

## Carpentry Firm and Its Unique Approach to Salvage are in Demand

**PHILADELPHIA** — Armed with both bachelors and masters degrees in French and English literature from prestigious Oxford University in England, Brendan Isaac Jones isn't your typical carpenter. Then again, architectural salvage isn't your typical in-

dustry.

Jones is the founder of Philadelphia's Greensaw Design & Build LLC, a two-year old firm that specializes in taking salvaged building materials and installing them in both traditional and unique applications in houses and commercial buildings. Working primarily in the Philadelphia area but also traveling to Northern Virginia, Nantucket, and upstate New York for projects, Jones and his three employees are seeing strong demand for their services, demand that can be attributed only in part to green building's popularity.

"We're turning down two out of three jobs right now because of demand and because we want to be on the same page as our clients," Jones explains. "We're a bunch of young craftsmen and we're trying to invent a new model of contractor."

That new model starts by ensuring that clients share Jones' love for and appreciation of salvage — a philosophy reaffirmed early in his career when a client's wife returned home to find antique, fully restored, salvaged doors installed, at her husband's request, and demanded that they be replaced with new doors that didn't look old.

"I just love old salvage and the stories behind it," Jones says. "I treat salvaged pieces as characters instead of as bland material."

Jones and his crew also treat clients as partners, believing that the process of building is a collaboration between the person who



**Brendan Jones is the founder of Philadelphia's Greensaw Design & Build, a firm that specializes in using architectural salvage in remodeling.** *Photo courtesy of Greensaw Design & Build*



**The crew of Greensaw Design & Build on the scene of the Ice House project in historic Alexandria, Va.** *Photo courtesy of Greensaw Design & Build*

has the idea or vision and the person who has the skills needed to turn that vision into a reality, guided by a schedule and budget. That philosophy became clearer during the years Jones spent working as a carpenter in various building trades, including in unions, timber frame shops, on demolition jobs and as part of a barn-building crew.

"We give clients a daily work schedule, always show up on time, and try to work on only one job at a time," Jones explains.

Jones and his crew work with a variety of salvaged materials, including doors, flooring, baseboards and windows, that are acquired both through their salvage work and by working closely with Philadelphia-area salvagers Frank Piller at Manayunk Design, Linda Lee Mellish at ReStore, and Mark Charry at Architectural Antiques Exchange.

"We're not strict conservationists who insist on renovating historical properties to look as they did," Jones explains. "Rather, we like the method of mixing and matching carpentry and woodwork and salvage from different eras, and the result is unique."

Jones and his team can also put historic properties back together to look as they once did, however, as evidenced by The Icehouse

project in Alexandria, Va., profiled on their website, greensawdesign.com.

Greensaw's founding was the result of Jones recognizing the wealth of salvaged materials and salvage opportunities in Philadelphia, the number of potential clients who love salvage, and the lack of area contractors who could make the material work.

And even though clients may love salvage, Jones says that the material sometimes can be a little intimidating to them. "Because it [architectural salvage] is different and a little arcane, I think people are a little threatened by architectural salvage."

To help increase their comfort level with salvage and the places that sell it, Jones will sometimes take clients on personal tours of local architectural salvage purveyors.

Looking toward the future, Jones says he wants to be able to travel a little more to jobs and widen the firm's scope, while still keeping it a somewhat unique carpentry firm. He also wants to introduce as many people as he can to salvage, why it's green, why it increases a building's value, and spread the good word on salvage — goals that he and his crew are already well on their way to accomplishing.

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