

**design centre**  
LONDON

# CONNECTED

**CREATIVITY, SUSTAINABILITY & CRAFTSMANSHIP  
FURNITURE BY THE WORLD'S LEADING DESIGNERS ON SHOW  
AT DESIGN CENTRE, CHELSEA HARBOUR**

**(7 December 2020 – 31 January 2021)**



**December 2020** The *Connected* exhibition of contemporary furniture, showcasing the work of nine of the world's most exciting designers, will open at Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour, Europe's premier design destination, from 7 December 2020.

It is said that from crisis comes great creativity. Featuring original and imaginative tables and seating of astonishing breadth, the *Connected* exhibition explores how designers and makers adapted their working practices during lockdown to bring sustainable timbers to life. Timed to coincide with England easing out of lockdown 2, the exhibition staged in the magnificent Design Avenue offers another opportunity to physically view the finished pieces up close.

An impressive rollcall of international names participated in the project including Heatherwick Studio (UK), Jaime Hayon (Spain), Ini Archibong (Switzerland), Sabine Marcelis (Netherlands), Maria Bruun (Denmark), Sebastian Herkner (Germany), Maria Jeglinska- Adamczewska (Poland), Studiopepe (Italy) and Studio Swine (UK / Japan).

The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC), Benchmark Furniture and the Design Museum challenged them to create pieces for their personal use, to suit their new ways of living and working from home. They were also invited to record their creative journeys to demonstrate how they approached the brief and developed their designs.

Transforming an idea into reality takes passion, invention and vision; from seeing the potential of the timber and respect for artisan processes to an openness to innovation. With the designers relying solely on digital communication and video conferencing, the *Connected* exhibition reveals what extraordinary results can be achieved when designers and makers work together, even at a distance.

Originally launched in September at the Design Museum, the *Connected* exhibition has been enhanced for visitors to Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour. Top designers, architects, collectors and design enthusiasts can view a new documentary that takes the viewer on a journey through the entire process, from the designers' workshops, through the American forests, and into the Design Museum.

The design ethos of biophilia, meaning love of nature, may have already entered the mainstream, but the exhibition also reflects the growing groundswell in interiors for environmental merits and the impact of material choices.



**design centre**  
LONDON

the  
**DESIGN  
MUSEUM**

**BENCHMARK**

Wood is renewable and easily recycled. The *Connected* project presents three beautiful and underused timbers – American red oak, cherry and maple. They grow abundantly and make up 30% of the American hardwood forest and all contribute to its diversity and sustainability. With heat treatments and a variety of finishes, they are shown to be hugely versatile.

Another key design objective of the project was to ensure that the products are demonstrably sustainable. When considered as a group, the nine *Connected* designs are better than carbon neutral. The total global warming potential (GWP) - often referred to as the “carbon footprint” - is minus 342 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. (Carbon neutrality is achieved as the carbon stored in the wood used for the designs, together with a small offset due to use of process waste for energy production, exceeds all carbon emissions during the extraction, processing and transport of raw materials, manufacturing at Benchmark, and delivery of the finished designs to the Design Museum).

Generating a deeper understanding of design is at the heart of Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour’s online programming. Award-winning British designer Thomas Heatherwick will be in conversation at a Design Date at 4pm on Thursday 17 December 2020.

Claire German, managing director of Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour says: “We support creative expression across the design agenda, and we’re delighted to host *Connected* featuring original work by leading designers and makers with AHEC and Benchmark. Bursting with new perspectives, these collaborative partnerships during lockdown have resulted in extraordinary designs of enduring beauty and quality. Meticulous care, craftsmanship and respect for wood as a sustainable material has never been more relevant in our fast-paced world.”

“Having *Connected* showcased at Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour is a really important moment for us,” added David Venables, European director of AHEC. “It gives designers an opportunity to engage with this beautiful exhibition of furniture and to learn about the possibilities of using American red oak, maple and cherry – much underused and sustainable materials – in interior environments. The beauty and versatility of the woods is something we are proud to share with this audience.”

“The designers who frequent Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour are some of the finest in the world, and for us to be able to show them what Benchmark can create with American hardwoods is a real opportunity to talk about craftsmanship and the importance of making quality pieces in a sustainable material,” says Sean Sutcliffe, founder of Benchmark Furniture. “Some of the *Connected* designers really challenged us with their concepts and we feel the results demonstrate that our workshop can work to bring to fruition almost any idea thrown at us.”

