

HOME

Old Oak Barrels Find New Life as Furniture

NewsUSA

(NU) - Chris Deffenbaugh first saw the potential in repurposing old oak barrels when he saw pieces of an old one in the corner of a friend's basement.

"Looking at the curve of the old barrel staves, the wooden lids and the rusty rings that once held it all together, I was struck by the shapes and threw it in my pickup truck to take home and see what I could do with it," Deffenbaugh recalls.

Despite having no barrel-making experience, Deffenbaugh put the barrel back together and decided to take it a step beyond serving as an unusual table in his home. He cut out one side and turned the pieces into a bar cabinet that could store wine and liquor bottles on the deck when he had guests.

Then, when the guests started asking him to make something similar for them, he had an inspiration that led him to quit his career in human resources, draw up plans, rent a truck and head for Kentucky, returning with 90 barrels and an idea that would become The Oak Barrel Company.

The Oak Barrel Company, based in the heart of Amish country in Berlin, Ohio, takes recycling seriously. In keeping with its motto, "Reclaim, Reuse, Recreate," the company does its best to use the entire barrel, with little or nothing wasted.

Deffenbaugh learned wood-working from members of the local Amish community and contracted with several Amish craftsmen and other local woodworkers to partner with him on various phases of creating art and furniture from the components of the barrels, including the staves, lids and rings. The company has chosen to use wine barrels to create beautiful tables instead of whiskey. While whiskey barrels are very



Pictured: A sampling of Chris Deffenbaugh's work in turning wine barrels into luxurious furniture for the home.

popular, they run the risk of producing a black mold if not properly cleaned, both inside and out, whereas wine barrels are already clean and do not run the risk of any mold, creating a better product in the long run.

The company's product line is always evolving and includes small benches with curved seats and legs from barrel staves as well as stools with barrel-lid seats. Also available are bistro-style, wooden-topped tables made from whole barrels, with matching chairs made from barrel components. Wine enthusiasts may appreciate the wine barrel wine rack and even the wine slate wine rack, designed to hang on the wall or sit on the counter.

All Oak Barrel Company products come with a lifetime guarantee, and many of the products can be customized with choices of stain color, type of metal fixture, and indoor or outdoor finish. The Oak Barrel team can create a custom piece in four to six weeks.

For more information visit theoakbarrelcompany.com to view some of the company's unique designs.