

Oxgut Products Are Made from Genuine Retired Fire Hose

Source: sfgate.com

Published: February 5, 2014



Photo: Sean Dagen, Dagenphoto.com

Oxgut Hose Co. of Emeryville creates mats, furniture and accessories out of decommissioned fire hose, which is resilient, indestructible and colorful.

Exclusive Designs with a heroic past. Oxgut Hose Co. offers high-end indoor & outdoor furniture inspired by retired fire hose, salvaged from departments throughout the U.S. Portion of profits go directly to The Children's Burn Foundation.

What happens to fire hoses when they are retired? Surprisingly, this was not the question on the mind of LauraLe Wunsch when she first stumbled upon a new use for the unique material: handcrafted high-end indoor-outdoor furniture and accessories.

“I was working with a craftsman on a side project creating a piece of furniture, and we were looking for something to complement the reclaimed wood we were using,” said Wunsch, founder and owner of Emeryville's [Oxgut Hose Co.](http://OxgutHoseCo.com)

When the idea of a fire hose came up, a friend of the former advertising professional connected her to the captain of a local fire station, who wanted to send her home with about 2,500 feet of hose that was decommissioned because of safety and other issues.

"The men had about 10 rolls of hoses for me, and I could tell it broke their hearts to have to throw them out," she recounted. "It's material they carry in their arms, and it's resilient and indestructible, but they didn't have another use for it."



Photo: Sean Dagen, Dagenphoto.com

The Kepple Stool (\$1,155) was created by San Francisco artist and designer Oliver DiCicco.
Finding new uses

Although her San Francisco-size apartment couldn't hold them all, Wunsch was raised to reuse just about everything. She left with a few samples, and a new appreciation for the durability and character of the material, which is typically synthetic fiber blended with a bit of cotton.

She also left with a nagging feeling that she could find a use for thousands of feet of decommissioned fire hose.

His designs revealed a higher level of capacity for this material and showed me what was possible," Wunsch said. "Then it was like, 'OK, what else can we do?'"

Oxgut, whose name honors the first fire hoses of ancient Greece, which were made from ox intestines, came to life after its successful monthlong Kickstarter campaign raised \$30,175 in August.

Wunsch went to several other designers with ideas for durable products with purpose. Ringit Gürlich created the first version of the [Fire Hose Mats](#) (\$185-\$275), and Oakland designer [Micah Lanworth](#) helped design the Wagner Wine Carrier (\$56), Walsh Wood Carrier (\$100), the Davis iPad Sleeve (\$60) and iPhone Squeeze Case (\$30).

Oxgut's collection also includes Fire-[House Slippers](#) (\$60 and up), Shanes Lounger (\$2,600) and Capt. Moore's Hammock (\$3,300).

In honor of the original purpose of fire hoses - saving lives - Oxgut donates a portion of every sale to the Children's [Burn Foundation](#).



Photo: Sean Dagen

The O-Type chair, \$1,400, by Oxgut Hose Co. The Emeryville company makes mats, furniture and accessories from salvaged fire hoses.

Expanding its reach

Most of the hoses it uses now are from the Bay Area, Tahoe and Santa Cruz, but the company is quickly expanding its reach to stations in Colorado, Houston, Oregon, Washington, Chicago, New York and Rhode Island, helping to divert tons of waste from landfills across the country.



Photo: Sean Dagen

Emeryville's Oxgut Hose Co. uses genuine fire hoses salvaged from U.S. Fire Departments for its indoor/outdoor furniture and rugs.

Available at www.oxgut.com. Accessories available at SFMOMA Store, 151 Third St., San Francisco. Furniture available at Propeller Modern, 555 Hayes St., San Francisco.

[Jillian Sullivan](#) is a [San Francisco Chronicle](#) staff writer. E-mail: home@sfchronicle.com
