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December 2012

NEWS®

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Talkin' shop with former editor A.J. Hamler



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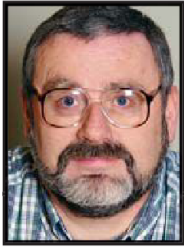


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TAKING STOCK

with JOHN ENGLISH

A burgeoning friendship and a better bottom line

In tough economic times, a little creativity can really help a small shop pay the bills. One way to do that is to seek out new customers who can use our skills and equipment in creative ways. For the last year or so, our shop in rural South Dakota has been collaborating with nationally acclaimed jewelry maker Anna Achtziger to create unique turned vessels that she designs, we turn and then she beads. The entire process has been rewarding on so many levels: it's good for business, it's a fabulous creative outlet, the learning curve has been exhilarating and we've gained a talented and unbelievably creative friend.

Achtziger came by the shop initially to take some basic turning classes. She knew that she wanted to expand her beadwork into a more three-dimensional form and wooden vessels seemed like a natural way to go.

We have a lathe studio here at the shop, with five Jet 1220 lathes, where we normally teach community education classes in bowl turning. The studio is equipped with Craig Jackson's new generation of carbide-tipped turning tools (www.easywoodtools.com)

that have completely replaced the traditional skewers, gouges and parting tools in our shop.

These cutters do two things that really help new turners begin the journey or advance turners in the scope and nature of the products that they tackle. First, they completely eliminate sharpening, which for any busy woodshop is a huge blessing. We used to

continued on Page 8



Working with tools and wood is inherently dangerous. We try to give our readers tips that will enhance their understanding of woodworking. But our best advice is to make safety your first priority. Always read your owner's manuals, work with properly maintained equipment and use safety devices such as blade guards, push sticks and eye protection. Don't do things you're not sure you can do safely, including the techniques described in this publication or in others. Seek proper training if you have questions about woodworking techniques or the functions of power machinery.

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- Max. cutting width: 20"
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- Max. cutting depth: 1/8"
- Feed rate: 6 FPM & 20 FPM
- Cutterhead dia.: 3-1/8"
- Cutterhead speed: 5000 RPM **2 SPEED**
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- Approx. shipping weight: 920 lbs.



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spend perhaps a third of our turning time tuning up chisels or grinding fingernail profiles on gouges. With the new tools, we use them until the cutter goes dull and then replace them with an inexpensive (less than \$20) new one. There are three shapes: round, square and diamond. When an edge gets dull, one simply rotates the cutter 90 degrees. When all the edges are used (and that takes a long time — we've had some that have held a good edge through hundreds of hours of bowl making), it's time to switch.

And secondly, they are remarkably easy to use. Simply hold them parallel to the floor: there are no angles to learn, no bevels to ride, no complex notions at all.

So Achziger stopped in to explore the possibility of marrying her beadwork to turned objects and we began by laminating poplar blanks together and turning simple hollow forms. The carbide tools, combined with kiln-dried hardwoods, allow even beginning turners to make deep vessels because they can turn two halves (think of making a couple of standard bowls) and then glue these together and clean up the glue joint after it dries. The lathe actually works as a clamp: it can exert even pressure along the entire 360 degrees of the glue line. This method is a lot safer than traditional deep hollowing, which takes a lot of practice to learn and years to master. Achziger turned her first vessel, pretty much entirely by herself, within the first few hours of instruction.

A new view

As our business relationship developed, so did the creative one. I'm a craftsman, taking pride in technique and discipline, but Achziger is an artist who sees shapes that don't yet exist. There were places she wanted to go that her limited skills wouldn't take her and my limited vision couldn't see.

Working together, she drew the map and I drove. And pretty soon we began to visit some very interesting country. Achziger constantly pushes the collaboration into new territory. To be honest, many of the things she asks me to do on the lathe scare the hell out of me. But I trust her vision and, somehow, we find a way to get where she's going without sending the work airborne.

It didn't take Achziger long to discover that one could order weird wood on the Internet. She usually arrives for our weekly sessions with



some new exotic tucked under her arm — African blackwood, spalted ambrosia, marblewood, redheart or zebrawood. It's usually covered in a layer of heavy wax, but even through that the wild figure shows and my heart begins to race. What will it look like when the first coat of finish floats over it? Will it behave well when the knives approach? And, of course, that nagging question: Is this the one that finally explodes?

Together, we discovered that not all blackwood is the same. Some of the stock she bought came from the Far East and it behaves a lot differently than the African variety. It has more color (browns and yellows) and seems to run hard and soft, although not along defined routes. This is all heartwood (no sap) and yet it has streaks of color like the seams of gold out here in our ancient Black Hills that meander through the blanks with a mind of their own. But, in general, blackwood is a turner's dream. It has tight grain that peels in ribbons reaching for the ceiling when large amounts are being removed to create domes and hollows and yet it crumbles like chalk when being scraped delicately to make needle-thin spires and finials.



The collaboration with Achziger (above), who marries beadwork with turned objects (left), has energized the author's shop.

The logistics

Working with artists (we get to share space with several here at the school) tends to bring out my own limited artistic talent and that's a very self-actualizing experience. I get to use the shop to create something that isn't just another plain-sawn red oak plywood box with a raised panel door. After 30-some years of building cabinets, it's a relief to turn on the shop lights on Tuesday mornings and wait for Achziger's next surprise to arrive.

Finding artists to work with sounds challenging, but it really isn't. And woodworkers don't need to confine this newfound freedom of expression to turning. Creative people will find a way to use what you know and the tools that you own to take you on a roller-coaster ride. Some ways to meet area artists might include volunteering to speak at monthly meetings of local arts groups, visiting with the art instructors at the local college or university, spending a few minutes with a gallery owner, or even posting a notice on Craigslist or a poster at the downtown coffee shops. Once word gets out that your shop is interested, artists will find you.

Liability can be a concern. We ask everyone to sign a liability waiver that was drawn up by a lawyer. Creating one yourself or downloading something from the Internet will probably cause more problems than it solves. As the artists are not employees, there is no need for workmens' compensation. And the fact that they are in the shop voluntarily somewhat mitigates the shop's risk.

Even when I'm turning and Achziger is directing traffic, she's wearing a full face shield. We follow basic safety rules and my primary concern is always her health and well-being, rather than the project. We can always turn another bowl.

Achziger pays for her shop time by the hour and we bill every couple of weeks. When she leaves with a finished project (there have been a dozen or so), the work belongs entirely to her to sell or display as she likes. Our shop has no ownership whatsoever in the pieces she creates. Whenever I begin to feel possessive about one of her works, I have the following humbling thought: she could make this with any competent turner, but I couldn't dream it up even if this was still the 1960s and ... well, you know where that's going.

One of the ancillary results from this collaboration has been the development of a line of products that we now manufacture during our slow times and sell to local retailers. These include cutting boards, wine bottle stoppers and several other "artsy" items that fit well with our equipment. For example, our 15" Grizzly planer is ideal for milling the wide faces of edge-glued cheeseboards and trivets and these products are a great way to use up almost every scrap in the shop. Very short cutoffs that used to end up as firewood are now turned (literally) into bottle stoppers that fetch almost \$20 apiece wholesale and \$30 retail at shows.

Using our craft in artistic ways also makes workdays more fun. And artists are generally pretty interesting people, so the conversations over coffee are no longer limited to the resurgent Minnesota Vikings or the gas efficiency of Hummers (guy talk). Plus, having someone new in the shop tends to force us to look at processes and methods in new ways. For example, we need to clean up more (one can't ask a guest to stand in somebody else's shavings) and take the time to unplug things when changing bits or blades and even organize the scrap pile so it becomes a resource rather than a liability.

We're moving everything to the walls in our retail space on the last Saturday of October to make room for a one-day show of Achziger's work. We've even applied for a temporary license to serve wine at the event, just in case somebody with taste (and a checkbook) pays us a visit. Such an event is truly a defining moment for a small shop, when art meets craft and a spotlight shines on something unique that has passed through our hands and become better for it.

Thank you, Anna. **W**

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Community workshop opens in West Texas

Family seeks to lure locals of all levels of expertise with its modern equipment and programs

By Jennifer Hicks
STAFF WRITER

In a rural setting such as West Texas, rented shop space is a hard sell. Almost everyone has a table saw and drill press in their garage for their woodworking tasks. Nevertheless, Amarillo natives Danny and son Josh Davis are banking on their family heritage to draw clients to their new community workshop in town that is simply called The Shop.

The two opened the 6,000-sq.-ft. facility in August hoping to lure locals of all levels of expertise with its modern equipment and program offerings. Nicknamed the 'Woodworker's Paradise,' it is open every day of the week, giving members continual access to not only tools, but experienced professionals.

Taking on the role of shop manager, Josh Davis says his family's longstanding reputation will be the underlying root of the business's success. His grandfather started a building trades program at Caprock High School in the 1960s and worked there for 30 years before retiring. Danny Davis then filled his father's shoes.

"Last year my dad was getting to the point where he was thinking about retiring, but was concerned about how he wouldn't have a shop anymore after that," Josh Davis says. "That started the idea of creating a space for people who are like my dad who do woodworking but aren't going to have a shop space. Now our members can join and have all of the tools that they'd ever want and space so that they can come and build whatever they would like to build."

With a stroke of luck, the two found a suitable building through a friend who owned a cabinet shop that he had left sitting vacant for two years.