### Plan Your Visit

The health and wellbeing of visitors and showrooms are the Design Centre’s first priority, and there are many measures in place to ensure a safe visit to the *Connected* exhibition. Entry is free and booking is not required.

### Event Information

+44 (0)20 7225 9166  
www.dcch.co.uk  
www.connectedbydesign.online

### Event Location

Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour  
Lots Road  
London SW10 0XE

#connectedbydesign  
#ConnectedAtDCCH

To view the *Connected* documentary:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVDFF15DS6E>

### FOR FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION AND IMAGES PLEASE CONTACT:

PR Manager, Rebecca Gleeson  
rebeccagleeson@dcch.co.uk  
+44 74 36145285



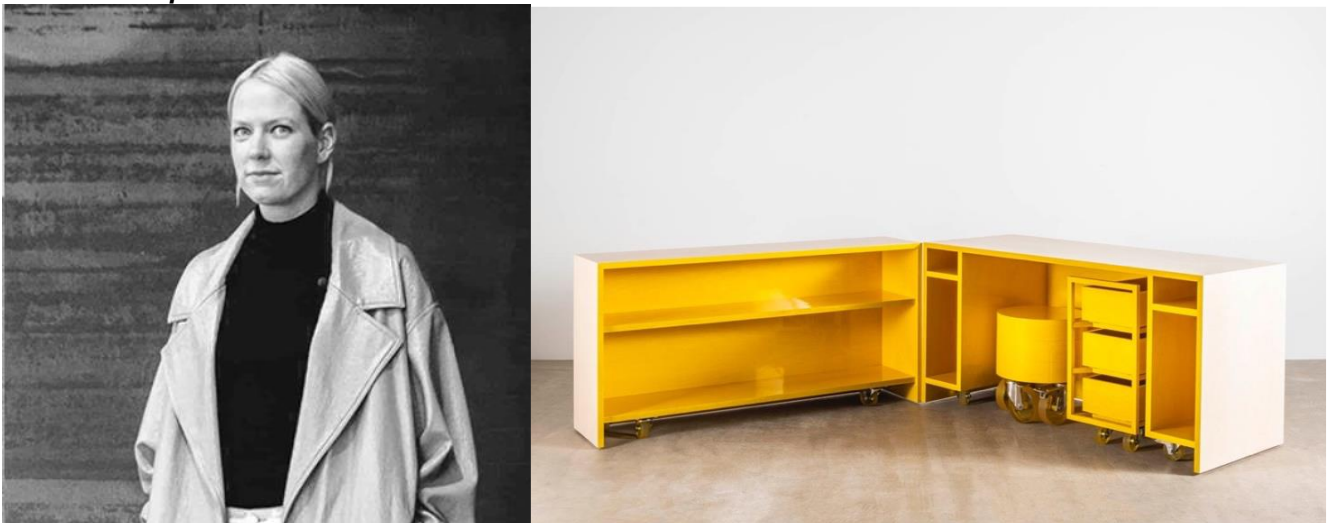
## THE DESIGNERS AND THEIR PIECES

### Stem by Heatherwick Studio (UK) *American maple*



Heatherwick Studio's **Stem** celebrates the power of biophilia by incorporating planting into curved CNC-machined American maple legs, clamped to a glass tabletop. After spending three months at the same desk using video conferencing to communicate, the studio craved nature and began to see the space around them as a mini television studio – what is behind you and around you is now being seen by the world. Initial inspiration evolved from the craft of wooden spoon carving. The same principle is applied to a shelving unit, with carved timber uprights and glass shelves. The seat is upholstered in Gotland shearling, with a carved base that references the other elements.

### Candy Cubicle by Sabine Marcelis (Netherlands) *American maple*



Sabine Marcelis' **Candy Cubicle** transforms from 'working mode' into 'hiding mode' with an element of surprise on the inside – inspired by the suitcase scene in *Pulp Fiction*. The outer surfaces use veneered American maple with a white oil finish. The interior has compartments for books and a computer, constructed from the same maple veneer – but coated in a yellow high-gloss translucent lacquer – hand polished to a fine finish. This offers a bright pop of colour when the cubicle is open, with the fine maple grain visible through the lacquer. The unit is on matching yellow casters, allowing the piece to be easily closed when the working day is over. Sabine's seat, a circular stool, is made from stacked and turned solid maple, with matching casters.

