



Mexico Red Oak Furniture Design Competition



August 2006

Newsletter of the American Hardwood Export Council

Throughout the past year, AHEC Latin America's promotional activities included lectures on utilizing American Hardwoods in interior architecture and furniture design at local design schools. The lectures featured red oak, its characteristics, applications and grading. As the featured species, design students were notified of the red oak furniture design competition organized by AHEC Mexico.

AHEC gave five conferences at Universidad Iberoamericana (UIA), Handcrafts School of the National Arts National Institute, (IMBA), La Salle University (ULSA), Industrial Design Center of the National University of Mexico (CIDI UNAM) and Metropolitan University (UAM). With the number of overwhelming responses by prospective

participants, AHEC Mexico organized its first furniture competition featuring red oak.

The competition took place in Mexico City featuring up and coming designers eager to grab the recognition of winning a competition of this stature and, most importantly, the first place prize – a trip to one of Italy's largest furniture tradeshows and competitions, Salon de Mueble in Milan, Italy. The students were given red oak donated by local Mexican importers to submit their design in one of three categories, lounge furniture, home accessories and storage accessories. A total of 289 printed design projects were submitted and eleven were chosen to be manufactured and featured in the competition.

A panel of judges consisting of members from the American Hardwood Export Council and the local design community had the difficult task of narrowing down design projects into three winning prototypes from each of the three categories. The judges evaluated furniture models based on five major points: ergonomics, design, functionality, usefulness, and economicity. A total of nine winning prototypes and two honorable mentions were built with the help of Mexican furniture manufacturing companies David Ortega Muebles, Mobeli, DISEÑO MOEDANO S.A. de C.V., and Fraxinus S.A. de C.V.



Judges viewed the design concepts before choosing the eleven finalists



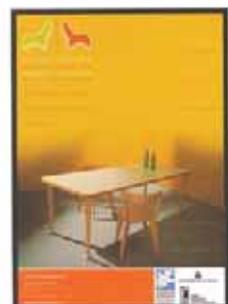
Media Coverage

Coverage for the competition included articles in some of the most read magazines, newspapers and visited sites in the Mexican design field. These included *Arquitectura y Diseño de Interiores*, *Generacion Milenio*, *Entre Muros Reforma*, *Portal Terra*, *Reforma*, *Estilos*, *Entre Muros Reforma*, *Elle en Español*, *Diseño e Interiores*, *Obras* and *Moblaje*.



PRIMER CONCURSO DE DISEÑO DE MUEBLES CON MADERA DURA AMERICANA

Texto: Raúl Nava Quiroz Fotografía: cortesía AHEC



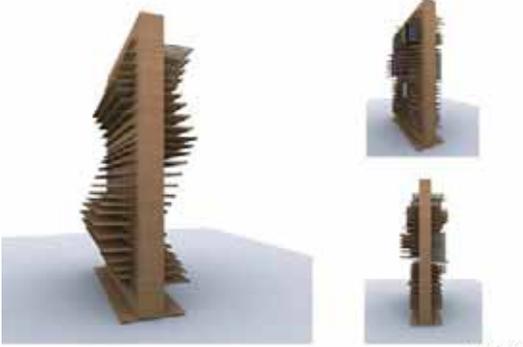
Con el propósito de desarrollar productos innovadores, funcionales y de calidad para la industria maderera del país, el utilizar madera prima sustentable, la American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), asociación encargada de promover el uso de la madera dura estadounidense en México, lanzó el concurso de diseño de muebles con Madera Dura Americana.

El concurso ofrece tres categorías: Mueble para Descansar, Mueble para Almacenar y Accesorios; en las cuales podrán participar con proyectos muchos los estudiantes de diseño industrial y carreras afines; los premios consistirán en un viaje a Milán, Italia, para asistir a la Feria del Mueble; para el primer lugar de cada categoría; para el segundo sitio, un viaje a Cancún al Show Expo Hotel; y el tercer lugar por cada categoría, recibirá una cámara digital, además de la publicación de todos los proyectos ganadores, que serán dados a conocer en el mes de mayo del año en curso.

