

# STUDIO TLALLI

Studio Tlalli is a Miami based high-end design studio that fabricates furniture and objects made from sustainable materials harvested from a private ecological reserve and assembled by hand in our shop in Pedasi, Panama.



#### ABOUT STUDIO TLALLI

When Ivan and Kristin Morales (IM-KM) arrived on the Azuero coast of Panama in 2008, they were architects from New York City. They built buildings and adhered to the sustainability codes set out for them. The deforested, barren land they found in Panama would end up transforming their architectural practice and their world view. In this process, Studio Tlalli came to be the place where they could channel the inspiration, they drew from the tropical ecosystem around them into designs that reveal the latent beauty of these natural materials.

In the process of building three residential projects in over a decade they coordinated the planting of over 80,000 native tree species to reforest the land around their residential projects and reconnect the remaining tracts of old-growth dry tropical forest, an endangered ecosystem. They worked with their clients to form a private ecological reserve called Reserva Ecologica Panamaes. Every Studio Tlalli design is directly sourced from sustainable forestry that IM-KM manages at the reserve. They have the unique opportunity to preserve the chain-of-custody of their forest products, raw materials, and design concepts -- from inception through final fabrication.

They believe that design is an organic process, dependent on the raw material available, and on the design dexterity to understand that the beauty within the material only needs to be revealed, not forged. In the process of reforestation, they became intimately acquainted with the tropical wood species that we work with. Each tropical wood is unique, with different strengths, colors, textures, and figures - and offers significant design inspiration for them.

In the rural area of Panama where the reserve and shop are located, woodcraft is a skill passed from father to son to cousin to neighbor. The team consists of local carpenters who they have worked with for many years to develop refined designs that are crafted by hand in the workshop. The team has taught them volumes about the workability of native species and how they age, allowing them to adapt their designs to withstand the test of time.

## FORESTRY SUPPLY CHAIN

The long-term goal of the forestry program at Panamaes is to harvest the wood for Studio Tlalli directly from the forest reserve that surrounds the shop. While waiting for the reforestation plots to reach maturity, windfall and driftwood trees are harvested and crafted into one-of-a-kind pieces from those rare species. Most importantly, we also use planted teak trees. Teak (*Tectona grandis*) is an endemic species from Southeast Asia, and it became a hot commodity in the forestry world of Panama in the 90's because teak plantations were supposed to have an incredibly attractive return on investment. However, the teak did not grow as expected in Panama and it intensified the acidity of already acidic soil. This rendered barren land which had previously produced food for local animals. Part of the Reserva was composed of these abandoned teak forests, shade-less plots of land void of wildlife that overtime we have cut and used the teak to make furniture and replaced with native tree species - creating biological corridors and allowing fauna to return and disperse seeds across the land. Enterprises like Studio Tlalli and IM/KM Architecture allow the reserve to be economically sustainable in addition to environmentally sustainable. It is a full-circle system that works to preserve and grow the dry tropical forest - the most endangered tropical forest type in the world.



## TLALLI MEANS "EARTH"

The word Tlalli means earth in Nahuatl, an Aztec language still spoken by over a million Indigenous people in Mexico and El Salvador today. The ancient architecture of the Americas has long been a design influence of ours, and one that we are continually learning from on our annual trips to Mexico to visit family and explore the remains of the vast Aztec empire. Aztec structures are famous for their display of hierarchy and balance - but we are particularly inspired by the Aztecs ability to engage each design with the earth - and how that quality has allowed their architecture to withstand the test of time. Creating art that is sustainably engaged with the earth is what we strive to do at Studio Tlalli. Using the Aztec word for earth as our name pays homage to the fact that this is a concept rooted in ancient wisdom that has long preceded us. Studio Tlalli is from the earth, for the conservation of the earth -- and most importantly, deeply inspired by the earth.