**Mesamachine by Jaime Hayon (Spain)**  
*American cherry*



The **Mesamachine** by Jaime Hayon is a complex and ambitious multi-element build, providing a single space to work, play, eat and spend time with his family. Like a swiss army knife, functional elements can be opened and extended to serve a multitude of functions. The main table frame is made up like a hollow torsion box, with tensioning ribs running along its length. The various storage solutions and extending shelves work on timber runners and involve an exacting degree of precision in their manufacture. Two stools and a bench follow a similar design language, with smiley faces cut out to add a playful element. The timber choice is American cherry with a clear oil.

**The Kadamba Gate by Ini Archibong (Switzerland)**  
*American cherry, red oak and thermally modified red oak*



Ini's **Kadamba Gate** is driven by a strong narrative that guides the material choice as well as the piece's construction. Both the table and bench function as outdoor pieces. The table has a metal base plate and frame that supports the tabletop. The sculptural underframe is made from irregular-shaped extrusions in multiple heights, inspired by the Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland. This underframe is constructed from a mix of materials – American red oak, American cherry and thermally modified American red oak. The table's top is laminated and machined, with a colourful gloss epoxy finish, and intricate removable brass detailing, which doubles as drainage for its outdoor environment. Ini's bench uses a similar construction as the table, with a metal frame cased within sculptural timber extrusions. The top has a subtle camber for drainage, and a removable vegetable-tanned leather seat pad with stitched perimeter, made by leather specialists Bill Amberg Studio.

**Nordic Pioneer by Maria Bruun (Denmark)**  
*American maple*



Maria's collection, **Nordic Pioneer**, offers a masterclass in Nordic design. With a purity to both the seating and to her gate-leg table, they are intentionally pared back, to let the materials and construction do the talking. Made entirely in American maple, a key design detail is the elegant wooden hinge that runs the length of the tabletop, to lift and drop the leaf. Components for this hinge are turned and drilled to within a fraction of a millimetre, to ensure a smoothness of movement. Turned rounded feet intersect with the square profile of the table leg, and subtle tracks for the gate legs are integrated on the underside of the leaf. Maria's seat references the functional and linear lines of the table, while stackable stools with rounded seat pads, machined from solid maple act to celebrate the choice of timber.

**Stammtisch by Sebastian Herkner (Germany)**  
*American red oak and maple*



With an organic and modular form, Sebastian wanted to create a landscape where the various elements of his day meet. The name **Stammtisch** translates as the 'regulars table' – a space for friends and family to gather every week. Using a thoughtfully selected choice of materials, the table is made from red oak, bleached, with a white matt natural oil finish. The large tray is made from American maple, ammonia fumed with a clear matt natural oil finish. His stools and small tray are made from scorched red oak. The timber for the tabletop and other components is spindle-moulded to achieve the characteristic shape that is key to Sebastian's design. Components were carefully jointed and glued up, with the design playing with contrasting grain directions from the tabletop and the movable trays, which can run along the length of the top within skived tracks.

