

THE FINEST FINE FURNITURE

Venice produces fine glass and England fine china, while Western Australia produces fine wood products that are fast becoming world famous. Already, many of our wood crafters boast export contracts and international client lists, adding further commercial value to the fine wood industry's estimated \$12 million annual worth.

Last November, the best of WA's fine wood industry came together to compete in the inaugural Wesfarmers Fine Wood Awards, and to showcase their talents, which were displayed in the lobby of the Central Park building in Perth.

Nearly 40 Western Australian craftspeople dedicated thousands of hours (one piece alone taking 500 hours to complete) to produce the exquisite world-class pieces. They ranged from impressive corporate dining furniture, and an item known as The 'Dream' Desk, to a skilfully turned vessel and fragile gift box weighing only 75 grams.

Samples of our State's finest jarrah, sheoak, blackbutt and silky oak timbers were also combined with less traditional materials like mother of pearl, pottery clay and animal hides.

The diversity of these works was in keeping with the four thematic categories chosen to encourage imagination and variety: WA Abroad, Contemporary Urban Concepts, Collaborations and Partnerships, and Country Essence. Each category carried a \$2000 cash prize.



This table by Greg Collins, made from timber, MDF and silver, is based around the theme of surfing. Greg sources material from 13 collectors around the world, and this piece uses material from the rare black palm.

The winning pieces were chosen from an exceptional collection. The category of Contemporary Urban Concepts was won by Neil Erasmus for his exquisite blackbutt, sheoak, leather and mother-of-pearl writing table.

Glen Holst won the Country Essence category with his corporate dining furniture. The imposing extension table and chairs were made of jarrah over Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF), sheoak, mulga, curly jarrah and aluminium. The unique extension mechanism was fabricated from aluminium, while the top was intricately inlaid using the joint in each leaf.

The winner of the WA Abroad category, for easy-to-carry collectables that are distinctively Western Australian, was Jack de Vos. His vase, made from coastal jarrah, impressed the judges with its simplicity and classic lines.



Above: A jarrah vase by Jack de Vos won the WA Abroad category, for easy-to-carry collectables.

Left: Peter Lowe's turned and carved vase is made from sheoak and is based on the theme of regeneration of the plant Mirbelia.

Photos - Martial Fatton

The fourth category of Collaboration and Partnerships was won by Jeannette Rein and Brenda Ridgewell for their jarrah, sterling silver and stainless steel bowl.

Collectively the exhibition was valued at a quarter of a million dollars. Prices of the exquisite pieces ranged from \$168 to what could be considered an investment price of \$47 000.

Chief organisers, The Fine Wood Industry Project Inc., expect the awards and exhibition to become a significant two-yearly event.

"There haven't been awards or an exhibition of this magnitude in almost a decade, and we're certainly hoping that this will be the first of many to come," said Event Manager Jane Tillson.

LANDSCOPE

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CALM's fight against feral cats gathers ground on Peron Peninsula with the development and testing of a cat bait. See 'Approaching Eden' on page 28.



Roadside vegetation often provides vital links between remnant habitats. See our story on page 23.



What attracted early pioneers to this barren corner of Western Australia? Find out in 'Eucla Pioneers' on page 35.



A new CALM book gives bushwalkers a host of short and longer walks in Western Australia's south-west. See page 10.



Fire is an important part of Western Australia's environment. Scientists continue to discover just how important. See page 17.

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COVER

The splendid fairy wren was one of many birds collected by John Gilbert, whose collections of specimens have been fragmented over the past 100 years or so. Now, they are being tracked down in museums around the world, and a more complete picture of their original distributions is emerging from Gilbert's original notes and labels. See story on page 40.

Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky



Executive Editor: Ron Kawalilak
Managing Editor: Ray Bailey
Editor: David Gough
Story Editors: Verna Costello, David Gough, Louise Johnson, Carolyn Thomson-Dans, Mitzi Vance, Penny Walsh
Scientific/technical advice: Andrew Burbidge, Ian Abbott, Paul Jones and staff of CALM's Science and Information Division
Design and production: Maria Duthie, Sue Marais
Illustration: Gooitzen van der Meer, Ian Dickinson
Marketing: Estelle de San Miguel ☎ (08) 9334 0296 Fax: (08) 9334 0498
Subscription enquiries: ☎ (08) 9334 0481 or (08) 9334 0437
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Department of Conservation and Land Management,
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