# HARDWOOD SERIES



Our hardwood furniture collection is made from forest products sourced sustainably in Panama or found by windfall or driftwood in Reserva Ecologica Panamaes, where we have planted over 80,000 native trees. In designing and managing the conservation agroforestry program at Panamaes we've become deeply knowledgeable of the qualities of these hardwoods from seed to final product, each with its strengths, colors, textures, and figures. Each modern piece in this collection respects the inherent qualities of the species it was created from, allowing the beauty to be revealed rather than forged.

Our hardwood collection is sourced and crafted in Panama, by our team of local carpenters. In managing the forest preserve, we have the unique opportunity to both metaphorically and literally preserve the chain-of-custody of our forest products, raw materials, and our design concepts — from inception through final fabrication.

*KUSY, A FORESTRY MANAGER AT RESERVA ECOLOGICA PANAMAES, COLLECTS SEEDS FROM A REFORESTATION PLOT THAT HE HELPED TO PLANT IN 2009*





EIFFEL CONSOLE TABLE – ACACIA WOOD WITH COCOBOLO INLAY





EIFFEL SIDE TABLE — WHITE WASHED TEAK





EIFFEL COFFEE TABLE — CLEAR TEAK OIL







ESPAVE WOOD DINING TABLE





OAK WOOD SIDE TABLE





SURF DESK — COCOBOLO AND EBONIZED TEAK WOOD







DIAMOND INLAY CONSOLE — OAK WOOD



TEAK WOOD BOOK SHELF AND SIDE TABLE



ACACIA WOOD BOOK SHELF AND SIDE TABLE WITH COCOBOLO WOOD INLAY



TEAK BENCH WITH LEATHER INLAY



ACACIA WOOD CANOPY BED WITH COCOBOLO WOOD INLAY





SHUTTER HEAD BOARD — ACACIA WOOD







EBONIZED ESPAVE WOOD COFFEE TABLE









GREYED TEAK WOOD OUTDOOR DINING TABLE





GREYED TEAK WOOD OUTDOOR LOUNGE CHAIR







EQUIS OUTDOOR TEAK DINING TABLE





EQUIS OAK WOOD DESK









GEMELA TEAK LOUNGE CHAIR — TEAK WOOD WITH CLEAR TEAK OIL





OUTDOOR COFFEE CENTER TABLE — GREYED TEAK WOOD







