

Artisans Quarterly Review

H A N D C R A F T E D C U S T O M W O O D W O R K I N G

And we have 2012

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I T ' S A L L A B O U T T H E W O O D

Where do we begin? Our agenda for 2012 is to go into entirely new directions with our furniture designs, all holding to an extremely high level of unique quality and original concepts.

We are buying, trading, and scavenging lumber from around the world and around our neighborhoods. We're expanding our footprint into concrete furniture and we are adding a little steel into the media mix. Glass will be more prominent and perhaps even some acrylic and other interesting inclusions.

We'd say we're not playing games, but ya know that we are! Gaming will be big this year. We're opening the games with a feature article debuting a very cool commission completed this January. This commission segways us into our plans to offer high end solid surface chess and backgammon boards and some one-of-a-kind rustic gaming tables.

Not to say we won't be doing restorations and taking on our usual commissions, but unless we build into a new portfolio we can't enter new markets. So expect more spec pieces this year. We'll start by showing you some of the material we have on hand and, in doing so, we are baiting you to commission something out of some amazingly unique specimens of wood!

So in summary, the game plan for 2012 is to make it about the wood! And you never know, perhaps a few more options for some fun marketing stunts and interesting events. As long as you all keep bringing us interesting things to restore and following through with your ideas for commissions, we'll keep cranking out these newsletters to brag about what we do!

“ T H E B L E N D I N G O F A R T & W I N E F O R 2 0 1 2 I S J U N E 2 / 3



Covert Project
Alert!



Artisans is partnering with members of the [Delaware River Valley Wine Trail](#) to present the second annual ["Blending of Art and Wine"](#) this June 2nd and 3rd. This year's event will be presented on the grounds of [Hopewell Valley Vineyards](#). All members of the trail will be open for business at their own vineyard, but will also be onsite offering tastings along-side artwork, music, food, and fun at HVV.

Last year was an experiment, we had sixteen very talented artists participate and the hypothesis that wine and art would combine wonderfully was proven. This year we're greatly expanding the venue.

The call is out for artists of all mediums! Contact [Artisans of the Valley](#) for information on representing your work at this event. We're seeking creative talents in any medium, furniture, paintings, fashion, jewelry, pottery, glass, etc. Artists are welcome to offer their work for sale onsite or for delivery after the event.

The event will be held rain or shine! - Children are free, wine tasting \$20, non-alcoholic pass is \$10. Special previews or after hours events may be offered to the press and trade professionals.

[Click here to download the "The Blending of Art & Wine 2012" - Event Flyer](#)



LET THE GAMES FLIP!

Our feature article in this issue is about an original design custom solid walnut chess and backgammon table. Our theme is lumber from an old sea chest converted into a game table. This piece is designed to be something contrived and created by a crafty ship builder; we're thinking perhaps 150 years ago. From that perspective, it stood the test of time and the open sea pretty well!

American black walnut makes up the bulk of the table while the integrated custom rotational game board includes materials from some of the ship's journeys using European Swiss pear, Australian leopardwood, and solid black West African Gaboon ebony.



Custom hand hammered hardware by [Horton Brasses](#) provides a functional set of miniature cannon trunions allowing the game board to rotate revealing alternating play surfaces. Horton also provided the banding, rings, and iron drawer pulls.

The gold and white and pink and brown dresses featured in this photo shoot are by Pamela Ptak; modeled by April Mancos and Gina Michalski. Pamela's bio is featured on page nine. Tuxedos provided by Chazamataz Formal Wear; modeled by Christian Robinson and Erik Hendrickson.

The chess set is by Jaques of London, on loan from one of our client's private collections. Our photo shoot for the gaming table took place at James Lear Photography; Jim's bio is on page ten.

The wine and champagne were offered by Hopewell Valley Vineyards; also our host for "[The Blending of Art and Wine.](#)" Rumor has it that Artisans will be bringing along a few original design gaming tables to this year's event on June 2nd and 3rd.



LET THE GAMES FLIP!

This unique commission boasts a double sided game board mounted on Horton Brasses hand hammered miniature cannon style trunions. The board rotates within an axis centered inside the gaming table and locks in position with two simple pull pins chained to the surface of the table. The pins are precision cut to ensure the board sits level and perfectly still. Any vibration would interrupt the game; Horton's attention to detail in this area clearly hit the mark.

For More information on Horton Brasses visit <http://www.horton-brasses.com>



LET THE GAMES FLIP!

Showing pieces in progress offers a glimpse into the creative methods, the efforts that go into the design and fabrication process. Shown far right, note the thickness of the ebony strip to the right side of the plywood substrait. We used a top quality 13 layer birch plywood laminated using 1/4" solid surface components for the chess and backgammon boards. Lamination is secured with polyurethane construction adhesive, which is gap filling, bonds to anything permanently, and flexible.

Once we leveled the surface at least 3/16" solid wood remains, this is no veneer! We built these boards to withstand generations of use. The chess board was hand cut and assembled in strips. The backgammon board was cut for us by Dana Osterman of The Sign Smith using a computer controlled system. We can now order the components for a backgammon board in any scale or material.

