

HERITAGE MANTELS - Frequently Asked Questions

Where do these beams come from?

Most beams were used as framing timber for barns on family farms throughout southern Minnesota and SW Wisconsin.

How old are they?

The beams are typically from barns built between 1870 and 1900. Hand Hewn beams were harvested and shaped by the earliest settlers from the mid- to late-1800's. Circle Sawn beams were typically cut by saw mills or on-site with large circular saw blades around the turn of the century.

How much do they weigh?

Depending on the size and the wood species, most range from 40 – 80 lbs. for an average size mantel.

What species of wood are most beams?

Oak, Douglas Fir, and Pine are the most common as those old growth trees were abundant in MN back in the 1800's.

What is the process to create beautiful mantels from old barn beams?

All beams go through a 6-Step Process:

1. **Cleaned** – Beams are pressure washed to remove all the dust and debris that have accumulated on the surface.
2. **De-nailed** – Nails are usually removed or driven below the surface so no metal is protruding from the beam.
3. **Cut** – Beams are then cut to length depending on the condition of the beam and the size of the mantel needed.
4. **Sanded** – Beams are lightly sanded to remove rough/sharp edges but still retain the unique rustic characteristics of each piece like saw marks, hand hewn markings, and nail holes.
5. **Insect Treatment** – A safe borate salt solution is then applied to all surfaces which is absorbed into the beam and kills any possible pests.
6. **Finished** – The beam is now ready to sell as-is in a natural state, or they can be finished with multiple coats of a quality finishing oil to darken the mantel and really make the wood grain and unique characteristics pop!

What finish colors are available?

Mantels can be left "as-is" for a natural finish. Otherwise, most are finished with a light, medium or dark walnut finish which gives a rich and rustic look while highlighting the natural grain and characteristics of each unique piece.

What is the typical size of a fireplace mantel?

Mantels are available in all shapes and sizes, but are typically 48" – 72" long, 4" – 8" high, and 6" – 8" deep. Consider the size of the fireplace insert, the width of the overall fireplace and the ceiling height when determining what size would look best in your space.

What is the price of a typical mantel?

Prices typically range from \$350 - \$800, but can be higher depending on the overall size and finish of the mantel.

Are corbels needed below the mantel in order to support it?

No, most beam mantels are typically secured directly to the wood framing or stone/brick of the fireplace. If you like the look of corbels below the mantel, they can be attached to the mantel itself, or in some applications, they can even be secured to the studs in the fireplace buildout (chase) and support the mantel as originally intended.

What's the best way to secure these to the fireplace?

There are a few different ways to install beam mantels, but this is a common method:

- Drive multiple large lag bolts into the studs or brick/stone, leaving enough of the lag bolt sticking out to penetrate 2/3 of the way through the back of the mantel. For heavier mantels, use more lag bolts.
- Cut the heads off the lag bolts with a hack saw, angle grinder, or other cutting tool.
- Drill holes 2/3 of the way into the back of the mantel to align with the location of the lag bolts.
- Apply construction adhesive into the holes.
- Slide into place, admire, and enjoy!