



## *reclaimed wood characteristics*

When checking specifications of reclaimed wood, there are several characteristics that should be considered. Each of these specifications is detailed below.

### *Heartwood Content*

“Heartwood” refers to the older, inactive central wood of a tree. This wood is usually darker and more dense than the surrounding wood, which is more porous and contains much of the tree’s sap.

### *Grain Density*

Grain density is directly proportional to the strength of the wood; the higher its grain density, the stronger and more durable it is. Higher grain density also typically means a smoother finish and overall appearance.

### *Knot Content*

Knots are natural defects in the wood which affect checking (cracking) and warping, in addition to the ease of working or cutting the wood. Where strength is an important consideration, knot content should be low, as knots weaken the strength of the wood. In non-structural, decorative items, however, knots add visual texture to the wood, creating a more interesting appearance.

### *Vertical, Flat Grain or Quarter Sawn*

Different types of wood possess different types of grain, depending upon the manner in which they are sawn. Vertical grain typically runs in a series of curving parallel lines, extending from one end of the wood to the other. Flat grain, on the other hand, has the appearance of uneven pond ripples radiating from a central source somewhere on the wood’s surface. Quarter Sawn lumber is characterized by vertical, uniformly patterned grain. The process also exposes medullar rays — also known as ray flecks — in the wood’s surface.

### *Nail Holes*

Reclaimed wood from old structures typically carry varying numbers of nail holes. As with knots, these holes can be both detrimental or beneficial. While a high number of nail holes will weaken the wood’s strength, it can also provide a very interesting appearance.