Artisans will now accept commissions for standalone or integrated chess and backgammon boards. Please contact us to discuss your ideas for heirloom quality gaming!



AN UPGRADE FOR THE SEQUENCE CHEST



Artisans received a commission in 2006 for a chest style gaming table. This piece gave us the opportunity for creativity and we created a functional puzzle (box) chest. It houses wine, glasses, game pieces, and requires a specific sequence of steps to open a dozen or so hidden secret compartments.

Circa 2006 we were not setup to produce game boards, so we incorporated a commercially produced veneer chessboard as the centerpiece. Long story short, we made a mistake. The board began to separate and lost its appeal; we decided to replace it with one of our new 3/16th boards.

Timing coordinated with another game table commission, so into the game board business we went! We actually made five boards in our original run in Swiss Pear, Leopardwood, and Ebony. So let the official record, the internet, show that our first board is double sided (chess / backgammon), the second board is framed in walnut and will be the centerpiece of our 2006 Sequence Chest.

The third and fourth boards will be incorporated into cedar rounds, shown at the bottom of the page. The fifth board is a surprise, sort of a little screw up on our part that we are creatively putting to use. We'll feature this unique, artistically crooked board in our next issue.



CRIBBAGE REVISITED

We can't say we have a lot experience with creating cribbage boards, but we have the basic concept down. This board is a custom piece

designed by one of our clients. If you're looking for one-of-a-kind Artisans can deliver. We can custom design hand made or computer cut play areas to provide a rustic or detailed perfect layout.

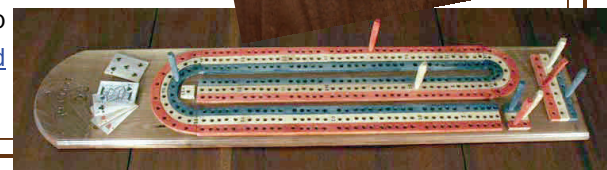
The board is solid walnut, the cards are hand painted with strips of hand painted maple for the pegs. The pegs themselves are hand carved jacks. Finished in a tung oil varnish the board will provide generations of play.



GAMING TABLES TO BE!

We, well Eric, obtained nine cedar rounds! The game plan for these game tables is simplicity. Cedar is basic, lightweight, and will make a great backdrop for an exotic wood game board.

We will use simple metal pedestal bases at coffee, dining, and bar heights. The first two tables will incorporate two of our leopardwood and pear combinations with ebony boarders. Look for the first in this series of nine tables to be for sale this June at the ["Blending of Art and Wine."](#)



375 YEAR OLD OAK BIBLE BOXES

Those following our projects may have remembered we posted a few photos of some 375 year old quarter sawn white oak. Well, now that the holidays have come and gone we can reveal some of the finished products. Shown here are 11 (rumor is there's one extra that has a little error in it ...) quarter sawn oak bible boxes. Custom made as a matching set each coming entirely from wood harvested from a 375 year old white oak tree.

These boxes are configured with floating panel tops and bottoms, mitered corners with spline reinforcements, wooden hinges, and a hand carved cross in the center of each lid. A very simple design using the beauty of the wood enhanced by a shellac and [Waterlox](#) tung oil finish.



THE BOX REVIEW

We've made dozens of bible boxes over the years, a review of some of our past projects seems appropriate after completing the set above. Boxes are available in oak, pine, walnut, cherry, maple, poplar, and in exotic woods. Shown in this group are some of our classic designs as well as a Friesian desk box and a music box. We offer an array of configurations for single storage needs or intricate compartments for jewelry or gaming pieces. We will design the perfect personalized gift!



THIS OLD SIDEBOARD

This project is going back about five or six years, but we haven't shared it yet so why not showcase a really great transition?

This is one of those classic situations where a great piece of furniture ended up in the garage as a workbench. When we picked it up, it was covered in oil, grime, and dirt. Generally it was falling apart, the old hinges were completely rusted out, the knobs were gone.

We soaked this piece in a bath of methylene chloride for quite some time, removing the old paint and slowly degreasing it. Getting the oil stains out took a bit of chemical finesse. The piece was broken down, doors and the case disassembled, and everything was reassembled with fresh modern adhesives.

Quite a bit of sanding and scraping, then golden oak stain, blonde shellac, and Waterlox tung oil brought the piece back to life. Another great example of a piece that could have easily been cast to a landfill that is now ready to serve for several future generations!



PAMELA PTAK "WEARABLE SCULPTURE"

Fashion designer Pamela Ptak graciously provided us with two of her original dresses for our gaming table photo shoot. We are proud that Pam found our artwork worthy to intertwine with her talents!

"Pamela's marriage of the art & science of fashion creates a line which resonates in the heart & soul. Function and form become wearable sculpture." Her philosophy in fashion design matches ours in furniture design. We create heirloom quality artistic and functional furniture; sculpture for your home or office.

As artists we know our niche, in our case we know furniture. Incorporating Pam's eye for fashion into our photo shoot allowed us to reach a new tier with our image. Our clients demand the best!

Stay tuned for an interview with Pamela in our upcoming issues. We're working on a topic!