Cabe señalar que en las propuestas se deberá utilizar como materia prima la madera dura de los Estados Unidos, específicamente de encino rojo, en un 50%, y el resto se puede combinar con otras especies, además del empleo de materiales diferentes, siempre y cuando el noble elemento sea el protagonista. Más información en www.ahec-mexico.org



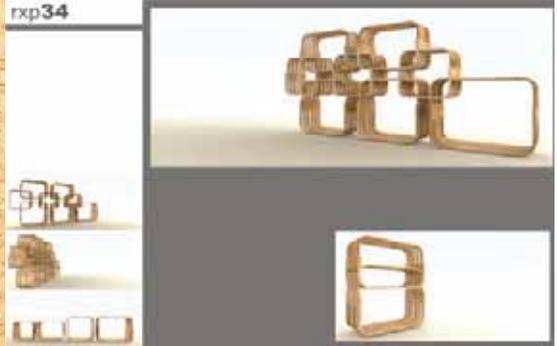
The theme of the contest was the use of red oak furniture for small living spaces. Projects were designed with the intent of showcasing the aesthetic value of red oak as well as demonstrating the natural and organic quality that furniture made of red oak provides.



The winning designs that follow demonstrate how this hardwood species can be used in a wide range of applications, can be space efficient, and at the same time can maintain that natural Mexican look.



In total, there were nine awards provided to the three finalists in each of the three categories: resting furniture, storage furniture and home accessories. Due to the large amount of design projects in the resting furniture category, two honorable mention awards were also handed out.



and the winners are...

lounge furniture - first place



Using a hard material in a comfortable furniture design was the theme for the resting furniture category. Out of 114 entries, designer David Parra's *All-inclusive* stood out as the leading project for its emphasis on comfort and its wide range of uses. The All-inclusive is a five piece furniture set made of red oak that comes with two chairs with leather seating, one separation unit to place between the chairs, and two stools.

The set is designed to allow various degrees of customization. The two chairs can be rearranged to make a double bed,

and the stools can be attached to the end of the chairs to be used as leg rests. This elegant furniture model combines flexibility in hardwood usage with a natural lounge look.



the all-inclusive as a bed and chairs

lounge furniture – second and third place



ARC03



Ignacio Ruiz Gutierrez, a designer from ITESM Guadalajara, received the second place trophy in the resting category for his furniture chair *ARC03*. The notable feature of this design is the interchanging patterns of two different colors of red oak to form a furniture piece that is not only

comfortable but also aesthetically appealing to the eyes. Also interesting about the design is that it is based on half a circle to form the seat of the chair, making it ergonomically suited to the human body.

The 3rd place trophy went to Jorge Torres, a designer from Universidad Iberoamericana, for his design *Imacu*. The *Imacu* is a red oak sofa with leather covering divided into four parts that may be adjusted to create two double sofas, one meditation cube, or four individual seating places.



The Imacu fully extended and folded

storage furniture - first place



Double function furniture with hidden spaces was the trend in the storage category. Over eighty-seven projects were submitted, but it was an ITESM Monterrey student Daniel Macias that won first place for his design *Ultra Light Book Rack*. Daniel's innovative and creative design consists of five lightly colored red oak beams that serve as both room divider and book shelf. The red oak beams may be adjusted in many ways to reconfigure the alignment of the book entries. Numerous inlets within the red oak beams provide ample storage space for a number of books or similar objects.





storage furniture - second & third place



EIM03

Like *Cajoncitos*, third place winner Cynthia Gonzales's *Kavhen* emphasizes hidden storage spaces within a red oak table. This coffee table combines two colors of the same wood, and uses a crimson die to achieve the tabletop design. While the *Cajoncitos* had several removable drawers on top, the *Kavhen* makes use of the table's sides for storage.



CYN03

Second place winner Eduardo Ibarra designed a dual purpose table that allows for the placement of items on top of a large red oak table with several compartments used for storage of items inside the table. Her model *Cajoncitos*, Spanish for small drawers, refers to the numerous removable drawers that form the top of the table.





