

GET THE LOOK

Vincent Reed has over twenty years experience conserving and restoring interior and exterior woodwork. Antonia Edwards uncovers his passion for breathing life back into antique wood



The Designer

Vincent Reed first discovered his passion for restoration whilst spending hours polishing his Grandmother's brass. This, combined with a keen interest in music, led to his first job restoring pianos in Horsham. He then

worked at a restoration company in Storrington before taking on an apprenticeship at Michael Norman Antiques in Brighton. Here he learnt the craft of soldering, lock restoration, leatherwork, turning, glass cutting as well as polishing and wood conservation. After starting his own company in 1989, Vincent opened a showroom to display his oak refectory tables and his services expanded to include architectural restoration. He employs a team of skilled craftsmen with more than 100 years of combined experience at his workshop in Hurstpierpoint and is an active member of the BAFRA (British Antique Furniture Restorers Association).

Whether dealing with flooring, panelling, staircases or applied wood decoration, Vincent always strives to reinstate the charm of antique wood through enhancing its original craftsmanship and aged appearance. "The aim is not to make the wood look as good as new or to 'over restore' to the point where it looks superficial. Wood is a living breathing material and the layers of wear and tear should be acknowledged as an integral part of its history."

A lot of Vincent's work involves remedying inferior repair jobs by inexperienced tradesmen and he has seen many cases where hiring an expert in the first place would have saved a fortune in the long run. "The rich hues of the wood brought about through aging can be stripped bare by modern sanding methods and chemical strippers. My job is always to conserve and stabilise the wood as much as possible and only replace parts that are in a complete state of disrepair."

Part of Vincent's passion comes from a fascination and joy in unveiling evidence of skilled craftsmanship from a bygone era. One of his most exciting projects was Groombridge Place in Kent, the setting for the Bennets' family home in the recent film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, starring Keira Knightley. English Heritage had discovered that someone was using harsh chemicals to strip the paint from three hundred year old panelling. Vincent Reed was duly appointed to take over the project as well as restore the hand-carved staircases and oak flooring. The fact that he had to painstakingly remove the paint with copper brushes in two inch segments at a time exemplifies just how much sensitivity and patience is required in the restoration process.



From top: Groombridge Place drawing room before; during panelling restoration; after restoration



Restored 16th century carved panelling at Groombridge Place, Kent.



Handmade oak refectory table made using reclaimed pit-sawn timbers

Vincent Reed can undertake all manner of building conservation and restoration projects for interior woodwork needs. They offer the following services using both new and reclaimed solid oak:

Bespoke interior design service - panelling, bookcases, floors, doors, windows and stairs.

Handmade refectory tables

Solid oak flooring - supply, fit and finish.

Potential customers are welcome to visit the workshops at Little Washbrook Farm, Brighton Road, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex, BN6 9EF.

Contact Vincent Reed on:

Tel: 01273 833 869 or go to

www.vincentreed.com



Restoration of 17th century Minstrel Gallery



Reclaimed solid oak floor supplied, fitted and finished