

Up-cycled/Recycled Furniture Ideas

By Karen Elzinga

UP-CYCLE V RECYCLE

Up-cycling

A fast and great way to start building a portfolio of eclectic furniture and home ware pieces. It's fast because you don't need to build it from scratch your simply altering and adding to something already fashioned and built for a purpose.

When choosing to up-cycle furniture or home wares to re-sell, choose items that are a little bit different, unusual in shape, quirky, a little bit weird. People enjoy reclaimed goods but they also look for unique items that cannot be purchased in stores. That's their appeal especially if your a boutique outlet or simply a hobbyist looking for extra cash.

Up- Cycled goods can be really unique especially if you have a keen eye for imagination.

You might see something that no one could ever have imagined and that may just be your quickest seller ever. Industrial styled furniture is very hot right now, and guess what you'll find at tip/refuse yards, plenty of old tool benches, saw benches and a wealth of home built benches with monstrosities attached to them, not working... but they don't have to be to be an interesting talk piece in someone's living room after you've had your way with it.



Be imaginative

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

This furniture item above was an old saw bench, it had the motor and a giant blade popping right out of the top of the table, by fashioning a new table top, adding a bit of creation it went from dab to fab and sold very quickly to a gentleman wanting unique one of a kind items for his house.

Recycling

Recycling materials is another great way to make money and get super creative. By taking parts and collectively bringing them together to build something new from something old.

Essentially you could place a new tag on the label because it's never actually been used in it's current new state, thus being new.

Get eclectic in your choices

When your at tip yards or salvage yards or even garage sale back yards look for weird items , rusted metals, rusted nuts and bolts, and nails, these items are imperative to creating with recycled timbers, there is nothing worse then seeing bright shiny bolts and screws on what is styled as vintage eclectic furniture. Stay tuned to the attention to detail, it is what makes it more appealing.

There is a lot of money to be made by thinking freely, by that I mean where can I get it for free.

By placing ads on websites like gumtree or the trading post for old fencing timber you get plenty of phone calls from fencing contractors because when they take down old fences to put up new ones, they also dispose of the wood generally to the tip, which costs them for the privilege so they will happily dump it in your front yard because essentially your saving them money.



For free you've now got a whole fence worth of timber, to do niche more refined home wares such as timber signs, wall shelves, picture frames etc. And believe me it goes a long way.

What to look for – The trick is looking for what you may not need just yet, think a head. It's easier to work when you know what ingredients you have so stay one step a head of yourself. Look for unusual pieces not necessarily belong to anything, it maybe a muffler of a car or bike that you could turn into a light. Remember think outside the box and use your imagination to create the extraordinary.

Home Wares

If you've started by creating home wares from recycled timber, think about how you could maximize your sale potential by duplicating what your building.

Designing takes time, and time is money, so building two of everything makes a lot of sense. Variation is key here, make and vary them slightly, it might be the colour, a pattern or embellishment you add on, it could be writing, painted style (shabby chic or full opaque effect), bolt shape or size, what ever it is it gives your customers a choice.

It's much quicker to do two of everything then to do one and think about what to do next. You're already measured up for one, so why not just cut a few more whilst you have those measurements worked out and the drop saw set up.

Remember time equates to money, so make the most of your time management.



GIVE PEOPLE CHOICE



Variation is key

It could that your variation is a small difference such as these examples, colour, embellishment how the twine is added, the wood shape at the base.

It could even be how you market them, one could be for incense sticks the other could be to hold kitchen utensils.

PLANT THE SEED

Give your customers ideas of how they could potentially use your products in different ways.



Here's another example

Two walls sign shelves, constructed the same way using the same timber and shelf attachments .

Two choices for the customer, do they have a family... then it maybe about the red one, but if they don't have a family yet, I could loose a sale. However my alternate shelf is about happiness in life, problem solved hopefully if they like green, but at least they have the option, and I have a second chance at a sale.



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

ASK YOURSELF THIS....

Do you remember something more if it stands out to you and if you've never seen it before or if you've seen 10,000 of them before everywhere.

Chances are that original one of a kind quirky, weird, statement piece will linger long in your mind a lot longer than a factory made piece. WHY?

