

ONE MAN AND HIS LOG

More than a hideaway, this is a furniture-maker's paradise

BY JANE EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHER ANDREW WOOD

THE OWNER

Jérôme Abel Seguin is known for his distinctive wooden furniture. Based for eight months a year on the Indonesian island of Sumbawa, he uses a local workforce of 11 craftsmen to make his pieces. Trained as a sculptor in Paris, Seguin discovered the island a decade ago while visiting to source 'amusing and original objects' to use in window displays. He took home a bag full of driftwood, debris and rattan chicken coups, which were still covered in feathers and excrement, and presented the lot to Louis Vuitton. They loved them, of course

Head directly east from Bali and Lombok and you find a completely different landscape. Where Bali may be set within a necklace of islands known for their voluptuous tropical beauty, the island of Sumbawa is raw and arid. In fact, it begs the question, what kind of person would choose to live here?

Evidently someone who loves wood. It's the elemental landscape of Sumbawa that inspires French furniture sculptor Jérôme Abel Seguin. The isolation of the place (he is by all accounts the only foreigner who lives here) leads to few distractions, and the peace and solitude is a necessary antidote to his hectic 'other life' in Paris. 'Besides,' he explains, 'I don't like the tropical landscape so much.'

Seguin's previous career as a window dresser was the perfect reason to travel and explore. It was during this period that Seguin became entranced by the rough monolithic hardwood designs he came across in >





Opposite page: Sequin enjoying the peace. This page: the Javanese chairs surround a table made by Sequin from insect-eaten wood, each crevice finely sanded and returned to its natural beauty. Above it hangs a tubular fabric made from tree fibre; the light bulbs are sheathed in rattan fish traps



Opposite page: in one of the guest bedrooms a row of smooth teak columns stand lit by the light, which filters through the bamboo blinds. This page: even in Seguin's office – the 'most cluttered room' – everything is in order: faxes hang from the wall and talismen are placed to protect against evil spirits

Sumbawa. A small *pirogue* (a canoe carved from a single piece of the local *kalengo* wood) lying on an isolated beach inspired his 'Wall of Wood', a solid curved screen constructed from the centre sections of three canoes. On a deeper level, Sumbawa evoked memories of a childhood spent making things from driftwood and shells in a Cape Ferrat shipyard, fuelled by the adventure stories of Daniel Defoe and Robert Louis Stevenson. 'One part of happiness is realising your childhood dreams,' he believes. 'This place, for me, is a bridge between childhood and now.'

The simple structures of his home and workshop even look like the barns seen in Seguin's native Bordeaux, but instead of terracotta tiles, the roof is covered in a thatch of Indonesian rush called 'alang-alang'. Visitors arrive at the house via a steep stairway cut into the hard clay hill that surrounds the house. The view is unexceptional: just a white wall and thatched roof. The entrance >



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