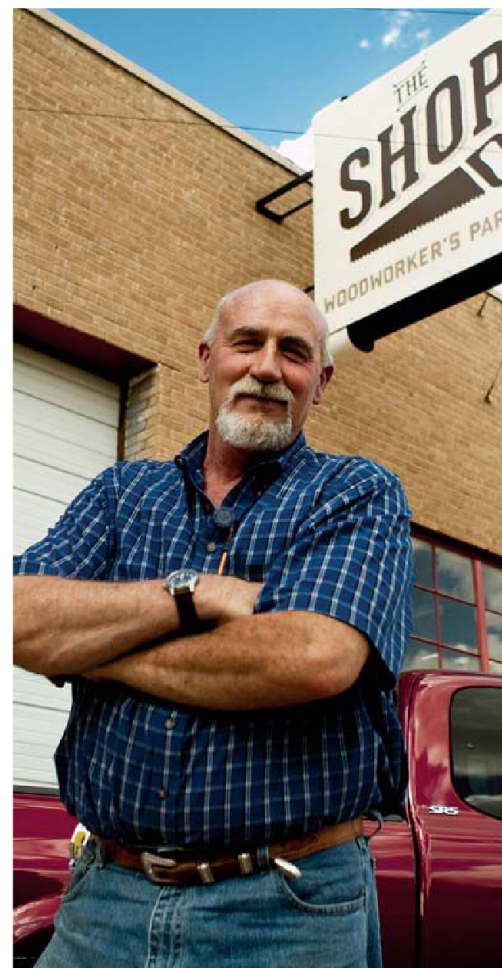
"He had just about every tool we needed. He cut us an amazing deal so we're leasing

the space and some of the tools. We purchased a table saw and some other items to better fit our needs."

Josh Davis says membership options are modeled after Philadelphia Woodworks, another community shop that opened earlier this year. The four different membership options include a yearly membership for \$120 per month; a three-month membership for \$160 per month; a monthly membership for \$200 per month; or a 10-hour program that members can use for \$200 in a six-month time period.

Membership is open to all skill levels and everyone is required to take a safety class. Clients range from professionals to retired woodworkers who just want to keep their hobby going. Josh Davis says that with hundreds of members in and out of the doors in the first year, the venture has turned out to be promising. The bimonthly woodworking classes taught by his father have been a solid draw.

"Part of what's our bid sell is my dad's experience, so we're trying to set the brand up behind him. He teaches all of the classes



Woodworker Danny Davis opened The Shop in Amarillo, Texas, to help members of his community embrace their passion for the trade.

and I'm there to help. There are quite a few woodworkers around here. There are a lot of businessmen down here that run a bank and then on the side they like to do woodworking. Others do it for a living. It's split right down the middle."

Contact: The Shop, 500 S.W. 7th, Amarillo, TX 79101. Tel: 806-373-5950. www.theshopamarillo.com

Contest winners grab \$30K in prizes

WoodTech News, a digital magazine produced for IWF by Woodshop News, announced the winners of its \$30,000 giveaway contest.

Lewis Myers of Simpsonville, S.C., won the grand prize of a CAMaster CNC router, model SR-23, with an approximate retail value of \$7,000.

Bill Donley of Williamsville, N.Y., and Danny Hellyar of Santee, Calif., were the first-prize winners, each receiving a Delta Unisaw, band saw and midi-lathe, valued at \$4,999.

There were four second-prize winners, including James Williams of Edwardsville, Kan., Gerard Chaney of Bel Air, Md., Eric Roberts of Garland, Texas, and Robert Chapman of Montclair, N.J. Each received a Binks MX 4-12 air-assist spray package valued at \$2,500.

Howie Robertson of St. Marys, Pa., Nick Cirillo of Yorkville, N.Y., and Wayne Hausknecht of Tuscon, Ariz. were the third-prize winners, each receiving 100 bf of cherry from Horizon Wood, valued at \$1,333.

'A woodworking community with a cause'

The Patriot Woodworker website is a support network for disabled veterans who love woodworking

By Jennifer Hicks
STAFF WRITER

John Morris, a woodworker who served in the U.S. Army, created The Patriot Woodworker website (www.thepatriotwoodworker.com) in March 2010 to establish a longstanding support network for disabled American veterans through woodworking-related endeavors such as fundraising projects. The site is based in San Jacinto, Calif., and essentially serves a non-profit organization that raises awareness about and supports veterans with the help of members who love woodworking.

"The Patriot Woodworker is a woodworking community with a cause. We all work with wood and we have a common bond besides woodworking. Many of us are veterans, many of us are not. But one thing we share is our concern and compassion for our men and women in the military who put it all on the line for us," says Morris.

With the help of site administrators John Moody and Ronald Duddelston, Morris assists with fundraising efforts for existing programs sponsored by other organizations with similar missions. So far, he has helped raise more than \$1,400 for the Wounded Warrior Project in the last two years and has donated more than 140 challenge coin displays to disabled veterans nationwide. He and other site members have donated time to Homes for our Troops to help build houses going to veterans.

In addition, Morris also creates and hosts his own unique fundraising projects, his most recent being The Patriot Woodworker Turning Contest, in which he partnered with Woodcraft and Easy Wood Tools. Participants donated their turned entries throughout August and September. The top four winning projects were announced on Veteran's Day and entrants received tools and other prizes donated by the sponsors. The winning entries were then auctioned off to raise money for veterans in need.

"I offered the turning contest because I see Homes for our Troops and the Wounded Warrior Project and wanted to offer something as

well. The turnout wasn't as great as I had expected ... We only had about a dozen entries. But this is the first year and I will be a better promoter next year."

Morris says he has a personal mission to help troops and is dedicated to their cause. As a child, he was raised to honor and respect military service personnel, which resulted in him entering the service right after high school. He has been a woodworker since he was a teenager and often worked in custom cabinet shops between military service mis-



John Morris (right) with military comrade and fellow furniture maker Russ Filbeck. Morris oversees thepatriotwoodworker.com, an interactive online woodworking community that raises awareness about disabled veterans throughout the U.S.

sions. He is currently employed full time as a land surveyor in addition to running the site. So far, the site's proven to be a success and he plans to continue raising awareness of its existence. Outside donations and sponsorship are important to him because he pays out of his pocket any required expenses that aren't met through fundraising.

"Over the past two years, we've asked for donations from our members and held fundraising drives for the various organizations we support at certain times of the year. Veterans Day, the Fourth of July and Memorial Day are always big and our members typically come through. The same goes for visitors alike. They'll push the donate button and get some funds over to help.

For information, visit www.thepatriotwoodworker.com or email Morris at patriotwoodworker@verizon.net. www.w

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N.Y. furniture maker wins business honor

By Jennifer Hicks
STAFF WRITER

Jessica Wickham called it a humbling and astonishing experience after her small shop, Wickham Solid Wood Studio, in Beacon, N.Y., won a business excellence award in October from the Dutchess County Economic Development Corp.

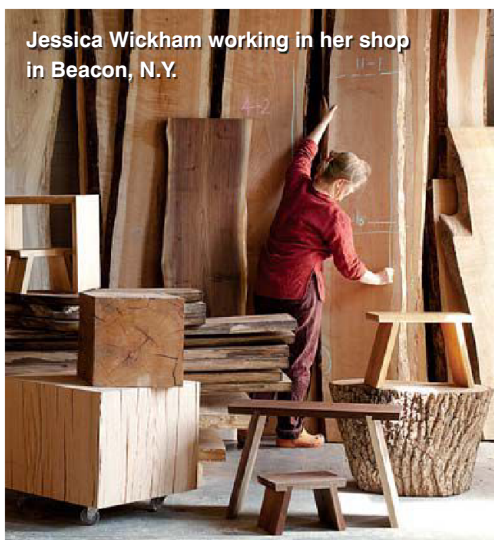
"I got the sense that they haven't given many awards to makers in the past. They usually go to conventional businesses," says Wickham.

But the community leaders who give out the award were impressed by Wickham's marketing plan built around using locally harvested woods and her eagerness to take advantage of networking opportunities.

"The basis of my business is that we salvage logs from the area, so I made a lot of comments in my [acceptance] speech that we live in an amazing hardwood forest in the Northeast and you don't really think about it or see it anymore, but you can find remnants of it."

Wickham, who once worked on Wall Street, started her furniture-making business in 2004. "I've invested everything in this business so I plan to do it for the next 30 years. This is the first business that I've owned. It's not a job for

Jessica Wickham working in her shop in Beacon, N.Y.



me. This really is a form of expression. I position myself somewhere between sculpture and cabinetmaking."

As her business grew to a high of three employees, Wickham was active with the Dutchess County economic group and learned that the Beacon area has an active arts community that engages in lots of networking and collaboration

projects. She joined the city's "Made in Beacon" program, which helps artisan-manufacturer types secure work in local establishments.

"I got connected to Susan Batton, who's the managing director at Dia:Beacon, a big institution in the area with a major art collection. She instantly became a fan and ordered a dining room table for herself. She ended up nominating me. She told me that my impact on the community impressed the committee as a business and that they want my services for future needs."

Wickham mills locally harvested black walnut, white oak and black cherry for her work. Her designs often incorporate the natural edge of the tree, which she describes as in line with Nakashima's work. She admits it can be difficult to find the kinds of clients that appreciate her work.

"It's a very narrow market that I do and it's been a real roller coaster in this economy, but the successes have been fantastic. I've had some great projects in the last year. We've been steadily busy for the past year, but it's definitely challenging."