PEDASI DECK CHAIR - GREYED TEAK WOOD





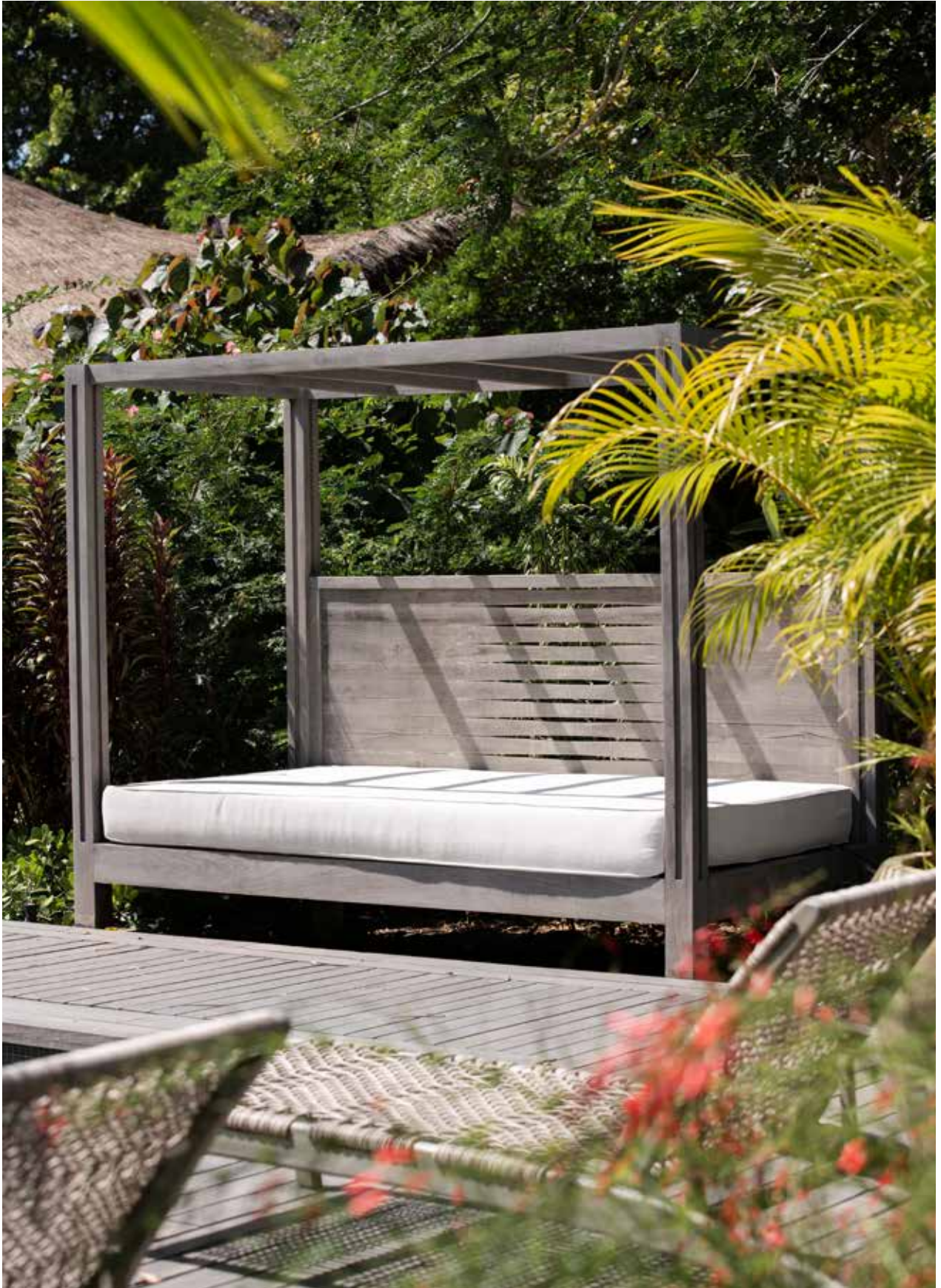
SLAB SOFA — ESPAVE WOOD





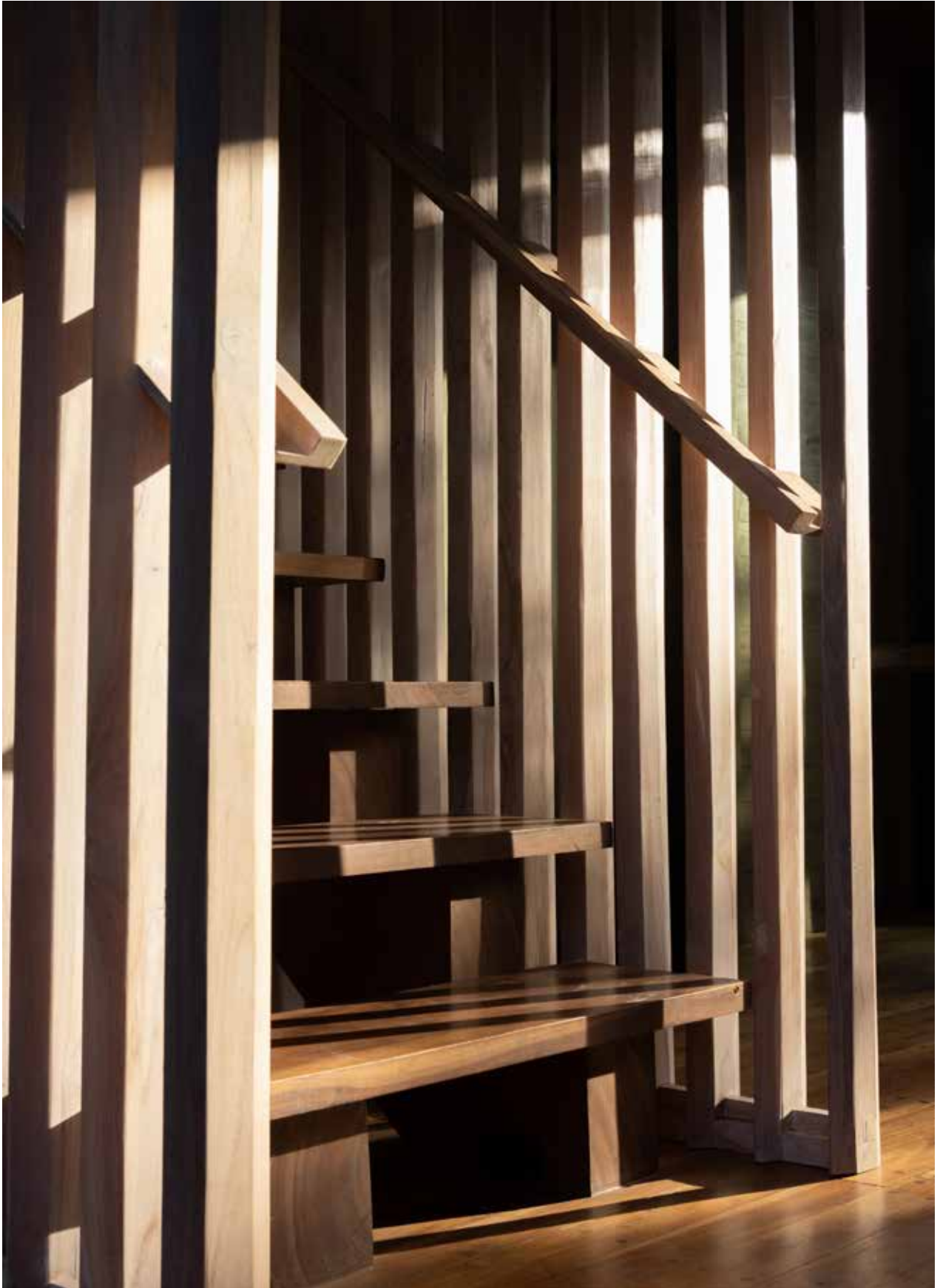




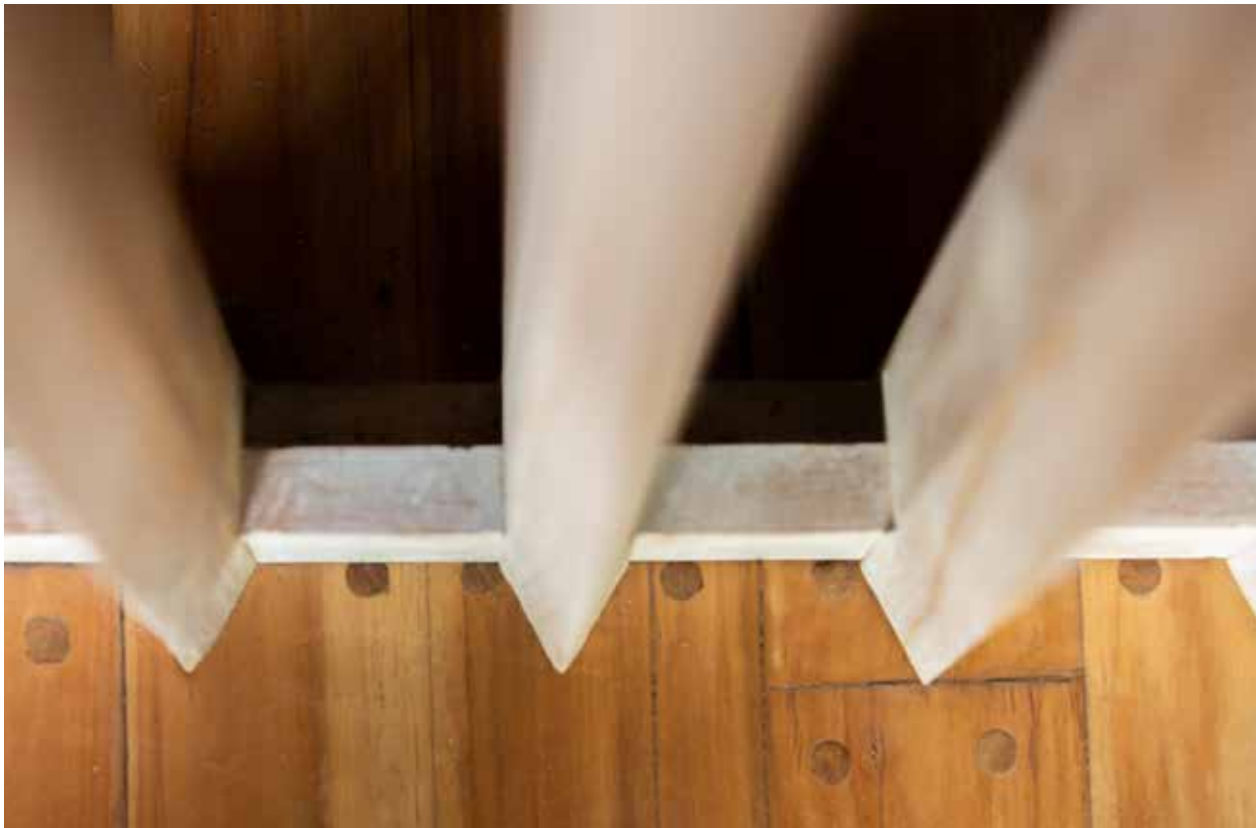


GREYED TEAK WOOD IBIZA BED



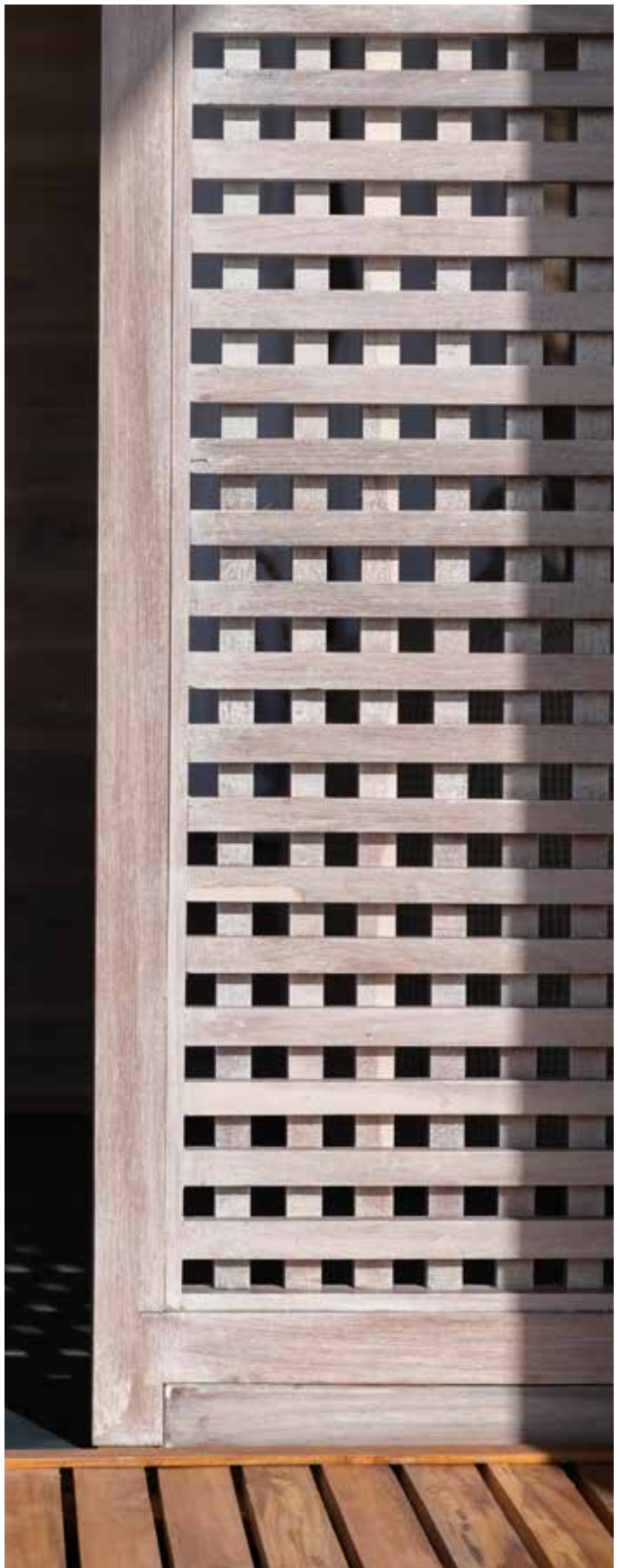


GREYED TEAK WOOD STAIR SCREEN AND HANDRAIL





WHITE WASHED TEAK WOOD VANITY AND SHOWER SCREEN





WHITE WASHED TEAK WOOD VANITY





WHITE WASHED TEAK WOOD VANITY

# REPURPOSED SERIES

Our repurposed collection is crafted from found wood that comes down in storms or washes up on the river banks and beaches at Reserva Ecologica Panamaes. With an endless turnover of driftwood on the 4km of coastline at the reserve, we have a lot to draw from, but the magic is that as soon as the tide goes out, so does our supply.

Time is of the essence and this collection is one of chance and serendipity - we've discovered massive specimens of native protected species that grow in our own forests - like Panama Tree (*Sterculia Apetala*) and Ceiba (*Ceiba pentandra*). We always ensure there is no wildlife calling these trees home before we decide to collect them. After using a backhoe and a crew of 10-15 people to get these huge sprawling pieces of wood to our shop, we spend weeks turning, washing and researching to understand the history and form of what we're working with, and aim to make as few cuts as possible to preserve the inherent design of these one-of-a-kind wood species.





DINING ROOM TABLE - PANAMA TREE DRIFT WOOD

Panama tree (*Sterculia Apetala*) driftwood, found serendepitously on Panamaes beach. The Panama tree is the national tree of Panama and is a protected species - cutting it is prohibited. These majestic trees grow along the banks of the Panamaes river at Reserva Panamaes and sustain a large variety of wildlife - we have many on the Reserve but this is the first to come to us by windfall. The large buttressed base is favored place for large felines to hide, and is now the base of ths table, with the trunk as the tabletop.



COFFEE TABLE - CEIBA TREE DRIFT WOOD

Ceiba (*Ceiba pentandra*) driftwood and teak oil finish. The Ceiba tree, with its massive horizontal canopy, buttressed roots that eclipse the average human in height, and large seed pods exploding with cottony fiber, is one of the grandest species in the dry tropical forest. We were excited to find this large trunk as driftwood, and created twin coffee tables by making one cut through the center of the trunk. We only minimally refined this impressive specimen to highlight its natural grandeur and variance.



LIVING ROOM CONSOLE TABLE - CEIBA TREE DRIFT WOOD

Ceiba (*Ceiba pentandra*) driftwood and teak oil finish. The Ceiba tree, with its massive horizontal canopy, buttressed roots that eclipse the average human in height, and large seed pods exploding with cottony fiber, is one of the grandest species in the dry tropical forest.