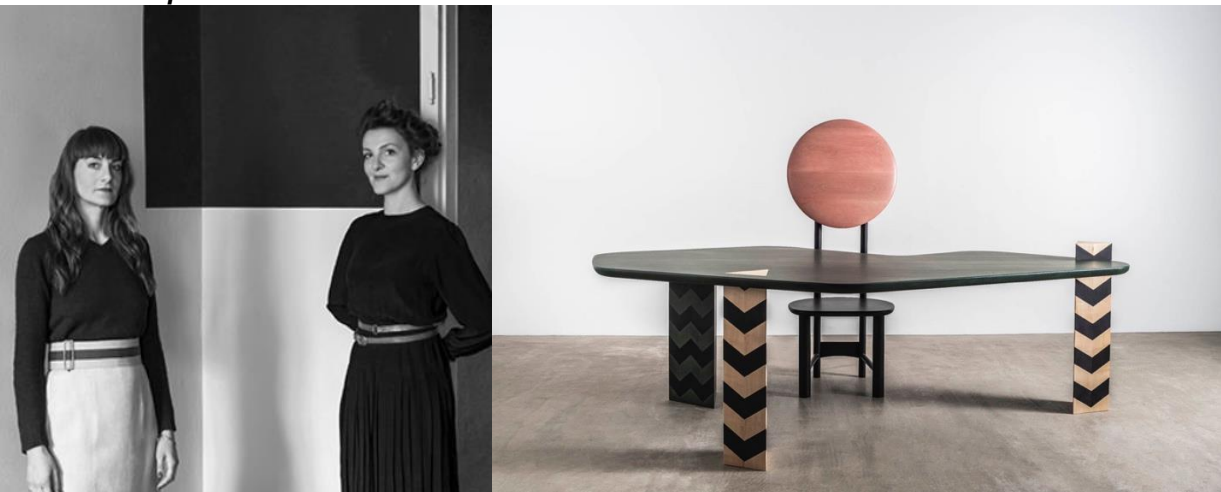
**Arco by Maria Jeglinska-Adamczewska (Poland)**  
*American cherry*



Maria's **Arco** seat and table draw inspiration from sculptural forms and the architecture of Benedictine abbeys. With a focus on a prominent curve, the table uses prime American cherry with planks carefully grain matched and machined. The table's angled legs are an unusual quarter-moon shape and create tension through the top by use of inset metal plates.

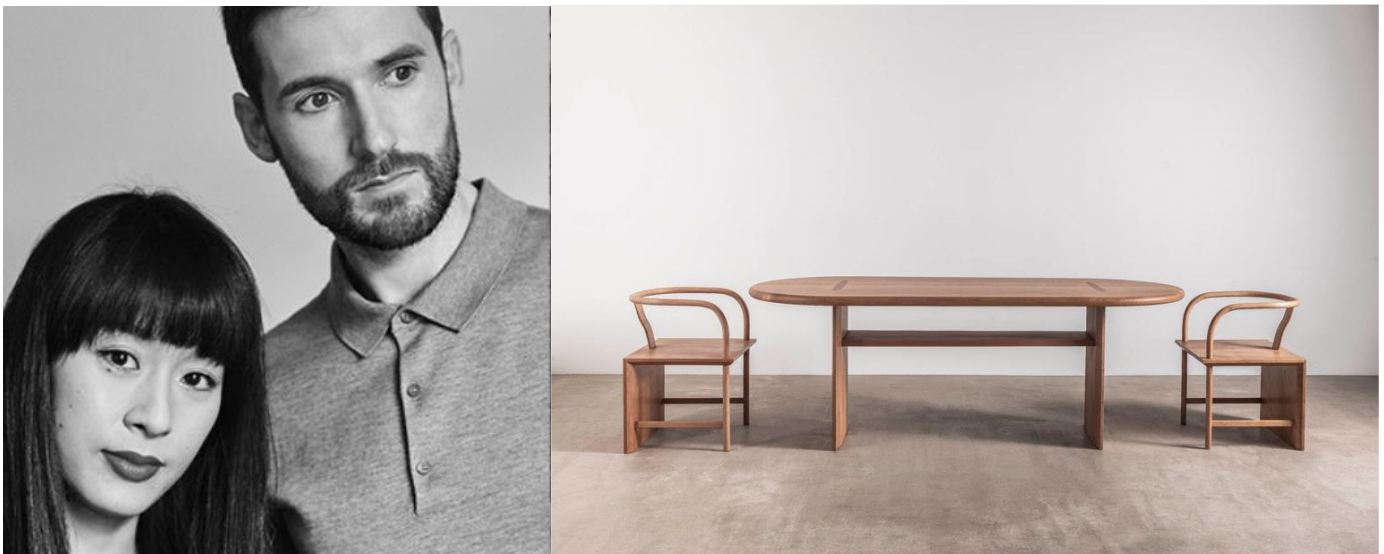
The chair has been designed to be sculptural, and to mimic the curves of the body. While appearing structurally simple, the construction choices (such as frame matching) showcase the degree of manufacturing proficiency. The side panels of the chair are coopered – a technique drawn from barrel-making, and the piece will act to celebrate the beauty of the hardwood.