Contact: Wickham Solid Wood Studio, 578 Main St., Beacon, NY 12508. Tel: 917-797-9247. www.jessicawickham.com 

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Woodshop News and the *IWF* would like to thank all the sponsors and woodworkers involved with WoodTech News' 2012's five digital editions. This effort was the largest release of digital information to the industry this year - an effort we plan to replicate in 2014. It is said that knowledge is power and we hope you and all the readers of the WoodTech News series empowered yourselves with the information provided to enhance yourselves and your business.

Congratulations to all the contest winners listed below:

Grand Prize Winner: CNC router, model SR-23

Lewis Myers of Simpsonville, S.C.



First Place: Delta Unisaw, Band Saw & Midi Lathe

Bill Donley of Williamsville, N.Y.

Danny Hellyar of Santee, CA



Second Place Binks MX 4-12 Air Assist Spray Outfit

James Williams of Edwardsville, KS

Gerard Chaney of Bel Air, MD

Eric Roberts of Garland, TX

Robert Chapman of Montclair, NJ



Third Place: Horizon Wood, 100 board feet of Cherry

Howie Robertson of St. Marys, PA

Nick Cirillo of Yorkville, N.Y.

Wayne Hausknecht of Tucson, AZ



TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

Powermatic adds 15" model

By Jennifer Hicks

STAFF WRITER

Powermatic's new PM1500 15" band saw boasts extensive cutting capacity and other innovative features. Designed similarly to the company's PM1800 18", 5-hp model, it features a 3-hp motor and sells for considerably less.

"It's a brand-new category of band saws at 15". It's really taking our 18" band saw, which has been highly successful, and bringing all of those robust industrial kinds of features down to a 15" size to make it more affordable. It's a

higher-end band saw. It's got the quality, robustness and heavy feel you would expect out of an industrial kind of band saw," product manager Joan Duvall says.

The saw weighs just under 400 lbs. and has cast-iron table and trunnion assembly for heavy workpieces.

Duvall highlights the 14" resaw height, 14-1/2" of blade-to-frame width, and extruded aluminum fence (19-3/4" long, 6-1/2" high) that slides on a steel guide rail.

"The fence is really beefy. It has a really large side plate and you don't really see that



Powermatic's new 15" band saw, model PM1500.

when you step down to a 14" model. It's not a bar style; it's a square T-style that makes it really easy to slide the side plate off and reposition it if you want to do veneer work or just want to cut stock."

continued on facing page

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Bosch now offers a lithium-ion planer

By Jennifer Hicks

STAFF WRITER

Bosch Power Tools recently added an 18-volt lithium-ion planer, model PLH181K, to its woodworking portfolio. With its compact size and light weight, the cordless tool is ideal for fine cutting and finishing work, and shaving and shaping hard and soft woods, according to the company.

The tool is a modified version of the company's previous nickel-cadmium model. Product manager Nick Feld tells Woodshop News that converting the tool to lithium-ion battery technology allows it to deliver much better performance.

"A planer is what you would classify as a high-amp-draw type of tool. In the past, one of the complaints was lack of run-time because the old [nickel-cadmium] technology just couldn't deliver with the higher power-to-weight density of the lithium-ion batteries. You can give lithium-ion users much more runtime, so now it becomes a much more appealing tool," says Feld.

Weighing just over 11 lbs., the tool features a four-pole motor with rare-earth magnets that delivers a higher power-to-weight ratio. This translates to removing stock quickly and easily to create a smoother finish, according to Bosch.

The tool comes with a 3.0ah high-capacity FatPack battery for extended runtime and cold-weather performance. Its Flexible Power System feature lets users choose the compatible SlimPack battery for minimum weight. Electronic cell protection helps prevent batter overload or any deep discharge.

Feld says the company incorporated an

electronically counterbalanced drum system into the motor that further optimizes the planing capability.

"The system eliminates the need to actually have two planer blades. Having two planer blades makes it very difficult for users to have those adjusted and also creates more friction, which causes more heat and puts stress on the tool which means less runtime and demands more power from the motor."



The Bosch cordless planer, model PLH181K.

The planer also features a directional chip ejection chute that can be moved left or right for more control over debris, as well as an edge guide that can be mounted to either side of the tool.

Other standard features include a locking on/off button, soft-grip handle, ratcheting depth knob and three integrated V-grooves for chamfering at all depths.

The planer sells for \$299 with one blade, a FatPack battery and carrying case.

Contact: Bosch Power Tools and Accessories. Tel: 877-267-2499. www.boschtools.com **W**

POWERMATIC from previous page

Power from the 230-volt motor is transmitted with a Poly-V belt. A magnetic switch protects the motor from potentially damaging power variations and also guards the operator by preventing the motor from starting unexpectedly after a power interruption, according to Powermatic.

The 21-1/2" x 16" table tilts 45 degrees to the right and 10 degrees to the left. A standard miter slot is provided, along with a miter gauge that features a pivoting head with stops at 45 and 90 degrees left and right.

Upper and lower blade wheels accommo-

date 153"-long blades, ranging from 1/8" to 1" wide. A foot operating brake system helps stop a coasting blade quickly. A handy blade tension release lever provides full-tension, partial tension and blade-release settings for making blade changes and relaxing the blade when it's not in use. An electrical interlock prevents the saw from starting when the blade is de-tensioned.

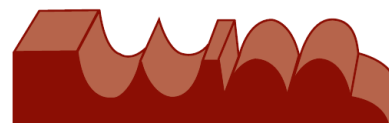
The machine's overall dimensions are 30-1/4" long, 34-3/8" wide and 80-1/4" high. It also features steel cabinet doors and 4" dust port.

The band saw has a retail price of about \$2,900.

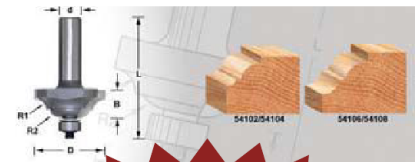
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Bessey Tools rolls out new clamp options

By Jennifer Hicks
STAFF WRITER

Bessey Tools introduced the Rapid Action clamp and malleable cast bar clamps at IWF 2012.

The Rapid Action clamp features a double-spindle mechanism for accelerated clamping action, a guided clamping bolt for direct pressure and anti-slip mechanism. In an interview with Woodshop News, product manager Andrew Fera says the no-twist feature on this series has a lot of appeal for woodworkers doing intricate glue-ups.

"There's no twisting of the pad. If you're doing a sensitive glue-up and you're worried about the wood floating on the glue because the pad would twist on a normal clamp, then this is really a key feature behind this clamp," says Fera.

Rapid Action clamps are available in three versions with clamping capacities of 12", 24" and 36". All have a 4" throat depth and clamping force of 1,320 lbs., according to Bessey.

They range in price from \$28 to \$36.

The malleable cast bar clamp series features a T-bar handle with rounded ends, malleable cast jaws with a corrugated design for strength and durability, and profiled rail. Fera says the T-bar feature offers better leverage options that certain users prefer over other clamp styles.

"We have an aging population of retired and semiretired woodworkers. They've worked hard all of their lives and they've got a little carpal tunnel or maybe their wrists aren't as strong as they want them to be. So having that T-bar on the end of the clamp solved that for a lot of these guys. It's a lot easier to pull than it is to twist," says Fera.

The bar clamp is offered in six versions with 6" through 24" clamping capacities, throat depths ranging from 3" to 4-1/2" and clamping forces ranging from 700 to 1,000 lbs. They sell for \$15 to \$37.

Contact: Bessey Tools North America. Tel: 800-828-1004. www.besseytools.com 



The direct pressure feature on the Rapid Action clamp prevents pad twist; the malleable cast bar clamps feature a T-bar handle.

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Freud blades feature patented coating

For 12" miter saws, they also feature special carbide and an anti-vibration design for longer life, company says

By Jennifer Hicks
STAFF WRITER

Designed for high production use, Freud's new 12" miter saw blades feature the company's patented Silver Industrial Cooling Element coating that protects against blade warping and wearing of the carbide tips.

"This is a metallic coating intended to reduce friction and reduce heat buildup during cutting, which can shorten the life of the blade. It can also prevent corrosion on the blade as well, which is significant in the workshop where blades are exposed to humidity," product manager Cliff Paddock says.

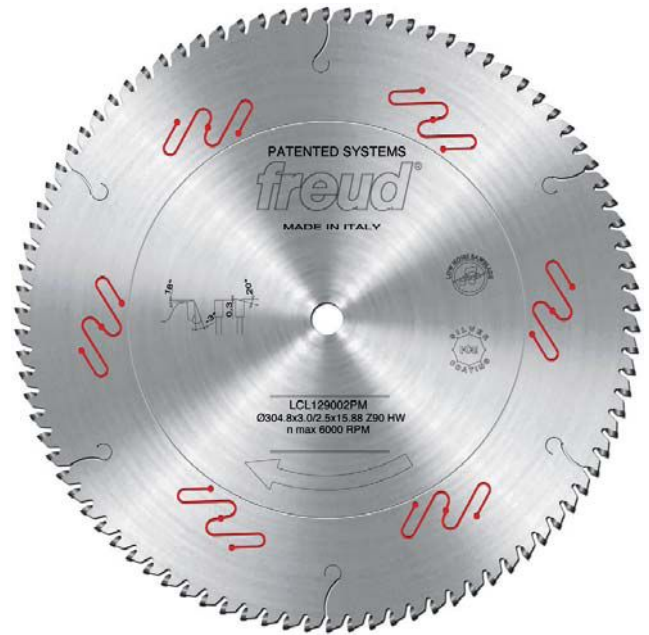
The blades include a 90-tooth for delicate woods and 108-tooth for non-ferrous metals. They also feature TiCo hi-density carbide, produced by Freud at a factory in Italy.