home accessories - first place



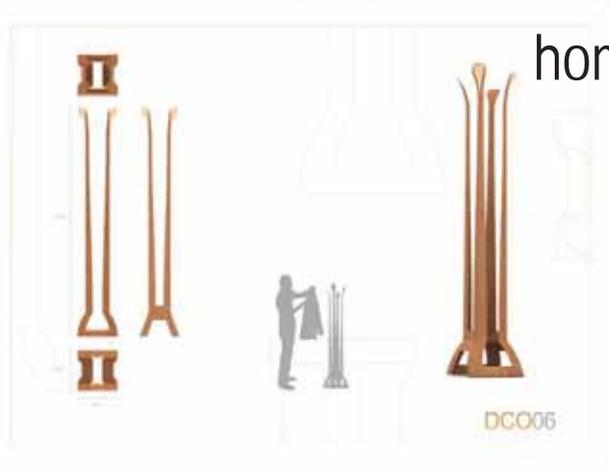
The theme for the home accessories category was furniture functionality and appearance. There were 86 amazing designs submitted, but it was Gorge Gaona's design that captured the attention of the judges to earn him the first place prize. *Dueto*, the Spanish word for little table, is a larger work table combined with a smaller table that may be extracted from the top of the larger one. The smaller table may be removed and used for multiple purposes

such as reading, working or eating. The *Dueto* is an ideal desk and table for the cost-conserving college student.





home accessories - 2nd & 3rd place



The second place winner in the home accessories category was Hector Hernandez with his coat rack the *Deco*. This model is notable for its artistic appeal utilizing the art deco design, a decorative art trend marked by its use of geometric shapes and stylized patterns. The coat rack is designed to be small and efficient to use in small interior settings. The red oak allows for the rack to be light weight, yet durable enough to withstand large and heavy garments hanging over it.

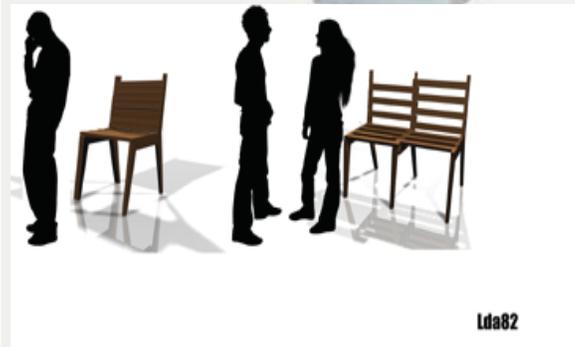


Designer Mauricio Guerrero won third place for his *Bed-table*, a multi-purpose furniture piece that was designed to be efficient for college students living in small apartment spaces. Striking features of this design include its functionality and its use of storage space. The *Bed-table* functions as a bed during the night time and has a red oak cover that slides over the bed to create a desk when it is not used for sleeping. The design maximizes efficiency by including a set of steps with storage spaces that are built into it.



honorable mentions

At the request of Italian furniture designer and research consultant Valentina Downey, two honorable awards were given for models in the resting furniture categories. Ana Victoria Paras's *Lola*, the organic starring furniture, wins this award for the ergonomic use of red oak applications in a furniture design. This piece of lounge furniture is comprised of a series of red oak lines streamed together by metal bars and is noticeably curved to match the outline of the human spine. *Lola* was designed for up to three people and is exquisitely shaped to place the body in perfect reading condition.

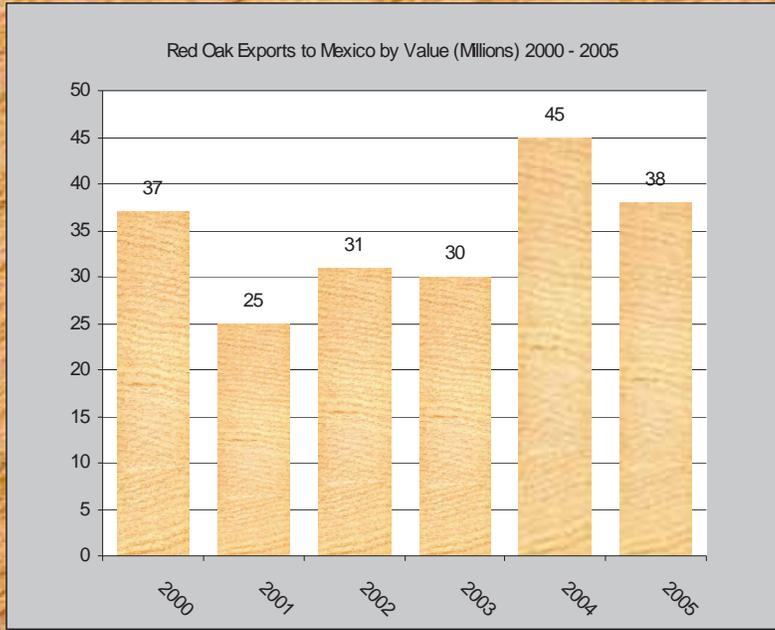


Lda82

The other honorable mention award went to Luis David Arredondo from Centro University for the two-in-one chair. What is unique about this pliable chair is that it can be used as one chair or separated into two chairs without sacrificing the design. It makes an ideal chair for small apartment spaces in which there is limited room for furniture storage. The design shows how red oak may easily be finished.



