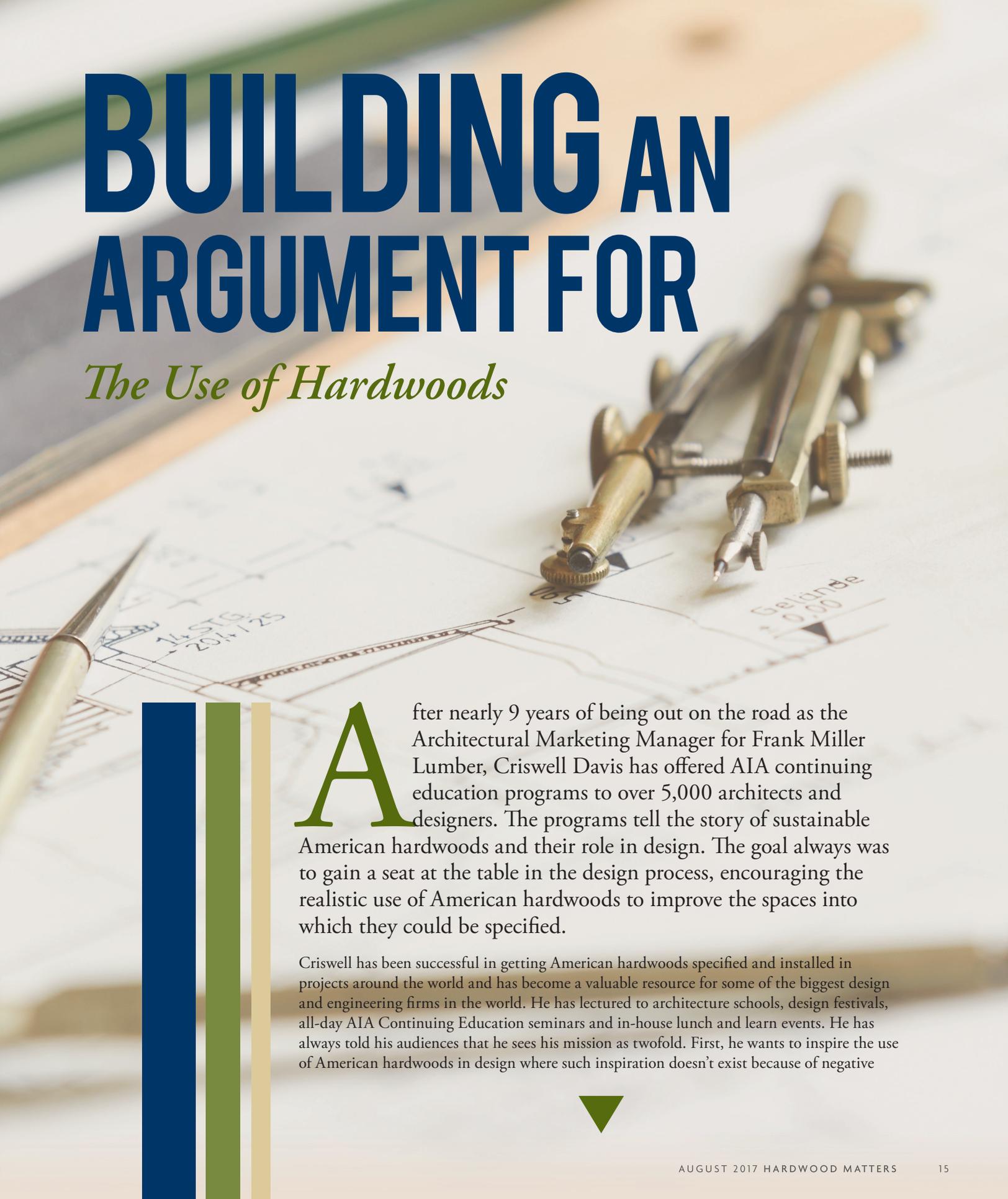


BUILDING AN ARGUMENT FOR

The Use of Hardwoods



After nearly 9 years of being out on the road as the Architectural Marketing Manager for Frank Miller Lumber, Criswell Davis has offered AIA continuing education programs to over 5,000 architects and designers. The programs tell the story of sustainable American hardwoods and their role in design. The goal always was to gain a seat at the table in the design process, encouraging the realistic use of American hardwoods to improve the spaces into which they could be specified.

Criswell has been successful in getting American hardwoods specified and installed in projects around the world and has become a valuable resource for some of the biggest design and engineering firms in the world. He has lectured to architecture schools, design festivals, all-day AIA Continuing Education seminars and in-house lunch and learn events. He has always told his audiences that he sees his mission as twofold. First, he wants to inspire the use of American hardwoods in design where such inspiration doesn't exist because of negative





preconceived notions regarding forest resource management. To this end he offers a plethora of industry stats regarding the health of our resource. Second, once his passion for sustainable American hardwoods inspires its specification in a project, he sees his job as helping to fine tune the specification so that the end goal is achievable. He treats his audiences to an exciting slide show of beautiful projects featuring American hardwoods.

In 2010 Criswell Davis wrote an article for Hardwood Matters entitled “The Boy Who Cried Wood” as his new mission as a Brand Ambassador for the American hardwood industry was taking shape. More than 7 years since that article was written he is proud to say that he has succeeded in gaining a seat at the design table. There is much work still to be done and so many architects and designers to reach, but he considers the time and resources spent so far to be well worth it.

