skin soaked in fragrant cedar or juniper oil. The 130 or so natural wood species used for veneer today also produce unique images: There are veneers that look like fine peacock feathers, like human or animal faces of different facial expressions, like small swirls of water, wet folding pictures or other symmetrical drawings, stretched animal skins with considerable fur ridges along the spine, bristles brushed against the grain, negative and X-ray images, oily smear films on water, organic body orifices such as the early childhood fontanel, paw and paw prints in yellowish-white snow, images from the realm of Outsider Art or even very abstract-looking graphics. The natural uniqueness of veneer varies from species to species and from tree to tree, reflecting the richness of nature.

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