don't pull up a chair, pull out a chair

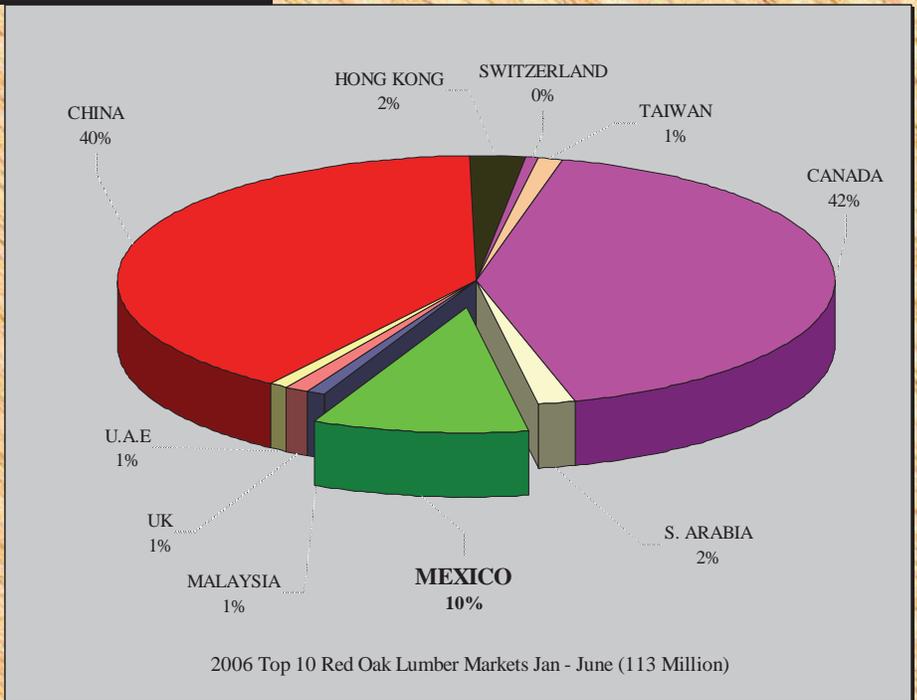


looking forward . . .

Mexico currently purchases 10% of the red oak that America exports. This contest sought to further solidify America's market share with this important trading partner by bringing awareness of the benefits of red oak to the next generation of designers; because of this promotion and the unpaid advertisement surrounding it, 1,000 Mexican design students were informed about American hardwoods. We expect to see Mexico's import of American hardwoods to grow through this and other AHEC promotions in Latin America.

AHEC's Latin American office continues to see positive buzz generated by the competition. Because of the event, American hardwoods received \$70,000 in unpaid advertising. The prototypes are brought to trade shows where they increase attendee's awareness of red oak and provide a point of reference for designers. When not at tradeshow, the prototypes are at AHEC's Latin American office where they achieve much the same effect; since the contest, AHEC's Latin American office has seen visitation levels rise.

Because of these successes, it has been decided to institutionalize the event, citing it as one of Mexico's most important furniture design shows. This year, 50 design professionals will join 1,100 students to create furniture in four categories, two for professionals and two for students. There will be more conferences, held at both universities and furniture design associations. There will be specific, concentrated promotional activities in Mexico City, Monterrey, Aguascalientes, Luis Potosi, Guadalajara, Queretaro, Morelos, Merida, and Cancun. AHEC will be distributing flyers, posters, and press



kits to build awareness, and members of the press will be invited to cocktail receptions both at the beginning and the end of the contest. The prototypes created will be used for promotional activities long after the contest's conclusion, and will be seen by both the furniture industry and individual consumers.

The American Hardwood Export Council would like to thank all of our contestants, judges, organizers, members, and everyone else who helped make this event possible.

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