



## 150 SQUARE FEET IN PORTLAND: SALVAGED WARMTH

photos by Stephan Cridland/Shannon Quimby

NOT THAT LONG AGO, when a tree fell in Portland due to storm damage or disease, it was chopped into firewood or chipped for the mulch pit. Then Stephen Aiguier, the founder of the sustainable design-build firm Green Hammer, did something to change that. In 2005, he co-founded Urban Timberworks, a workshop that transforms those trees into fine furniture, cabinetry and slabs. Naturally, when Aiguier started his own kitchen remodel last year, he already had one element picked out.

“Stephen showed me a beech slab and asked ‘Can we incorporate this?’” said Jan Fillinger, an architect who partnered with Aiguier on the project. Fillinger knew that they could. First, though, Aiguier’s 800-square-foot bungalow needed to be reconfigured to better fit his family’s needs.

Fillinger added a principal suite at the back of the house and created an open plan in the front. Now the kitchen—and Aiguier’s slab—takes center stage. The beechwood occupies a central counter and eat-in bar. Its edge meets a solid manufactured surface for dramatic effect. “I love creating good design from beautiful contrast,” Fillinger said. “The pristine human-made material highlights the natural beauty of the wood.” The wood tones are repeated throughout the adjacent rooms to create good flow. Neutral white walls, copious natural light, and clever kitchen storage prohibits clutter. Aiguier also made various energy upgrades, including installing Energy Star appliances and an uber-efficient heat recovery ventilation system that improves indoor air quality. “We doubled our square footage,” said Aiguier, “and halved our energy bill.”

Today, Aiguier enjoys the second life of the rescued wood. “My wife and I entertain a lot and don’t always clean up right away,” he said. “But the slab looks as good as the day we put it in. I like seeing a renewable local resource used in a way that’s durable and inspiring.” ■