



Once Upon a Time

This is a big chair, an oversize throne chair of dynamic and striking proportions. It plays with our relationship of scale to how we normally feel when seated. At its heart is an enormous slab of beautifully star figured and deeply saddle carved, yew wood. From the seat sprout the gigantic ash wood legs. The powerful, animated front legs, with their dramatic sweeping curvature, and the stalwart and sturdy rear legs. The arms are taken from one piece of hornbeam with its amazing natural almost 90° angle bend. This piece was carefully selected and then sawn in two to create the reflecting pair of arms. The rear posts for the chair were carefully selected for their unique curvature and subtle asymmetry before being worked to produce the ergonomically sculpted back support. When you sit in this chair invariably you feel big like a King in a throne and at the same time small like a child who cannot quite reach the floor with his or her feet. A chair in which the imagination is let loose, to survey the Kingdom below.

There is with 'Once Upon a Time' an overwhelming desire to simply look at and admire this chair, however the real joy comes from when one sits in the chair and immediately feels welcomed, comfortable and enveloped by its sheer solidity and grandeur.

The Big slab of yew in 'Once Upon a Time' certainly gives the chair status and magnitude. It is the heart of the piece and has a rich character of wizened age from its hundreds of years of growing. This particular piece of Yew was obtained from a great storm damage of 1987 in England from the Orlantigh Estate near Wye in the heart of Rural Kent.

'Once Upon a Time' was born from an idea to create something special, truly unique from such an astounding hulk of yew of which I obtained in slab form in the later part of 1998. Originally 7" (180mm) thick I had the timber milled cut into two boards of 4" (100mm) and 3" (75mm) thickness, choosing the thicker for the seat base. This made it more manageable to shape, carve and manoeuvre. As it stands one can just about lift the chair by them selves, however it is preferable to seek help.

Originally 'Once upon a time' had no footstool. One could sit for a while in the big chair with legs swinging and feet dangling like a child or like a character of normal proportions into a much bigger altogether more over scaled theatrical set. Fairy tales such as 'Alice in Wonderland' or 'Gulliver's Travels' immediately spring to mind. Practically though to sit with legs dangling for long periods of time is an uncomfortable experience. So albeit 3 years later I created the footstool 'Once Upon a Minute' to truly compliment 'Once Upon a Time', giving the sitter the ultimate in luxurious comfort. Now it is complete. Not only it is a remarkable and dynamic sculptural centrepiece. It is now a truly functional and comfortable piece of sculptural art created with an intuitive and harmonious approach to working with wood.

Once Upon a Time March 2000

ash, hornbeam, walnut, yew

H 1730mm W 840mm D 610mm

Once Upon a Minute (foot stool) August 2003

ash, yew

H 250mm W 360mm D 380mm