"The choice of carbide is special. Saw teeth have to hold up when cutting abrasive material so you need to add carbide that's abrasion-resistant, otherwise they won't hold their edge very long," says Paddock.

The blades undergo a precision grinding process and tri-metal brazing that consists of copper sandwiched between two layers of silver alloy to create a stronger, more impact-resistant bond between the carbide and the blade body. An anti-vibration design is also incorporated to maximize cutting life, according to the company.

The 90-tooth blade sells for \$158 and the 108-tooth for \$175.

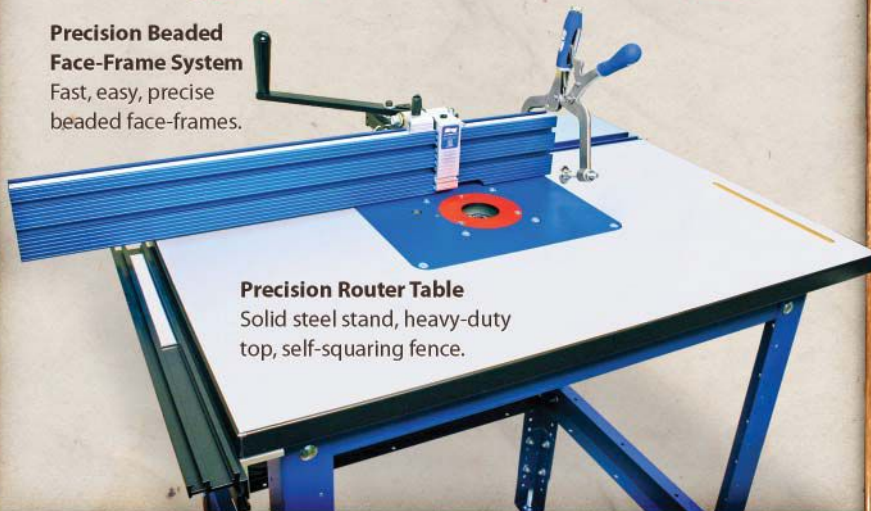
Contact: Freud America Inc. Tel: 800-334-4107. www.freudtools.com 



Freud's new miter saw blades feature a metallic coating to prevent heat friction and debris buildup.

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Have you thought about an exit strategy?

Retirement might be years away or right around the corner and how you prepare can determine how happy you'll be in your old age

Let's accept the fact that we are all getting older. And, for many, it could be time to start planning for retirement or, at least, winding down and phasing out. This brings up a host of challenges and it is never too soon to start the process.

Some woodshop owners might choose to continue indefinitely. Who knows? They just might live forever. Others think that on a given day they will be able to sell the

business for a substantial sum. Others die before turning off the lathe. There are many options.

Making preparations so a successor is in place before you gallop off into the sunset is the more expedient procedure. Whatever you do, which could include nothing, the day will come when it will be necessary for you to make your exit — prepared or not. To ensure a well-coordinated departure it is necessary to develop an exit strategy. The

sooner you start, the better off you'll be.

This transition and divestment can be perplexing and time-consuming. But there are many ways it can be accomplished. Resolving personal and business issues can be difficult at the best of times and can still be more onerous if you are uncertain about your longer term objectives. The germane issues revolve around the age at which you wish to step out, personal health in the event you will not be able to carry on until then, family considerations, financial concerns, retirement needs, procedural matters and whether you wish to remain where you are or relocate.

Even if not considering retirement, some of these issues should be addressed. You never know when circumstances will change.

Timing

You can never start planning your exit strategy too early. Many experts suggest that five years prior to retirement is the optimum time, but others think it should be sooner than this. Many otherwise astute businesspersons postpone making these plans because they can't accept the fact that someday it will be necessary to move on. They unwisely put off important decisions until another day. It is important to get started early. Delaying the planning

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process could bring about unintended consequences and perhaps decrease your woodshop's value. It is wise to develop a written exit plan, one that sets out your objectives, details your constraints and documents how you plan to achieve these goals.

The initial steps include:

- Creating an exit plan that would include a divestment strategy.
- Identifying your most important objectives.
- Formulating the proper timetable. This is deciding what comes first, second, third, etc.
- Determining your anticipated retirement needs and the best way to maximize your retirement savings.
- Documenting your goals.
- Determining and documenting the best way for you to attain your goals and proceeding from that perspective.
- Addressing the potential legal problems and tax consequences.

If selling the business at a future date is your goal, give yourself one to two years to accomplish this goal. Before offering it on the market, ensure that you have a clear understanding of all of your options. There are several paths you could take, each depending on how you want to get out and the length of the transitioning period. Make your plan flexible in case you change your mind about the timing or if circumstances change.

Always have your draft plan examined by legal and accounting experts. There is little point in going through all of this only to find that your gains are frittered away to the IRS or you could potentially have unworkable covenants in your divestment action plan.

Whatever you do, which could include nothing, the day will come when it will be necessary for you to make your exit — prepared or not.

The buy-in, buyout

The process of phasing out of full-time management and gradually moving into a lesser position is a popular method of retirement planning and execution. One of the better methods is to arrange a buy-in, buyout. Buy-in refers to the purchaser; buyout refers to the seller. By this procedure an orderly transfer of your woodshop is made bit by bit during a certain number of years — never less than two and seldom more than

10 — to a partner, associate or an outsider. The purchase price is agreed to at the time the contract is signed.

The difference between this and an outright sale is that you remain active and in control of the business as a transitioning seller or partner until the full debt owed to you is retired. There should be a down payment of sufficient size to ensure that the buyer does not walk.

The last words

It cannot be said too often. Transitioning from active business management to a comfortable lifestyle in retirement must be planned well. It can never be a case where on an appointed day somewhere in the future you will gather up your personal possessions, put your hat on your head and, with a wad of money in your jeans, walk out the door. An exit where you depart with your health, your wealth and your reputation for running a good shop intact will take meticulous planning and methodical execution.

Start now, not someday when it becomes a do-or-die situation. Consider all your options. Select the one that works best for you and get the best legal and tax advice. **W**

Lloyd Manning is a semiretired commercial real estate and business appraiser and financial analyst.

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Blanket coverage is the spray-gun game plan

Improper technique can cost time and material and can lead to finish defects or failures that are easily avoidable

I've had several projects this year that required me to provide analysis of a spray finishing system and subsequent training of personnel involved in the process. And I've taught a number of classes on spray practice and operator technique. In each of these cases I've observed several or all of the situations I'll talk about here that affect the quality, efficiency, comfort, safety and happiness of those involved.

All of these examples pertain to air spray (conventional, HVLP) and many, especially

the examples of applicator technique, pertain to airless and air-assisted airless as well.

Since I recently covered the basics of a good spray booth set up (October 2012 issue), I won't go over that again. I will emphasize the importance of incorporating good booth practices to provide the right environment for the application of the coatings. I'm also leaving out personal protection and safety for another time. I'll limit this article to basics of material, gun, and operator technique.

The material

The type of coatings available to the finisher today range from relatively low viscosity shellac and lacquers to higher viscosity conversion varnishes, polyester, polyurethane and high-solids paints.

Often finishers try to use one gun and one combination of air cap, fluid tip and needle to spray everything. They use increased air pressure to atomize a high viscosity material rather than changing either the gun or the setup to accommodate the need of that material — or they thin the material excessively; both practices waste material, electricity and time. The gun should be set up for the viscosity recommended by the manufacturer of the material and the material should only be thinned as recommended. Excessive thinning reduces coating build, consumes excessive solvent and invites runs and other defects. The coating should be at the recommended temperature because viscosity is inversely proportional to temperature.

The gun

Besides trying to use the gun and setup for materials outside of the gun's range, maintenance of the spray gun is the biggest problem I see with the gun itself. Keeping the gun's functional parts clean is often neglected because at the end of the day most guns can be

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Besides trying to use the gun and setup for materials outside of the gun's range, maintenance of the spray gun is the biggest problem I see with the gun itself.

hung on a hook and used the next day without cleaning. However, the gun slowly loses efficiency and eventually fails to spray properly, requiring a fix on the spot. The air cap can accumulate dried coatings on the face or the atomizing air holes can become clogged, altering the airflow that determines quality of the spray pattern.

All fluid passages should be flushed with solvent and dried, whether in the gun itself or a pressure tank or cup, including fluid hoses. Follow the manufacturer's recommendation for cleaning and lubrication to ensure efficient, safe and proper performance of the gun.

Problems you might expect to experience in a poorly maintained gun include, but are not limited to:

- A packing nut that is loose, too tight, worn or dry
- Sticking air valve stem due to a foreign matter on the valve or seat
- Worn or damaged valve or seat
- The fluid tip or needle is worn, damaged or loose
- A loose fluid tube or fluid inlet nipple
- A clogged air vent
- A loose, damaged or dirty cup lid
- Damaged or worn gaskets, o-rings or packing
- Clogged, obstructed, worn or damaged horn holes

Some of the performance issues associated with these deficiencies include leaking fluid, leaking air, jerky or fluttering spray, poor pattern, poor atomization, dry spray, excessive overspray or a failure to spray.

