

Sawmills have become far more than a giant saw blade cutting logs into as many planks as possible. The artistry of these mills is turning wood planks into beautiful design elements. By orienting the log to the blade in different ways, a sawmill can turn cathedral oak grains popular in traditional interiors, into the straight grains favored by more modern designs. The contrast between boards taken from the same log can be breathtaking.

How logs cut from the same tree appear depends on a variety of factors. Cost is certainly important. Less expensive boards are straight cut yielding more boards per log. Boards cut for a specific function or appearance are rift cut or quarter sawn yielding fewer boards per log, but making each board worth more.

This illustration shows the orientations used to create specific types of boards.