Because it's different.....
It challenges your concept of what is possible and chances are if there's only one available in the world; it will be sitting on your shelf at your house before long.

People love to have something no one else can, that's life and the nature of humanity. So when I talk about using your imagination it's to create something fresh, new, visionary and interesting such as these lights in old wine bottles.

I sold 3 of these in the space of 1 week. They look so cool at night.





Timber signs sell very well

Timber signage is always a good and easy way to sell recycled timber.

You can either purchase stencils for words or letters, but generally they are pretty pricey for metal varieties especially. Cardboard you could get maybe 5 repeats before your letters start to curl up a little making a nice neat print more difficult, but they are cheaper.

I find the easiest method is paper transfer. Simply hit photoshop, write your words, reverse the words in photoshop so when attached to your timber the letters are the right way round, then glue your copy paper to your timber and leave to dry overnight (definitely). Add water and lightly scrub away the paper, you'll be left with a light white look when it dries but if you varnish over it, it will go away leaving your letter message perfect.



GET CREATIVE

Not every piece of furniture needs legs, this is actually a wall hanging shelf, it's quite large over a meter in height.

Made with completely 100% recycled parts all adding to it's charm.

The beauty of this piece was that it came together like a jigsaw, with timber off cuts that I was planning to use for something else but never did. The trick here is never throw away anything. I can't tell you how many times I have thrown something away thinking it's life was over and then not 1 day later thought that piece would have been perfect for this project grrrrrrrr.

Not everything needs a back either, sometimes it's a missing things that can make them more appealing.

3D SIGNS CAN BE SO COOL

Timber signs are great but 3D timber signs are awesome, people like the texture, the look, the uniqueness of them.

Even better is when they are made with a purpose for example the bottom sign here has individual little shelves to house tea light candles. It sold very quickly. People enjoy the dual nature of a timber sign especially for candle lovers.



Up-Cycle Me



Taking a good solid piece of wooden furniture and transferring it into something completely different can be a very rewarding experience.

Take this item, originally it was a brown pine timber video stand, popular it's in day, but with a bit of imagination and know how you can turn it into something quite beautiful, functional, and almost vintage in appeal.

Now its a seat with storage underneath.





This piece I spoke about earlier, it's about imagination, I actually loved this piece, it is definitely one of a kind.



I changed the top and made it into an art work feature and I did the same the underpart where Vintage is now written.



I added gloss varnish to all the metal including the motor which looked amazing.

The best part about rusted metal is it looks unbelievable when you varnish it





How about a sea change

Old brown shelf unit...now ocean inspired beach house unit. By adding fabric ([SEE MY LESSON ON ADDING FABRIC TO FURNITURE](#)) you can transform old furniture into something amazing, vibrant and modern with a touch of vintage to it.

BRING THE OUTDOORS INSIDE



Who said that outdoor items can't come indoors and look fabulous. An old and large metal hose reel was originally yellow but with a good spray paint now red, and a giant spring now the leg for a side table. A quirky piece of furniture.





Tool box on a stand

One item you'll see plenty of at the tip shops are old metal tool boxes, and they make the best toilet roll holders ever, or locked boxes for things you don't want anyone else seeing such as diaries. Simply clean up the box, and give a few coats of gloss varnish and those spots of rust will become a beautiful feature. Bolt onto a stand of sorts side ways and I cannot tell you how many people and told me that's such a great idea.





Old plastic wheel barrows

Often plenty of plastic wheel barrows at the tip shops and loads of chairs with metal legs. Combine the two and these bean bag chairs rock especially for kid's rooms. Collage with fabric over the barrow and gloss. These are nice, bright and super fun.



RUSTED METAL SHELVES

Every Tip shop has some of these rusted metal shelves, metal stabilizer grid for concrete and timber. By wrapping timber around your metal shelves you get a new look entirely, and again gloss varnish those metal rusted shelves and it will look amazing. These make for great outdoor furniture items in undercover areas.





Bridge made from old double bed base

Ever thought of transforming one item
into something completely different?