Here 3 architects share their opinions and observations on the attributes of North American hardwoods and their growing role in architecture and design.



“What’s great about wood to me is not day one. It’s actually 20 years later when you start to see the patina and the character that is completely unexpected or unpredicted that comes to life.”

DESIGN, SUSTAINABILITY & HARDWOOD

ANDREW KLARE is a Director at KPF based in New York with 14 years’ experience in various building types, including supertall towers, mixed-use developments, institutional and residential projects.

With regard to sustainable design and choosing hardwoods Andrew sees the two together without question. “With our firm we don’t advertise that we do sustainable architecture, the reason for that is because we figure high design is also doing sustainable architecture. The aesthetics, the function, the impact it has on the urban environment... all of those things we have a moral obligation to make them not only successful buildings not only for our clients but successful buildings for our environment and for future generations. And so it’s engrained in us.”

He notes that wood is a very “primal” thing and something that always brings comfort when using it. “We use a lot of stones and woods to make spaces feel warm, inviting and occupiable; places that want to be populated and places that want to be destinations. We use wood as a crutch because it’s always an easy throwback and I say that as complimentary—you add wood to something and you make it better.”

Andrew is a fan of hardwood because of its range and versatility. “It offers an amazing palette with materiality that not only offers, from a design perspective, a great tonality . . . form making and even just the patterning that can be happening with this wood, it’s endless. It’s a great tool for us to work with and because its not its not limiting and offers these green sustainable contributions and inherent beauty that people just seem to be drawn to it becomes a great piece of our overall palette.”



BIOPHILIA & THE BOTTOMLINE

The relationship between people and their environmental spaces is called Biophilia and influences the designs of **BRADLEY CARLSON**, AIA Principal. “It’s how people feel in a space both physically and mentally; and by incorporating natural materials like American hardwoods and presenting it in a design solution in a natural way, it really enforces that kind of connection.”



For the last 27 years, Bradley has primarily practiced in hospitality design, with projects including hotels, restaurants, spas, function and conference centers. “From an operator side, you want to create a space that people want to come back to and people respond very well to natural materials. If you walk into a space with beautiful hardwood floors, walls, architectural detailing and furniture it really creates that favorable experience.”

From the business side of things, Bradley notes that designers must be prepared to answer the question; “is this going to make me any more money?” His response, “be careful” when comparing just initial costs of selecting

“American hardwoods is a great interior and exterior product, hitting on a number of points and sustainability is often misunderstood as people bring preconceptions for a material on what’s appropriate or not.”

American hardwoods with synthetic materials or other choices and really look at the life cycle of the material.

“The material life cycle costs comes up a lot and the process of selecting these materials really needs to be architect guided,” he notes. “For instance, the initial costs of a hardwood might be higher and a client or specifier might opt for less expensive up-front materials but those materials often times have higher maintenance costs, not as long a life span or the durability needed. When all of those aspects are taken into account over a 15-year period of a product life cycle, American hardwoods come out ahead.”

Speaking to sustainability and the push in locally sourced products, Bradley believes this is a consumer trend that resonates with American hardwoods. “People like knowing that it’s locally produced . . . whether it’s their American hardwoods or the dinner on their plate. And that makes them feel like they are being responsible in their choices and reinforces their expectations of what they are looking for in today’s market.”

HEALTHY DESIGN – WAY BEYOND GREEN

CHERYL CIECKO, a licensed architect with more than 28 years of professional experience who currently specializes in healthy building, says there is a growing awareness by consumers of toxins in their environment and there is a tendency towards natural materials without added ingredients. “Its something I talk a lot about in my practice. And locally sourced, natural products is kind of a double whammy in terms of solving the problems that people are trying to solve.”



“There is miscommunication in the sustainability arena,” she says. “And its something your organization is doing a really good job of actually

countering. You have some really good information regarding sustainability and healthy forests. There is maybe, for instance, a preconception that something like bamboo may be better because it grows fast without really understanding that it is growing fast in Asia; and there is a lot of processing involved. So just looking at the life cycle assessment piece from cradle to grave, wood has a great story. What I have found interesting is looking at all materials and that have driven my interest in wood.

Every material has a story to tell and wood has a very compelling story to tell to me.”

Cheryl Ciecko Inc. was founded as an integrative architectural wellness-consulting company to provide support, assistance, resources and insights to both professionals and individuals challenged by water damage, mold and other toxins in buildings, resulting in possible health impacts for occupants.

“If the wood industry doesn’t tell its story then other people will tell your story. The wood industry thought everybody knew their story... but they don’t.”

Between 2004 and 2007, an estimated 100,000 homes in more than 20 states were built with toxic drywall imported from China. Emissions from the drywall corrode plumbing and electrical systems and homeowners blamed toxic emissions for headaches and respiratory ailments. Cheryl advises that the first question anyone should ask . . . “where is the product coming from? where is it being made?”

“A product made in another country can make claims that they are organic or gluten free, they can say they are made in a certain way. But if a product (wherever its made) is not going to be subject to 3rd party reviews, if the company isn’t held accountable and doesn’t have a reason to make you whole if there is a problem, then personally I wouldn’t want that in my building or my house.”

If the wood industry doesn’t tell its story then other people will tell your story.