



Teak furniture can be both modern and timeless.

## SUSTAINABLE STYLE

WESTMINSTER TEAK'S MAL HADDAD DESIGNS OUTDOOR FURNISHINGS FOR ELITE CLIENTELE.

BY J. MICHAEL WELTON

With over 3 million acres of teak planted and managed by the nation's ministry of forestry, Indonesia is blessed with significant natural resources. And while many of the world's natural resources are shrinking, Indonesia's teak forest has grown over the past 200 years. In fact, Indonesia is home to some of the largest teak forests in the world.

That's why Westminster Teak Vice Presi-

dent Mal Haddad splits his time between his home in Miami and the Westminster Teak factory in Indonesia. He also designs and approves most of the furniture the company builds and sells. "I'll do a drawing. They'll do a prototype. Then I'll fly over and approve it for production," he says.

Unlike wicker, whose production involves the addition of petroleum byproducts for

outdoor use, teak doesn't need any additional treatments to be durable outside because of its naturally high natural oil content.

The slow-growing trees are also harvested sustainably (five new ones are planted for every one harvested), and Indonesia's teak forests can actually help native biodiversity. "The trees are planted in rows, and the people who live in the area are encouraged to plant other types of crops for themselves, for retail and agroforestry, in between the rows," Haddad says.

Most workers live in a nearby village and can walk or take a small scooter to work. They don't need to go very far for meals, since organic vegetables, fish, and chicken are grown on the plantation for consumption.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WESTMINSTER TEAK



Westminster Teak furniture is perfect in almost any outdoor environment.

"There's free medical care for them and their families as well as housing opportunities," Haddad says. "We want to retain the workers, so they are treated very well."

Haddad says that all these components—the sustainable harvest, production, and employees—work hand in glove to allow Westminster Teak to deliver designs that would have looked good 50 years ago and will look just as good 50 years from now. "Because teak lasts a very long time, it's generational," he says. "It's not trendy. It's around long after the trends are forgotten."

In the States, Westminster's chairs, benches, and tables are popular with a high-end market as consumers adapt to new ways of living outdoors. "People want to bring the outdoors in and the indoors out," Haddad says. "The use of outdoor furniture is increasing, and architects don't just design the house but the outdoor areas as well. It's all growing by leaps and bounds."

Growing demand applies to virtually all of Westminster's residential and commercial products. Interior designers and individual homeowners here in the U.S. love the Westminster brand. And high-end resorts like the W, Four Seasons, and Ritz-Carlton hotel chains and corporate clients like the Metropolitan Opera, Apple, Microsoft, and YouTube do too.

It just goes to show that when you're looking for timeless and sustainable outdoor furniture, teak never goes out of style. ♦

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