Well this double bed frame cost me \$20
and my son and I transformed it as a
mother and son project into a bridge in
half a day. How gorgeous is that.



Wire and an old table stand made into water feature

This was created using wire and lots of it, two different types, galvanised and rustable (It looks black when new), by combining both it gave a fantastic contrast, then just roll like wire like rolling up a ball of wool. It sits on the base of a table that was turned upside down and positioned into a pot with a water feature added and a light.





Fire pit ambience made from recycled materials



Old case turned into side table with storage

An old cardboard style case and chair legs taken from another old chair, positioned together to achieve this quirky piece. Because the case is only hard cardboard a base of MDF wood was positioned inside the case and the legs screw to that. Fabric was used to cover the case.



UP-CYCLED OLD WOODEN TABLES

Shabby chic old wooden furniture, it's the easiest and best way to hide any dents and bumps that the furniture has had in it's previous life and cover the tops with fabric ([SEE MY LESSON ON HOW TO COVER FURNITURE WITH FABRIC](#)) For a new and interesting finish.





THEY REALLY DO COME UP LOOKING A MILLION DOLLARS





TURN MORE MODERN DAY FURNITURE BACK INTO VINTAGE

This was originally a kids table, painted pink with embellishments, though the style screamed vintage old, so by choosing the right fabric it turned into that style and sold quickly.





This was an old dressing table, I used chair legs and raised the height and inserted a slatted base to the middle, even the vase is from the tip! It is covered in fabric. [SEE MY LESSON ON ADDING FABRIC TO FURNITURE](#)



Made from scrap sheet metal, handles are sand paper pads, the artwork part is photographs of my art. Sheet metal comes in a roll and is easily cut by scissors, I then used tacks holding them with a pair of tweezers to hammer in the sheet metal.





Sculpture garden
made from old clay
pipes.



Transform old pallets into a hanging plant garden

Old pallets can be picked up for free or a minimal fee at numerous places.





Recycled timber, corrugated iron and old metal shelving fantastically rusted, varnished it comes up a glossy treat transformed into this unique screen. Originally this was a metal shelf unit, I simply unscrewed it all, rearranged it and put it back together as a screen.



Sculptured lamp made from discarded army toys.



This is a light made from plastic army toys, it's quite large and 1.3 meters tall. All the toys are added to a wooden core using no nails glue, the light was woven in as the sculpture was made, and then everything was sprayed red and spray glossed.



A mixture of up-cycled and recycled parts can make for very interesting furniture pieces.

TURN OLD WOODEN SINGLE BEDS INTO DELIGHTFUL KID'S BENCH SEATS



Try turning old wooden bed's into bench seats, they come up so beautiful, and the two I made sold not for the purpose of little kid's rooms but two adults wanted them for displaying things on. So the market potential is great

Add fabric to the timber for varying unique looks ([See my lesson on adding fabric to furniture here](#))

The beauty of this is with one bed you get two bench seats if you got for the two ended bed frames, now for about \$10-15 per bed frame at a tip shop that's a good profit when you sell.

HERE'S another example



BE QUIRKY & WEIRD

I'VE SAID IT BEFORE , QUIRKY,
WEIRD FURNITURE SELLS.....

Creating from scratch means you
can really play around with your
ideas, and often your ideas will
come along as you go.

Playing with colours, make sure
they go well together
harmoniously and don't scream
I'm horrible don't buy me...
Don't worry there plenty out
there.

Mix and match fabric with paint
for unusual eclectic effects, they
will be eye catching to say the
least, and try to give your
furniture a unique purpose so
your customers can visualize
what they can use it for.







Pick up odd items in your travels.

When I'm looking for odd items I always make sure that there's a way for me to attach it with minimal fuss. Take this blue piece of piping, there's no point buying it if I can't attach it, it was perfect because it had holes in it, so with a few bolts it's on, so now a novelty table. So easy to make money.



Thank you for viewing this lesson on inspiring your up-cycle and recycle ideas

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This has been another Karen Elzinga presentation



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** Eccentric Fashion & Accessories * Original Art * Eclectic Oddities **

Karen Elzinga (Bachelor Degree – Fine art & Visual Culture)