The operator

Ultimately, the operator has to ensure that the materials are correct, the gun is right and properly setup for the material and the desired results are accomplished. The objective for the operator is to apply the specified wet millage (thickness of film) to the surface in the most efficient manner. This is accomplished by positioning himself and the work in such a manner that he can clearly see the advancing wet edge of the coating as it is applied and spraying so the pattern of atomized liquid resolves itself into a continuous and consistent wet film without running, puddling or developing bubbles.

He should position himself relative to exhaust and inlet air flow so that the vapors and particulate matter from the spray travels from the gun to the exhaust plenum and should spray from front to back whenever possible. That permits the exhausting overspray to be

drawn toward a portion of the surface that has not yet been coated.

The operator has control of these areas and must make sure that they are checked for each change in material:

- Spray pattern, fluid and air settings, spreader adjustment, and distance from and orientation to surface, speed of pass.
- For a pressure feed gun, the fluid pressure should be such that the gun delivers about 250 to 300 cc per minute (check manufacturer's recommendations)

The air pressure should be set as low as possible while maintaining the minimum atomized droplet size. Exceeding this amount results in more dry spray, overspray and fog, and that reduces efficiency and safety. Unless spraying very small surfaces such as chair legs and stretchers, the pattern should be as wide as practical for the gun and the material. For those smaller surfaces, you can reduce the air pressure and fluid delivery and move closer or use a smaller gun or cap with a smaller spray pattern.

When making a pass, start from the point before the edge of the piece by triggering the gun before moving the spray pattern over the surface and continue until the gun has passed beyond the other side of the piece and been triggered off.

continued on Page 23

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Durham Bookcases has been a fan of ShopBot 10 years running.



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WOOD MARKETS

Hickory sales find boost in floor market

Its reputation for being difficult to process and dry because of a high shrinkage rate is offset by its stunning richness in color

By Jennifer Hicks
STAFF WRITER

While the denseness of hickory (*Carya spp.*) makes it a difficult hardwood with which to work, this domestic species is popular because of its unique rustic appearance and low price, particularly in the flooring industry. And with all of the sharp tooling in the today's market, it's more desirable than some might think.

"I'd say there is a medium interest in hick-

ory in general. What is quite interesting is a lot of it is going into the flooring market and people are enjoying the rustic nature of the wood, particularly the different colors. They often grade it into different colors," says Rory Wood, owner of Rare Woods USA in Mexico, Maine, who adds that one of the more popular versions is calico, a two-toned streaked color.

Hickory sales rarely fluctuate at Bingaman & Son Lumber in Kreamer, Pa., according to salesman Bob McCabe. He also believes

the mineral properties that create the striking color variations are attractive for enhancing furniture aesthetics and doing accent work.

"We experience erratic usage from month to month and quarter to quarter, but if we look at year-on-year results, they seem to stay pretty steady," says McCabe.

"It's certainly not one of our major species, but we produce anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 board feet per month on a pretty steady basis. The usage goes up and down and the No. 1 and No. 2 Common are stronger than the upper grades, but it's a good wood for flooring and cabinetry."

Also known as shagbark hickory, Carolina hickory and other names, the species is widespread throughout the country, but grows primarily in Eastern and Midwest U.S. states and eastern Canada. Trees reach up to 120' with diameters of 2' to 3'. It has a reputation of being difficult to process and dry because of its high shrinkage rate, which contributes to its consistently low prices. It is similar to and often used interchangeably with pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) and various pecan subspecies.

Bob Thompson of Thompson Forest Products says hickory sales are down slightly as far as cabinetry is concerned, but confirms its popularity in the flooring industry.



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"We're not in the flooring market, but I've heard people in the flooring market say hickory sales are doing pretty well for them. I did a hickory floor in our home last year and it's beautiful. There's such beautiful color in it. If you get some nice bright-white wood and put

some brown or reddish tones with it, it looks pretty sharp in my opinion," says Thompson.

Hickory is generally sold in 4/4, 5/4, 6/4 and 8/4 thicknesses. Retail prices for truck-load volumes of 4/4 upper grades start at around \$1.35 to \$1.40/bf. [W](#)

FINISHING from Page 21

The speed of the pass and the distance of the gun from the surface needs to be constant and balanced. If you increase the speed, you must move the gun closer to the surface. If you decrease the speed, you can move farther away and apply the same film thickness over a larger area. Try to find the balance that allows a good wet coat without excessive material wasted by missing the surface and not so far away that the coating material is drying before flowing out well.

Move the gun parallel to the surface, as though it was on a track, directing the spray perpendicular to the surface. Each pass should overlap the previous pass by 50 percent. Less or more than 50 percent overlap will create an uneven wet coating, although a minor difference will probably not be seen. A mistake often made is to allow the gun to move from a position where it is spraying almost perpendicular to the surface at the beginning of a piece to an angle up to 45 degrees toward the rear. If you cannot reach all the way to the rear of the surface while holding the gun at very close to 90 degrees, you should reposition the piece so that you can spray half from one side and then the other half from the other side.

A swivel table or cart with casters will allow an operator to rotate the piece easily. For a larger (or just more comfortable) operation, a lift table with swivel capabilities is ideal for pieces of different sizes and can save years of wear on your knees.

Do not arc the gun in a vertical or horizontal plane. This causes excess overspray and loss of consistent millage. Many operators develop lazy habits that encourage arcing. I'm 6-foot-1 and spraying a horizontal piece wider than 5 feet requires that I move my feet. If I simply reach and angle the gun to hit the far edges, I am wasting more than half of the finish at that point to overspray. Some operators get in the habit of "flipping" the wrist in a short arc at the end of a pass.

Moving the gun by rotating the arm at the elbow causes arcing in the other plane and makes it difficult to achieve an even coat. Keep the wrist flexible so the gun points perpendicular to the surface for better efficiency.

Spray operators who did not receive good training or who have had a poor result from technique, equipment or product, sometimes shy away from applying a full wet coat. In order to avoid runs and puddling, they spray multiple light passes. While this does accomplish their objective of avoiding runs, it costs time and material and can lead to finish defects or failure. Strive for the maximum film build and surface covered consistent with the limitations of the equipment and product. [W](#)

Greg Williams, formerly senior touchup and finishing instructor for Mohawk Finishing Products, is now a freelance instructor and consultant for finishing and touchup. He can be reached at gregalwil@yahoo.com.

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- Max. cutting height: 6"
- Blade size: 92 1/2" - 93 1/2" L (1 1/8" - 3/4" W)
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- Cutting capacity/throat: 18 1/4"
- Max. cutting height: 12"
- Blade size: 143" L (1 1/8" - 1 1/4" W)
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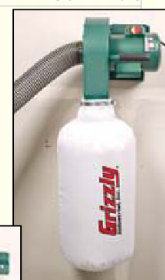
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FRONT & CENTER

Out of the Woods Cabinetry in Utah hasn't shied away from tough economic times and they've stayed lean, efficient and successful



Out of the Woods Custom Cabinetry serves the residential market only.

BY JENNIFER HICKS

STAFF WRITER

With about 50 employees, Out of the Woods Custom Cabinetry in Layton, Utah, is an example to smaller shops wishing to grow. About 11 years ago, the company started as a two-man operation.

Based in a 24,000-sq.-ft. industrial facility in northern Utah, the business offers a wide range of design and build services. Tige Rhoades, an equal partner with Lonne Rasmussen, says the company caters strictly to the residential market, completing about 700 jobs per year.

"The other two places I worked in before starting this business did commercial projects. Commercial projects just operate way differently than residential projects. They talk about retention and have different billing and progress payments. It's just a different animal than residential work is. We just chose not to go there," says Rhoades.

The residential niche also boosts consumer interest in the company's in-house granite countertop fabrication operation, something the owners hope to expand upon in the near future.

Ambitious pair

Rasmussen learned woodworking from his father, while Rhoades studied at the Ogden-Weber Applied Technology College in Ogden, Utah. The two worked together at Rasmussen's father's shop in the mid-1990s until Rhoades left to work for another cabinet shop. In 2000, Rhoades decided to start his own woodworking business and Rasmussen followed.

"I was 25 then. I thought I had it planned, but didn't have it mapped out. In 2001, Lonne and I started working in a 45' x 50' steel building behind my house. We worked together for six months before hiring employees, then the operation got too big for where we were and we moved here in 2005."

Early clients came through general contractors and builders that they already knew. But they made a point of not stealing former employers' work so they didn't burn any bridges. It was that type of integrity, along with standing behind their work, that built their solid word-of-mouth reputation that brings them frequent business today. While they do a fair amount of advertising through phone books, local flyers and home shows, referrals are their key source of business.

Making clients happy is a big priority to both owners. Rhoades regularly monitors the volume of work and makes sure all projects are completed on time. Customers gravitate to the kind of service that separates the company from smaller ones with less manpower and fewer resources.

continued on next page



Kitchen cabinets account for about 95 percent of the company's work.

OUT OF THE WOODS CUSTOM CABINETRY

PRESIDENT:

Lonne Rasmussen

LOCATION:

Layton, Utah

EMPLOYEES: 50

SHOP SIZE: 19,000 sq.ft.

ABOUT: Focused entirely on the residential market, this large production shop specializes in designing and fabricating custom



kitchen cabinets with granite countertops, spurring customer requests for products that belong in other parts of the home such as mantles and entertainment centers.

FROM CO-OWNER TIGE RHOADES:

"We started this business in 2001 and now have 50 employees. If you keep in mind the economic turmoil we've been in over these past few years, we grew pretty fast."