**Pink Moon by Studiopepe (Italy)**  
*American maple*



Studiopepe's **Pink Moon** plays with the idea of cycles of renewal and new beginnings, inspired by the pink moon in spring. Its construction involved contrasting inlay details on the table's legs and a contemporary seat inspired by a Charles Rennie Mackintosh frame. American maple was chosen for this piece. Timber was first selected and CNC cut for the leg inlays. These pieces were then stained and oiled, a process that dyed the timber through. The tabletop was planked and then cut on CNC to the desired nature-inspired form. Legs were mitred together, and then the contrast inlay fitted flush. The chair's unusual backrest comprises a large maple 'moon', CNC machined in two halves, drilled to accept the back legs and then stained. When the two halves are brought together, a seamless joint will be created, with the Pink Moon suspended by the Mackintosh-inspired frame.

**Humble Administrator's Chair and Table by Studio Swine (UK/Japan)**  
*American red oak and cherry*



Studio Swine designed a throne-style seat and table inspired by traditional Chinese gardens and the archetype of the Ming Chair. After spending lockdown in Tokyo, the pair were left craving nature and wanted to celebrate the timber in its purest form. American cherry was chosen for its warmth and caramel tones for the solid seat and back leg, with curved steam bent American red oak front legs, arms and backrest. The steam bend for the arms was ambitious and complex to fabricate, in that it bends across two axes – requiring a team of six craftspeople and a specially constructed jig to create its unusual form. Their table uses a smooth clean piece of American cherry, with the straight leg profile visible through the top as end grain. An inset laptop shelf will act as a tensioning brace for the table.

– ENDS –

**Notes for editors:**

**About American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC)**

For over 30 years the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has been at the forefront of wood promotion in Europe, successfully building a distinctive and creative brand for U.S. hardwoods. AHEC's support for creative design projects such as *Legacy*, *The Smile* and *MultiPly*, for the London Design Festival demonstrate the performance potential of these sustainable materials and provide valuable inspiration. AHEC has pioneered the modelling of environmental Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) for hardwoods, an approach that has since been adopted by other industries. LCA measures a number of impacts: primary energy demand (from renewable and non-renewable resources); global warming potential; acidification potential; eutrophication potential; and, photochemical ozone creation potential.

[www.americanhardwood.org](http://www.americanhardwood.org)

@ahec\_europe

**About Benchmark Furniture:**

A powerhouse of craft, Benchmark are one of the UK's leading furniture-makers. Founded by Terence Conran and Sean Sutcliffe in 1984, the company has a mission to create furniture that contributes to human health and well-being, using natural, sustainable and non-toxic materials. With workshops in Berkshire and Dorset, Benchmark works with many of the world's leading architects and designers on commercial and residential projects. From forest to finished piece, Benchmark are positioned as a leader in sustainable enterprise. Their approach marries forward-thinking design with exemplary levels of craftsmanship and creativity, producing furniture that exudes natural warmth and soul.

[www.benchmarkfurniture.com](http://www.benchmarkfurniture.com)

@MadebyBenchmark

### **About the Design Museum:**

The Design Museum is the world's leading museum devoted to contemporary architecture and design. Its work encompasses all elements of design, including fashion, product and graphic design. Since it opened its doors in 1989 the museum has displayed everything from an AK-47 to high heels designed by Christian Louboutin. It has staged over 100 exhibitions, welcomed over five million visitors and showcased the work of some of the world's most celebrated designers and architects including Paul Smith, Zaha Hadid, Jonathan Ive, Frank Gehry, Eileen Gray and Dieter Rams. On 24 November 2016, the Design Museum relocated to Kensington, west London. Leading architect John Pawson converted the interior of the 1960s modernist building to create a new home for the Design Museum giving it three times more space in which to show a wider range of exhibitions and significantly extend its learning programmes.

[www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org)

@designmuseum

### **About Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour**

Design Centre, Chelsea Harbour is the world's premier destination for design and decoration. Home to 120 showrooms and 600 international brands, it is the largest of kind in Europe. Its unique sense of community, commitment to creative excellence and specialist expertise make it the first port of call for professional designers and architects sourcing for prestigious residential and commercial projects including hotels, bars, restaurants, superyachts, private jets, luxury showflats, country houses and city apartments. The place to discover world-class talent, connect with established makers and luxury brands, all at one address, nowhere else is guiding international interiors with such an assured hand.