SIDE TABLE - TEAK WOOD ROOT

The star shaped cross section of a teak (*tectona grandis*) root interposed into a cube form makes for a side table that is both organic and modern. The natural golden red-brown hue of the root wood has been used for centuries as a dye - a natural teak oil finish brings out the brilliant tones of this wood.

# LEATHER SERIES

Our shop is based in the Azuero Peninsula of Panama, which is known for its cattle ranching. Leather is an abundant local resource, but Azuero leather is thick and unrefined - marked with brands, ticks and barbed wire. It is strong, weather resistant and every hide tells a story. We use these unique qualities of the leather as assets, and instead of trying to hide or refine this tough material, we work that character into the design. The texture and brands of local farmers are on proud display and it is tanned by hand in a local open-air workshop - as a result, no two pieces in this collection are ever the same.

We source our leather from a family tannery in Guararé, Panama, that has been handcrafting leather hides in much the same way for generations. The hides are left to hang and cure in open air workshops behind the family's farmhouse, where the humid salty air adds to the character and sheen.











LEATHER AND WHITE PAINTED OAK WOOD CHAIR



LEATHER AND OAK WOOD CHAIR



OAK AND LEATHER DAY BED



OAK AND LEATHER SOFA



CLUB CHAIRS AND LOVESEAT — TEAK WOOD AND LEATHER





# RATTAN SERIES

Our Rattan collection is crafted from windfall Panamanian oak and finished with a clear teak oil and rattan panels from Cane and Basket. The pulls are Cocobolo, a protected and endangered hardwood that we salvaged from poachers who were intercepted trying to steal the trees from the reserve. This collection was designed to seamlessly hide components of a surround sound music system, with the bass speaker and electric components in the sideboard or built-in consoles, and the other speakers in the side tables.

## COCOBOLO DETAILS

This tropical hardwood has been exploited into near oblivion for the gorgeous color of its red-orange heartwood, and thus the species can hardly be found outside of conservation forests. We came across downed cocobolo trees after intercepting poachers on our forest preserve, and thus use our limited supply of this precious wood for pulls on our Rattan collection.





RATTAN AND OAK WOOD CREDENZA







RATTAN AND OAK WOOD CREDENZA DETAIL



RATTAN AND OAK WOOD SIDE TABLE





RATTAN AND OAK WOOD SIDE TABLE



WHITENED TEAK WOOD BUILT-IN CONSOLE WITH RATTAN DOORS



WHITENED TEAK WOOD BUILT-IN CONSOLE WITH RATTAN DOORS



RATTAN AND DIAMOND INLAY OAK WOOD DEY BAR



BAR DETAIL





OAK WOOD DRY BAR WITH COCOBOLO AND RATTAN DETAILS



OAK WOOD DRY BAR WITH COCOBOLO AND RATTAN DETAILS



RATTAN BENCH — WHITENED TEAK





RATTAN BENCH — WHITENED TEAK



RATTAN AND GREYED TEAK WOOD VANITY MIRROR



RATTAN AND TEAK WOOD VANITY



RATTAN AND WHITENED TEAK CLOSET WITH COCOBOLO DRAWERS



RATTAN AND WHITENED TEAK CLOSET WITH COCOBOLO DRAWERS



TEAK SURF BOARD STAND



TEAK SURF BOARD STAND



COMMISSION US FOR YOUR SPACE

We are currently working on a private commission basis and all our pieces are made to order at our shop in Panama.

Contact us for more information:  
INFO@IM-KM.COM or visit us at [www.IM-KM.com/tlalli](http://www.IM-KM.com/tlalli)

All furniture shown in this catalog is property of studio tlalli  
(c) 2022 Studio Tlalli all rights reserved