In just 11 years, the company has grown from two to 50 employees.



(From left) The company's granite countertops fabricated in-house are not only popular in kitchens, but home offices as well; this large kitchen features the company's popular antique glaze finish.

OUT OF THE WOODS *from previous page*

"There are quite a number of small shops that will bid lower than us, but halfway through the project the homeowner will realize that they didn't look into what the business had to work with and whether they could back up their promises. I understand what goes on because there was a time when I was working out of a shop at my house, too. I have had people come back and say they decided not to use us and regret it," says Rhoades.

Diverse offerings

The company currently enjoys a steady four-to eight-week backlog, about half sourced directly from homeowners. These are generally middle-class individuals with homes ranging in value from \$200,000 to \$500,000. Most reside within an hour's drive of the shop, primarily within Davis County. Rhoades says the company rarely goes beyond its established market because then it would be more difficult to adjust installed work, a follow-up service on which the shop prides itself.

The scope of furniture and cabinetry prod-

ucts offered goes well beyond kitchen cabinets and living room built-ins, but each order usually starts there.

"I think one reason customers come to us is because they are always building a new house or remodeling an existing one and they want new cabinets and countertops. Kitchen cabinets are 95 percent of our work. But then later on they want a fireplace mantle or entertainment center to match what we've already done," says Rhoades.

The massive shop features a Weinig Unimat 500 molder, multiple High Point upcut saws,

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The shop floor measures about 19,000 sq. ft. Most of the remaining space is used for offices by the design, management and sales teams. There's also a large showroom, displaying dozens of sample kitchens where clients can select the design and finish that's right for them.

"The woods we work with are maple, alder, cherry, hickory and oak and the rustic varieties of the same five. Our clients mostly want rustic alder with a stained finish and a commercial varnish topcoat. Lately, a lot of people have wanted a completely white, perfect-looking cabinet," says Rhoades.



The shop works with 12 of the region's top builders on a regular basis.

Solid connections

Out of the Woods is hardly the only cabinet shop in town. "When things were going well before the recession, guys that come along and sell equipment said that Utah had the highest number of shops per capita along the Wasatch Front, so it's very competitive," says Rhoades. "We try to use our size and longstanding reputation to our advantage."

Rasmussen oversees the company's marketing efforts and manages the four-person sales team. He spends most of his time building business-to-business relationships, such as working with appliance and home accessory companies that allow him to display marketing materials in their retail stores. Other employees in the sales department network with builders, designers and industry service groups to form

solid relationships. Remaining on good terms with general contractors is another one of the company's keys to success. It works with 12 of the region's top builders on a regular basis.

"When our contractors have a project going on, they will select us. They won't call for bids. We have an active sales force and we're constantly trying to build our pool of general contractors," says Rhoades.

Staying lean

The owners say they have a plan to drastically grow the company, which is on hold until the economy improves more. Rhoades and Rasmussen are very careful about staying within their means to remain in good financial standing. They have had to lay off employees through the years, but they always find a way to refill the vacancies when there's enough work to justify hiring. They have also put off purchasing a CNC router, a

machine some of the shop's operations managers claim is essential.

"One of the things that I think has been critical to our survival is that we operate on a budget. We have management reports in the company to tell us how we're doing. Good business organization lets us cut our business down to the size that it really is instead of living outside of reality," says Rhoades.

"One of our competitors is a great guy, a fantastic individual. He was renting two bays in one building. When work slowed down, he didn't get rid of one of the bays. He kept thinking he'd get more work and it put him under. I think there were other people that did the same." **W**

Contact: Out of the Woods Custom Cabinetry, 1720 West Gordon Ave. (1000 North), Layton, Utah 84041. Tel: 801-444-9663. www.ooutwc.com

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An eye on **OUTSOURCING**

By John English

Custom components manufacturers can take a load off small-shop owners and relieve the pressure of their backlog

When it comes to kitchens, what's the difference between a big-box store and a custom cabinet shop? It's that one word: custom. It's the ability to change the rules, make things work perfectly, be creative. It's more than aesthetics. Custom means being able to fit a kitchen to the available space, rather than

the other way around. Trying to fit the room to standardized cabinet dimensions is, by its very nature, more an exercise in arithmetic than craft. The results — lots of fillers and soffits and compromises — often leave something to be desired.

Custom also means quality. It implies a handmade touch, an attention to detail that is not often found in low-end and mass-produced cabinets. When a shop is competing in a tight market, price isn't always the issue. Customers are looking for excellence in both design and construction. While the stapled particleboard side on a big-box store drawer will often fail a few years down the road, the solid hardwood sides on a custom shop's drawers will do their job for decades.

Quality takes time

Fortunately, today's custom shops have a way to retain high quality and still meet production deadlines. Outsourcing components has become a big part of what we do, in large part because the new suppliers were almost all custom cabinetmakers before they became component manufacturers. They understand the market, the customers, the budgets and timetables. And, above all, they understand that custom still means quality.

Outsourced suppliers can provide cabinet doors, face frames, drawer boxes, drawer faces, even body components. Some also offer complete cabinet systems, where size is not a constraint. They can make a pantry three inches deeper than standard or an island a bit taller or shorter. They can match finishes and moldings and they can generally do it all for less money than a standard shop can do it in-house. That's because of the legacy of Henry Ford: they have economies of scale that kick in that just aren't available to a smaller shop. Component makers can buy material by the load and build numerous kitchens simultaneously. They also specialize. When a person only makes mitered doors every day, all day, they can become very efficient at it.

From a bottom-line perspective, perhaps the biggest benefit to outsourcing components is that these companies truly understand timelines. Most of them will deliver within two or three weeks of receiving an order. A custom shop with half a dozen craftsmen that has several jobs in the pipeline can be months behind if they're doing everything in-house. And, in



Outsourced suppliers can provide cabinet doors, face frames, drawer boxes, drawer faces, even body components.

the current market, that might be a big enough backlog to jeopardize new orders. With housing starts expected to increase more than 20 percent in 2013, contractors simply won't have time to wait three, four, maybe even six months for a custom kitchen. By outsourcing components, custom shops can dramatically cut production times and still stay competitive.

Which components can be outsourced?

The short answer is pretty much everything. In theory, a custom woodshop could very quickly become just a custom designer and installer, with a little bit of assembly required every now and then. However, that doesn't always make economic sense. Outsourcing everything can be limiting, especially when it comes to design. Even though the larger component suppliers offer a huge range of door styles and finishes, their catalogs do have some limits.

For example, CabParts Inc. in Grand Junction, Colo., supplies 32mm-based cabinet boxes, along with drawer boxes, rollout shelves, adjustable and fixed shelves, slab-type door and drawer fronts, closet/storage/organizer systems (modular or custom) and functional hardware. The company has an extensive line of more than 1,500 standard boxes (plus custom sizing) and, like many other component suppliers, they offer heat-fused melamine panels in a wide range of colors and textures.



By outsourcing components, custom shops can dramatically cut production times and still stay competitive.

Their parts can also be ordered with hardwood veneers on a wide variety of substrates, including MDF, plywood and various "green" cores.

Despite that huge array of options, CabParts doesn't make traditional face frame cabinets, so shops matching existing work would need to make a lot of the kitchen in-house or shop elsewhere for some components.

Usually it's less expensive to build the cabinet boxes in-house and just order the doors and drawers. One issue is shipping costs, which is a prime concern that has been recognized by WalzCraft in LaCrosse, Wis. They build pretty much everything that goes on the box, but they don't build the box itself. The company manufactures

custom cabinet doors, drawer boxes, moldings and many other varieties of cabinet components and accessories. They will handle orders for a single door, or a thousand doors, and build everything from range hoods to face frames. But their customers still make the boxes in-house.

The trick is to source superior suppliers and discover what each company specializes in. Creating a resource file with several manufacturers allows a shop to cover all the options and order everything it needs on short notice, but perhaps from more than one source. And this also allows a shop manager to choose what parts are going to be made in-house.

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Why make any parts in-house?

Control can be an issue. For example, sometimes it's nice to be able to dry-fit something on the job before it's complete, especially when the project is existing construction. On older houses or commercial buildings, installers are often dealing with awkward pipe or chase placements, shallow alcoves, uneven floors or perhaps walls that are way out of plumb. Ceiling heights can be arbitrary, door openings varied and wall thicknesses unpredictable. Sometimes, it's just easier to build a strangely configured box than to try and order it.

Matching existing casework is perhaps the main reason for keeping some work in-house. Grinding a custom molding knife or bending laminated stock for an arch or stair component could be something best done in-house and being able to make these highly prized elements is what sets a custom shop apart from the pack.

Building large and heavy cabinet carcasses in-house makes a lot of

sense. Shipping and handling is not only expensive for such items, but the chances of damage and delays are higher, too. But then ordering the doors, shelves and drawers from a component supplier makes a lot of sense. All of the doors for a sizeable kitchen will usually fit on a single pallet and spending an hour unpacking them beats

spending a week making them. That's especially true when a shop has developed a relationship with a component supplier and has reached the point where the buyer feels that he/she can rely on predictable and uniform quality.

From an accounting viewpoint, there are some advantages to outsourcing, too. As the suppliers are not employees, there are no payroll taxes and paperwork or workers' compensation costs or vacation schedules and absences to manage. There's less inventory of raw stock to purchase and store and, consequently, less money tied up in that inventory. For example, there's no need to maintain bunks of several species of hardwood so that the shop can offer the same door design in different woods.

