Casegoods Characteristics: Standard Woods

Alder Solids
Hard, strong wood that can be stained to imitate walnut and mahogany. Also has a maple-like figure. Is cherry-like in appearance.

Ash
Very hard wood that takes finishes well. It has a distinctive, open grain with occasional brown streaks. Usually creamy white to light brown, sometimes used as an oak substitute.

Birch Solids
One of the strongest American woods, it is heavy, fairly stiff and hard, and rather tough. The grain is fine and close and it takes fine finishes well.

Cerejeira Solids
Durable, fairly coarse wood with an interlocked and irregular grain. It has a rather waxy look and feel with a mild scent of cumarin or vanilla. Yellowish to light brown, with a slight orange tint.

Cherry
Strong, durable wood that takes finishes well. It is a light to dark reddish brown wood with a straight tight grain structure. Once known as “Connecticut Mahogany”.

Curupixa
A medium density wood that dries rapidly and finishes well. It is a light brown wood with a wavy grain.

Jequitaba
Durable wood that is easy to work with and has a good, smooth surface to finish. It has a grayish tan color with occasional pink streaks and a straight to crossed grain.

Macassar
A very dense hardwood that is durable and takes finishes well, but can be difficult to work with. It has a dark grain that ranges from dark brown to dark black.

Mahogany Solids
Grade for grade, mahogany is superior to any other cabinet wood in freedom from defect. It is relatively hard, works well, highly lustrous, durable, and carves and finishes well. It ranges in color from salmon to dark red.

Maple
Hard and strong wood, resistant to shock, takes finishes well. Fine, closed grain, bird’s eye grain possible as well. Creamy white to off white, sometimes with reddish or greenish brown tints.

Oak Solids
Very strong, hard and durable wood that holds screws and nails well. Its color ranges from pale grayish-brown to ochre with a coarse grain structure featuring vertical rays or lines.

Pine Solids
A soft wood with a fine, uniform texture and straight grain. Creamy white, pale yellow or light brown heartwood that yellows with age.

Rosewood
Often used as an accent veneer, it comes in various shades of dark brown with conspicuous dark streaks. It takes a fine finish and has a slight milky rose aroma.

Rubberwood Solids
Moderately heavy wood that is uniform in structure. Results in a mostly straight grain with clear, attractive patterns. The color ranges from pale cream to yellowish brown.

Satinwood
Known for its pale gold color, and rippled and mottled pattern — the “bee’s wing” pattern. Used primarily as a veneer.

Sapeli
A strong wood that is easy to handle. The grain is moderately interlocked or wavy. Quarter cut Sapeli yields a ribbon, regular stripe or bee's wing. The wood has a cedar-like scent that remains even after long exposure. The heartwood is pink when freshly cut, but it matures to a red-brown or purple-brown color.

Walnut Solids
Walnut has remarkable fidelity and is well-suited to carving. It has a pleasing grain and a characteristic wavy pattern. Three main varieties are used:

- African Walnut: Bronze, yellow-brown wood with irregular dark lines.
- Asian Walnut: Softer, coarser and paler in color than the American variety
- American Walnut: a dark, hard wood varying from a purplish black to a rich red brown

Casegoods Characteristics: Specialty Materials

Abacus Rope
Derived from the fiber of the leaf-stem of a plant native to the Philippines. It is closely related to and resembles the common, cultivated, banana plant and is sometimes called “Manilla hemp”. When new and untreated it is deep golden-brown in color. The rope is flexible, durable, strong, and stands up well to wear and weather.

Bamboo
Technically not a wood species-- it is classified as a grass that is much denser, and therefore stronger than hardwoods. It also grows much faster than hardwoods, making it an easily replenishable resource. The thin outside green layer is high-density silicon that yields hardness equivalent to hardwoods and a smooth surface of wax like material. The thicker inside yellow layer is loose and fragile.

Coco Twig
Short, knobby sticks taken from the coconut plant which are then laminated to plywood substrates and sanded down to smooth surface.

Coconut Bark
Bark taken from coconuts and cut into square tiles, then laminated onto plywood substrates.

Palm Wood
Timber taken from coconut palm trees that are felled once their fruit-bearing age is passed. The outer layer is very dense and hard, and the wood does not have age lines, knots or other imperfections. Non-porous and impervious to wood-boring insects. Color ranges from golden to near ebony, with dark brown flecks.

Onion Skin
Dried onion skin that is laminated to plywood substrates.

Raffia
Fibers from tropical palm trees that have good strength and stretch.

Rattan
A vine-like plant that grows abundantly in a long slender stem with a uniform diameter along its length. It is not hollow or brittle like bamboo, and becomes quite pliable when heated, but retains the shape when it cools. It does not take color, but can be varnished or lacquered.

Water Hyacinth
An aquatic plant which lives and reproduces rapidly while floating freely on the surface of fresh waters. Native to tropical South America, but has since proliferated extensively throughout the world, especially in South East Asia. The stalks, when dried completely, can be woven into ropes for added strength.

Wicker
The term Wicker is used to describe the weaving of materials such as Cane, Sea Grass, Willow, Bamboo or other natural products.

Casegoods Characteristics: Veneers

Technically, a veneer is simply a thin surface layer glued to a core, such as Formica. However, in quality furniture construction, and featured on many antiques, decorative wood veneers are used to create inlaid patterns. Exotic and expensive woods, such as rosewood and satinwood are incorporated to add grain interest.

Veneered construction adds value to the case piece by enhancing both the aesthetic appeal and the dimensional stability. Veneering also provides for the freedom of design for curved areas such as bombay fronts or doors which require extra strength and stability.