

NATURAL CHOICE

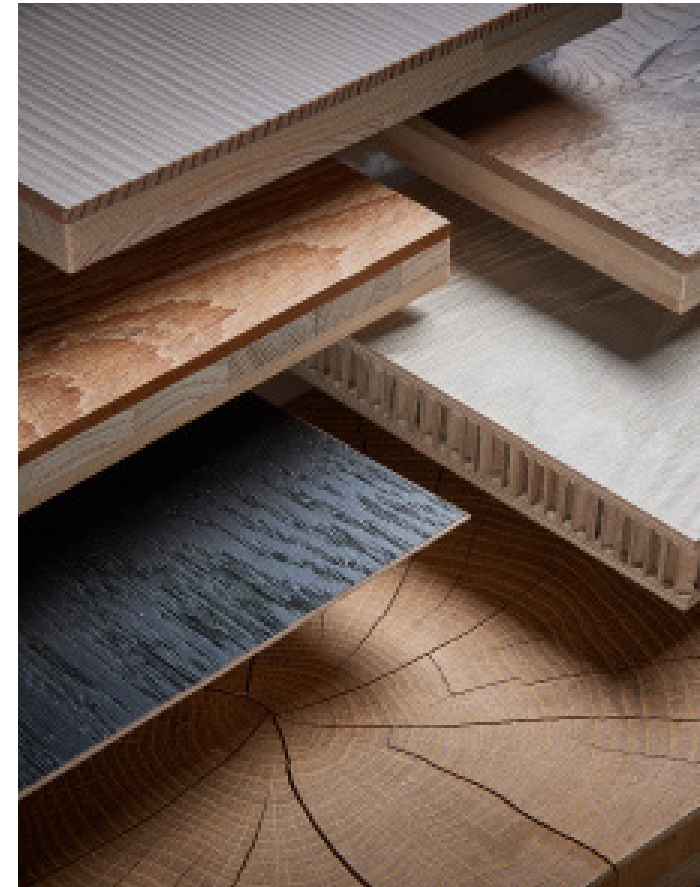
The timber selected by specialist Schotten & Hansen for its exquisite flooring and stylish interiors will bring the simple beauty of nature into your home

Few companies understand their product quite like Schotten & Hansen. Established in 1984, and now with 140 employees, this leading manufacturer of wooden interiors and flooring knows that every detail matters – from enhancing the delicate ecosystem of the forest to nourishing the cellular structure of engineered boards. Based in the, densely forested Bavarian Alps, Schotten & Hansen is deeply rooted in the local terrain.

The two principals at the helm are its driving force. With a degree in forestry, managing director Bernhard Heinloth is in charge of operations and sales. Co-founder Torben Hansen came from a family of auctioneers in Denmark and joined an antique-restoration business in Germany called Schotten that gradually evolved into the company. The company's stunning made-to-order wooden floors and interiors can be found in international airport lounges and super-yachts, luxury apartments and some of the world's most exclusive hotels. Torben has acquired a deep knowledge of timber – its molecular composition and the effects of ageing – which he has been passing on to his two sons, who have started working for the company. Together they craft wood that will be durable and develop a beautiful patina over time, and unlike most wooden surfaces, never needs to be sanded.

The firm's philosophy embraces wabi-Sabi, the Japanese concept of celebrating imperfections. So the natural knotholes and fissures in the wood it uses are treated to enhance their tactile qualities – and nature is almost always the repository. For example, a resin such as shellac, made from the secretions of a beetle, offers resistance to wear and tear might be bound with an oil extracted from nuts, fruit or seeds, which saturates the cells of the wood and repels water. Waxes produced by bees, lice or the candelilla plant add further layers of natural protection. Pigments used to colour the wood are also derived from the natural world, be they oxidised metals, ground stone or plants. Although the customer becomes a kind of custodian, little needs to be done to maintain the timber's breathable, beautiful surface. That's what happens when you buy not merely wood, but a wealth of knowledge. schotten-hansen.com

TOP ROW FROM LEFT Torben Hansen working with pigments in the studio. Surface samples with different substructures. Oak flooring in the ivory antique colourway features in a private residence. **BOTTOM FROM LEFT** Mastic, bees wax and candelilla wax offer protection against dirt and mechanical influences. Working the surface of a bespoke stairway. The wooden surfaces can be adapted to floors, walls and furniture



JAMES HARRIS CHRISTOPH PHILADELPHIA SCHOTTEN & HANSEN