[www.dcch.co.uk](http://www.dcch.co.uk)

@designcentreCH

### **About the Material:**

#### **American red oak (*Quercus rubra*):**

Reaching a height of 21m, with a trunk diameter of 1m, red oak is the most abundant species in America's hardwood forests. Distributed through much of the eastern United States, it is the most used hardwood in the U.S. and is popular in Asia. European woodworking industries are less familiar with red oak and have historically shown some reluctance to use it; although this is beginning to change as more designers and manufacturers are discovering its potential. Named for the colour of its leaves in the fall, this classic oak wood has a light brown sapwood, and a heartwood characterised by attractive warm reddish-pink tones. The colour of the wood shows variation, based on location.

Red oak is straight grained, coarse-textured and distinctive. The grain is so open that smoke can be blown through it from end-grain to end-grain on a flat-sawn board. Lighter in weight, more flexible, but just as strong as European oak, it has medium bending strength and stiffness and high crushing strength. With an open and porous grain structure, it is very good for steam bending. It glues and joints well. Being hard, stable when dry and easy to finish and stain, it is ideal for furniture, flooring and cabinetmaking applications.

Red oak was specified for the interior scheme at financial information firm Bloomberg's European headquarters in London. The project – designed by architects Foster + Partners – won the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2018, as the UK's best new building.

Overview: warm, grainy, tough and bendy, full of character.

#### **American cherry (*Prunus serotina*):**

A medium size tree, reaching a height of around 20m, with a trunk diameter of 50cm, American cherry makes up 3% of the American forest resource overall, but in the northern Appalachians and particularly Pennsylvania and West Virginia it is very abundant and widely available. Cherry has a relatively short rotation, taking less time to mature than other hardwoods. The narrow sapwood is a light pinkish colour, while the heartwood varies from rich red to reddish brown, and darkens on exposure to light. It is a high-quality cabinet wood and may contain streaks of lighter sapwood and dark gum pockets. With a straight unpronounced grain and fine texture, the wood is medium density and moderately strong. It is easy to machine, shape and connect, and when sanded and polished, produces an excellent smooth, glassy finish.





American cherry had a long period of popularity in furniture making, but seems to have gone out of fashion. It is also used for panelling, turnery, tobacco pipes, veneers and has been specified for its acoustic properties, for use in auditoriums and concert halls.

American cherry was selected by architects Kolman Boye for their Rotunda Serotina for *Wallpaper\** Handmade, first shown at Milan's Salone del Mobile in 2016.

Overview: rich, smooth, vibrant and flexible, a craftsman's delight.

**American maple (*Acer rubrum* and *Acer saccharum*):**

A close cousin of European maple and sycamore, American maple can reach heights of between 23-27m, with a trunk diameter of 75cm. For purposes of this project, we are grouping the botanical subspecies, hard and soft maple, which share similar characteristics and are both relatively abundant. Hard maple is a cold climate species favouring the northern states, whereas soft maples grow more widely across the mixed hardwood forests of the eastern United States; with more red maple in the northeast and silver maple concentrated in the mid and southern states. Both hard and soft maple produce syrup.

The soft maple name is rather misleading given both timbers are relatively hard and heavy, with some variation in colour according to region. Both sapwood and heartwood may contain medullary flecks as a natural characteristic. All maple has a close, fine texture and is generally straight grained, with smooth, tight characteristics akin to a fruit-type timber. Hard maple can occur as 'curly', 'fiddleback' and 'birds eye' figure. The wood darkens slightly on exposure to light with time.

Maple has good strength properties, with medium bending and crushing strength. It can be steam bent and is low in stiffness and shock resistance. Maple machines well with care and is reasonable for fixing, although pre-boring of holes is recommended. It can be stained to resemble other species. Its tight, smooth grain and high resistance to abrasion and wear make maple particularly popular for use in furniture, musical instruments and flooring. It is the traditional wood of kitchenware, absorbing and transferring minimal taste

Overview: light, fine, hard and incandescent, a bright choice.