With the marketing materials that are supplied by most component manufacturers, a shop can allow the end user to choose from catalogs or online images, so the cost of constantly updating a showroom is somewhat mitigated. Those savings can be used to set up a PC with rendering software

Sometimes, it's just easier to build a strangely configured box than to try and order it.



For information on cabinet component suppliers, please visit the Woodshop News online resource guide at <http://resourceguide.woodshopnews.com/listing/guide/components-parts>.

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that will allow a client to walk through a “complete” kitchen before a single board is planed. Most of the larger component suppliers have libraries that can be imported, showing their available edge profiles, panels, finishes, hardware and other design elements such as moldings, inlays and even lighting.

Beyond material and labor costs, there are lots of smaller savings associated with buying in components, too. For example, fewer bits and blades need to be replaced or sharpened when all the doors and drawers are being made elsewhere. Lights and heating/cooling systems in the workshop might see less use, and even finishing booth filters, sandpaper and a host of other supplies might get a little cheaper. There’s less dust to deal with, less waste to haul, fewer remnants and cutoffs to store. There are even some unquantifiable advantages such as fewer man-hours on machines or in spray booths where employees are exposed to possible harm.

Get the dimensions wrong and you’re stuck with a pallet or two of over- or undersized doors or drawers — and a significant delay.



And there are management cost savings, too. If nobody’s building doors, they don’t need to be supervised. Nobody has to do shop drawings or program the CNC.

There are a few very slight disadvantages to cabinet component shopping (one gives up some control and creativity), but all in all it makes a lot of sense. A woodshop can offer its customers a wider array of options

that are delivered in a shorter time and do so with predictable pricing. Of course, as with all advanced technology, this option is subject to the “garbage in, garbage out” rule. Get the dimensions wrong and you’re stuck with a pallet or two of over- or undersized doors or drawers — and a significant delay.

Measure twice. **W**



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IN HIS OWN WORLD



Anderson mostly builds furniture for churches, such as this lectern.

Alfred Anderson's remote shop in the Pacific Northwest has a focus on custom craftsmanship that stands the test of time

By Thomas G. Dolan

Alfred Anderson, principal of Alfred Anderson Craftsman in Wood in Colbert, Wash., works out of a 19th century farm and, in many respects, his life and work styles are more reflective of that bygone era than of modern times. Everything he makes is an original. There are no standard products, no inventory. Anderson builds handcrafted basic furniture such as beds, tables and chairs.

"Most woodworkers have products on hand that will fit many people's needs," Anderson says. "I don't. I'm the one who fills the need for the person who can't find what he wants anywhere else."

An early vision

Anderson was born in Alabama. "I was very good in arts and crafts as a kid," An-

derson recalls. "When I was six years old I got the idea I would be making things all my life. It's the same idea I carry around in my 66-year-old self."

He attended high school in Pennsylvania and Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, graduating with an arts degree in 1967. He started on a master's degree in painting and drawing at Washington University in St. Louis, but was drafted into the Army. After being discharged from the Army, Anderson worked at what is now the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from 1971-1974.

He moved around a bit before settling in the Seattle area in 1977. From 1978-1996 he lived on nearby Mercer Island. He married his wife, Cathy, in 1984, with a daughter from a previous marriage, Marina.

Though he lived on Mercer Island, Anderson's business was in Seattle. He started painting as an artist. "I could support myself as a finished carpenter, for I had enough skills to do high-end and interior carpentry," Anderson says, "though it was not the absolute best fun." At about this time he also started to do what he does now, though at a simpler level. "I would make things such as a chest of drawers

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or framed windows, the kinds of objects that have to be designed and built from scratch."

This was an important growth period for Anderson as he began to get more and more work in Pioneer Square. The historic district requires restorations to be done in the matching styles of the 19th or early 20th centuries. So even when there was a contemporary insert, such as a TV set, it had to be enclosed in a console reflective of the historical period.

This led to Anderson working on classic boats. The same rules applied. For instance, radar equipment had to be enclosed in a case befitting the boat's original design. One of Anderson's most interesting projects was on a yacht named Thea Foss, which belonged to actor Douglas Fairbanks Jr. in the 1930s. The yacht was converted into a mine sweeper in World War II, then changed back into a yacht and then restored by Anderson to its original design.

The big break

But Anderson's main line of work, developed in Seattle, has been through Kaufer's Religious Supplies. This work, as Anderson describes it, "is for the interiors of churches, primarily Catholic and Anglican, fancy liturgically sensitive products. The more liturgically sensitive the more likely I am to get the call."

The church work allowed Anderson to give up his steady job as a licensed contractor and move

to Colbert. As a licensed contractor he could tear out a wall to put in a window, but it required insurance and bonding costs much different than simply bringing in a new piece of furniture. "Sim-



A communion table, which Anderson built from locust and pine.

ply delivering finished objects makes my business much more affordable," he says.

The farm Anderson moved to was his wife's great-grandparents' homestead and was purchased from her uncle. The 80 acres were once used for timber and agricultural fields for growing grains such as oats and wheat. Now, says Anderson, "it's all being ecologically restored to native grasslands and forests."

What was once a 45' x 30' commercial chicken house has been gutted and reworked on the inside to a modern woodshop, while the outside still looks like an old farm building.

"All of the heavy work, the big sawing projects, I do with power tools," Anderson says. "The finishing work and joinery work are all done by hand. As are all of the authentic finishings of varnishes, polishes and lacquers." Though he uses some exotics, such as wenge and ebony, most of the wood he uses is domestic. These include ash, maple, walnut, oak, larch, Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir.

Anderson has a local following and gets a number of referrals, but does not really advertise. It's through Kaufer's Religious Supplies, based in Seattle, with an outlet in Spokane, that Anderson gets about 80 percent of his business. He's been working with this retailer, but only occasionally will have a small object on display in their showrooms. And, though Kaufer's relies heavily on its catalogs, Anderson's one-of-a-kind work is not featured there either. What happens, Anderson explains, is that a customer might see something, but ask for something a bit different, something that requires an original design or customization. The customer will be referred to Anderson.

Anderson builds a variety of unique products.
continued on next page



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ucts for churches. Some are small, such as tabernacles, ornate containers for holy artifacts, and crucifixes. Some are more basic furniture such as period desks, tables and chairs for speakers or other special guests in the sanctuary. Some are large and elaborate.

For instance, Anderson says one of his most interesting projects was for an Anglican church with a very strong high-church influence on its interiors. "The pulpit was not merely a lectern," says Anderson. "It was a pulpit in an absolute sense, raised high up over the sanctuary, built in an extravagant 19th century architectural style. Ornamental steps led up to it. It was built like the front of a sailing ship and you could almost envision the priest climbing up a rope ladder. This was a really fun project."

Anderson made a model of the project from plywood, about 6" tall, complete with lighting so the pastor and other decision makers could get a full sense of what the finished work would look like. Anderson then built the project in his shop, which was shipping across the mountains to the church in Redmond in western Washington.

One and done

An added bonus to working on big projects in churches, Anderson says, is that "not only are you working in a variety of different architectural styles and aesthetics, you are also



Anderson constructed this coffee table as a miniature and usable workbench.

involved with very interesting collaborators from other crafts, such as glass blowers, metal workers and sometimes even ceramic makers."

But even small projects can offer challenges which Anderson enjoys solving. "There was one 19th century stained glass window in which the client wanted to create the impression of real flowers actually growing or floating out the window," he says. "So I created a hidden shelf that created this illusion." He laughs. "Who would want two of these?"

Anderson says that Kaufer's Religious Supplies, with whom he's worked for some 30 years, "has been instrumental in making my business profitable. They are selling the work, while I am here having fun." Anderson adds that, though his present situation has allowed him to leave behind more onerous tasks such

as general carpentry and construction work, he still needs a day job. So he and his wife do a side business of property management.

Though his emphasis is on church work, Anderson still does custom historical furniture for homes. He describes one of his latest clients in the Lake City area of Seattle as wanting a king-sized bed with a headboard of a half-round window reminiscent of English-style houses of the late 19th century. This window was built around the colonial motto of "The sun never sets on the British Empire."

This walnut headboard was modeled after a "sunrise window" salvaged from an old school in rural area of eastern Washington. Yet, for all of his emphasis upon remaining true to historical styles, Anderson says he still gets a certain amount of demand for his custom work in brand-new homes designed in the most modern contemporary styles.

When asked if, given the supplemental work he's always had to do to support his one-of-a-kind work, it might not have been better to do a certain amount of standardized work, Anderson replies, "To try to be in both ends of it gets a bit dicey. For then you have an entirely different profile as a production shop. You have to have the capacity to make the same object over and over. For me, that would be like having an ordinary job. My work style is more a rarefied hobby than a job."

Or, put another way, more of an art than a craft. **W**

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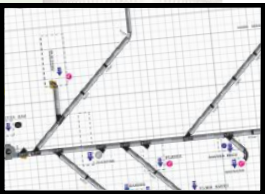
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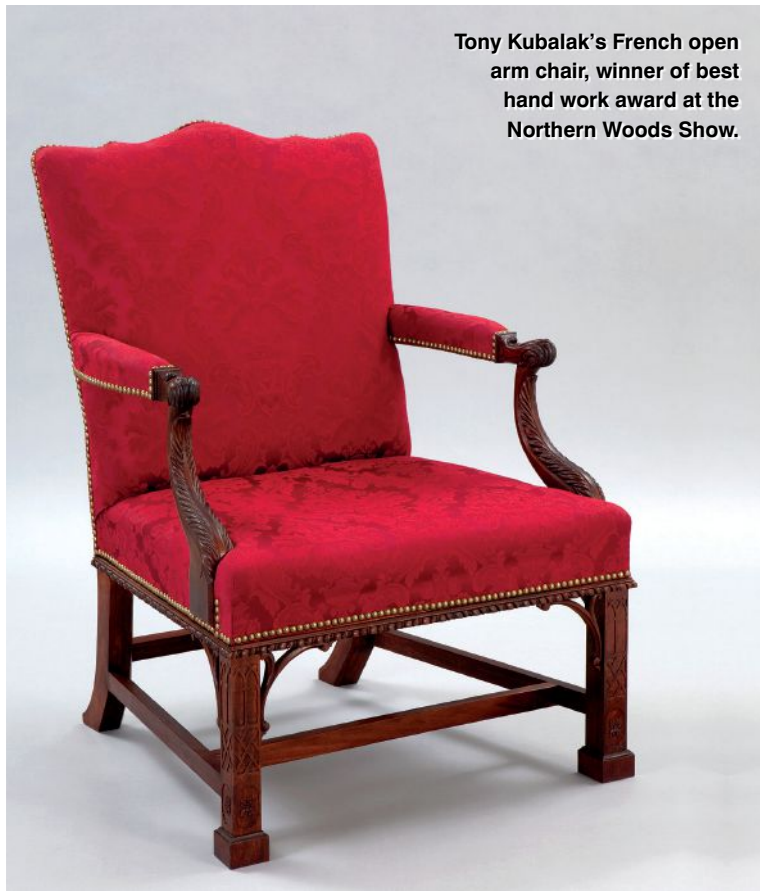
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Tony Kubalak's French open arm chair, winner of best hand work award at the Northern Woods Show.

Minnesota guild holds annual exhibit

By Jennifer Hicks
STAFF WRITER

This year marked the 29th edition of the Northern Woods Show, a friendly competition sponsored by the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild. Held from April 26-29, the show provided an opportunity for members and non-members to present and discuss the best in high-quality woodworking design and construction.

The guild has about 1,000 professional and amateur members. This year's show winners include:

- Joel Ficke, best traditional piece
- Tim Gorman, most technically accomplished
- Craig Johnson, best detail
- Tony Kubalak, best hand work
- David Lane, best finish
- Mark Laub, People's Choice award
- Nickolas Nelson, best in show
- Dick Schultz, judges' award

Northwest mastery exhibition

The Northwest Woodworking Studio in Portland, Ore., presented select furniture pieces from the school's mastery students Oct. 4 at its annual Mastery Showcase. The event featured seven select furniture

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pieces from some of the program's most skilled graduates.

The school offers three mastery programs designed for self-directed students. The local and distance programs are one-on-one study programs for students with their own shops that teach fine furniture making with a focus on design, joinery and building skills. Students design and construct a total of 10 pieces over the course of two years and visit the studio for a series of lectures, demonstrations and critiques. The residence program is a nine-month intensive program that provides in-house shop space for participants.

Call for entries

The San Diego Fine Woodworkers Association, co-sponsor of the annual Design in Wood exhibition held during the San Diego County Fair, is seeking entries for the 2013 show.

"Design in Wood has become the most prestigious competitive woodworking exhibition in the country," exhibition coordinator Bob Stevenson says. "Touted as being the largest and finest exhibit of its kind, it runs for over three weeks and attracts over a million and a half viewers and prospective clients."

The theme for 2013 is "Game On." The competition is open to all woodworkers and the categories include furniture, carving, turning, musical instruments, clocks, marquetry, and CNC work. The entry deadline is May 3, 2013.

Contacts

Minnesota Woodworkers Guild. www.mnwvg.org.

Northwest Woodworking Studio, 1002 S.E. 8th Ave., Portland, OR 97214. Tel: 503-284-1644. www.northwestwoodworking.com

San Diego Fine Woodworkers Association, P.O. Box 82323, San Diego, CA 92138. www.sdfwa.org 

PHOTO: RAMON MORENO



Nickolas Nelson earned best in show honors for this "Cabinet in Chinese Elm."

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CALENDAR

Organizations sponsoring meetings, classes or shows of interest to professional or hobbyist woodworkers are invited to submit items to: Calendar, Woodshop News, 10 Bokum Road, Essex, CT 06426; editorial@woodshopnews.com. Include name, dates, location, description and contact information.

The complete national calendar of events is updated monthly at www.woodshopnews.com.

— Compiled by Jennifer Hicks

COLORADO

Feb. 1-3, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the Merchandise Mart in Denver. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

FLORIDA

Monthly — Woodcrafters Club of Tampa meets every third Thursday evening at 3809 W. Broad St. in Tampa. For information, visit www.tampawoodcrafters.org.

Feb. 7-18, 2013 — Florida Handcrafted Furniture Show at the Florida State Fair in Tampa. Exhibitors must have a Florida mailing address. Entry deadline is Dec. 15. Contact Vernon Blackadar at vesablackadar@msn.com.

March 15-17, 2013 — The Woodworking Show

at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

IDAHO

Feb. 23-24, 2013 — The 2013 Idaho Artistry in Wood Show invites competitors from all skill levels to submit their wood carving, turning, scroll work and fine wood working for display and judging. The show will feature demonstrations, vendors, raffles, an auction and banquet as well as the opportunity for artists to sell their work. Location: Boise Hotel and Conference Center in Boise. Contact: www.idahoartistryinwood.org

INDIANA

Jan. 18-20, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

ILLINOIS

Feb. 8-10, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the Gateway Center in Collinsville. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

KANSAS

Jan. 25-27, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the International Trade Center in Overland Park. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

MAINE

Feb. 11-May 3, 2013 — Twelve-week intensive

program at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport. Course provides a hands-on woodworking experience in a fully equipped shop with daily personal instruction. Fee: \$6,950. www.woodschooll.org

MARYLAND

Jan. 4-6, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

MASSACHUSETTS

Jan. 11-13, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

NEW JERSEY

Feb. 22-24, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the Garden State Exhibit Center in Somerset. www.thewoodworkingshows.com

RHODE ISLAND

Dec. 7-9 — Foundry Artists Holiday Show. Join 65 talented artists showcasing their work. Location: Pawtucket Armory Arts Center, Pawtucket. www.foundryshow.com

WISCONSIN

Feb. 15-17, 2013 — The Woodworking Show at the Wisconsin Expo Center in West Allis. www.thewoodworkingshows.com **W**

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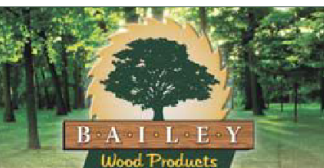
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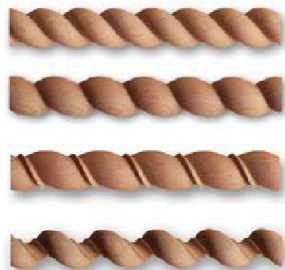


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Made in Vermont

Vermont craftsmen recently exhibited their design entries in the Vermont Woodworking Design Competition, held Sept. 29-30 at the ninth annual Vermont Fine Furniture & Woodworking Festival at the Union Arena in Woodstock, Vt.

The contest gives the public an opportunity to see the broad scope of work designed and created by state artisans. This year's judges were Robert Fletcher, co-founder of the Vermont Woodworking School; Dave Sellers, owner of Sellers & Co. in Warren, Vt.; and James Murray, executive director of design and product development at Simon Pearce Glass.



(Clockwise from top) "Winter Woods," by Jim Maas of Birds in Wood in Morgan, won third place in the carving category; David Hurwitz Originals won the custom furniture category for this chest of drawers; a cherry bowl with black inlay from Green Mountain Woodturning, a winning entry in the custom woodenware category.

Pieces were judged based on the quality of the craftsmanship and the innovativeness of the design. The competition was open only to those pieces that are designed and made in Vermont.

"I thought the work was excellent. The quality of craftsmanship in Vermont has gone way up in the last 20 years. Ten to 20 years ago, there were a lot of people who were just beginning woodworking and their craftsmanship was weak. But now there are a substantial number of people with a very high skill level," says Sellers.

The contest was judged in the following categories: custom furniture, production furniture, custom woodenware, production woodenware and carvings. There was also a student/apprentice category for those 18 and over and enrolled in woodworking school.

The first-place winners were:

- Custom furniture: David Hurwitz Originals in Randolph
- Production furniture: ClearLake Furniture of Ludlow
- Custom furniture: David Hurwitz Originals in Randolph
- Custom woodenware: Green Mountain Woodturning in Ryegate

- Production woodenware: Maple Landmark Woodcraft in Middlebury
- Carvings: My Minds Design in Grafton
- Student/apprentice: Alicia Dietz, Vermont Woodworking School

For a complete list of winners, visit www.vermontwooddesigns.org.

— Jennifer Hicks

60 Grit

Rough humor by Steve Spiro



Len was definitely aging.

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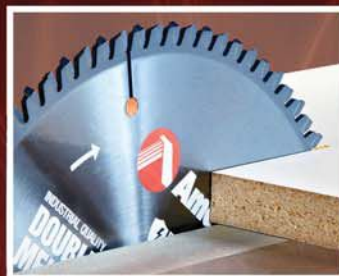
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