Photos by James Lear, Models April Mancos (Gold & Wine) and Gina Michialski (Pink & Brown), Hair & Makeup by Krisi Harris - Wearing custom couture silk & brocade evening wear .

Below Eric Hendrickson & Christian Robinson model classic ChazMaTazz Tuxedos.

We finalized our plans for this photo shoot only a few days before it happened. We greatly appreciated the 24 hour turnaround when we needed two men fitted for our last minute black tie event!

For the last 35 years, ChazMaTazz has maintained a master tailor on their premises to ensure your rental fits like you own it. They keep a great inventory of tuxedos available for rental within the hour.

Welcoming big, tall, and athletic builds with the assurance of a proper fit. Independently owned and operated for that personal touch. So of course the tuxes fit perfectly for Eric Hendrickson and Christian Robinson (right) and the shoot went well!

<http://www.chazmatazz.com>

CHAZMATAZZ FORMAL WEAR



JAMES LEAR PHOTOGRAPHY

James Lear has been in the photography business for 35 years. His life in photography was inspired by his sister, a professional photographer at an early age, by helping her with retouching photos back in the age of the negatives and altering finished prints.

Jim soon graduated from hiding out in dark rooms and began pursuing his passion behind the lens. Today, although he remains a lover of film, Jim is entrenched and experienced in the digital age.

His professional experience includes all facets of the art: portraiture, legal, entertainment, editorial, business, weddings and glamour. He loves his interactions with people the most, seeking to capture the unique moments of life.

A member of WPPI (Wedding and Portrait Photographers International) for many years, Jim has won several awards for his work and has several of his photos published in various magazines. Jim looks forward to the future and work that has yet to be accomplished. **Contact Lear Photography at: 609-882-2202**



[Silver Lily Necklace by Jennifer Smith-Righter](#)
Model April Mancos

**HOPEWELL VALLEY
VINEYARDS IS
SHIPPING!**

HVV is gearing up to provide their wines across the nation. We've become rather addicted to Hopewell Valley Vineyard's wine and pizza in the past few years. The White Merlot is our general go-to wine, however the sparkling red has recently jumped up to our attention for a great table wine option.

Go for the Barbara if you like a more full bodied option, and of course the Merlot. New Jersey finally joined the 21st century to allow such basic necessities to be shipped and removed their blockage on our state's vineyards to participate in free market commerce! So gracious of our great people's republic of a state huh?

<http://www.hopewellvalleyvineyards.com/>

Photos by James Lear



MIXING PALETS

Wineries Toast Creativity with Mixing Palettes: An Art and Wine Weekend

Central NJ-April 14th-15th, 12-5pm- Wineries of the Delaware River Valley Wine Trail are hosting a weekend for artists, art lovers, and wine drinkers. Each of the four vineyards will feature unique art events including live painting, instructional demonstrations, and exhibitions by artists and artisans. In appreciation of those who create, anyone who presents an "Artist ID" will receive discounts on wine. An "Artist ID" could be anything that "proves" you are an artist, from a business card to paint covered jeans. All of the art events are free for visitors to enjoy in the relaxing environment that each winery offers.

Wineries: Unionville Vineyards, Hopewell Valley Vineyards, Terhune Orchards Vineyards and Winery, and Old York Cellars.



Photo by Henry Scweber

For more information visit www.facebook.com/DelawareRiverValleyWineTrail

MODERN OAK TABLE REFINISH



This Bonizzoli dining set is not an antique or a collectible restoration; it's another great example of how proper refinishing applies to high quality modern furniture.

This table is hollow core rustic oak with solid wood legs and solid oak chairs. Refinishing in Waterlox tung oil revitalized it to better than its original finish, and now it is ready for daily use and future generations.

Most lacquer, varnish, urethane, and acrylic finishes only last 10-30 years. Waterlox tung oil is an heirloom finish, and it looks great on pieces like this! We can restore and revitalize with Waterlox



THANKS FOR GETTING US TANKED "AGAIN!"

The pilot six episode series of [Animal Planet's](#) series "[Tanked](#)" by [Nancy Glass Productions](#) featuring the crew from [Acrylic Tank Manufacturing](#) of Las Vegas, NV was a success! They've signed on for 20 more episodes, season two!

Artisans is called in to join the "Lifestyles of the Fish and Famous" entourage providing a custom built cabinet surround for a unique appliance project. That's ALL we can reveal so far until the air date of our next episode.

Although, if some of you may be traveling through Long Island and happen to stumble upon [Plesser's Appliance](#). The inadvertently find yourself with a sneak preview ... we really couldn't be blamed for leaking any secrets.

Thanks to ATM, [Nancy Glass Productions](#), and [Plesser's](#) for their hospitality! Watch "[Tanked](#)" on [Animal Planet](#) Saturday's at 9pm; season two is beginning April 14th!

[Watch the "Tanked" Trailer!](#)



Wayde King, Heather King, Eric Saperstein
Michael Pietras, Brett Raymer
February 2012 at Plesser's Appliance Babylon, NY

WOOD SCAVENGING ... OFF TO THE MILL!



So we've been busy scavenging wood from a variety of sources, and the net results are proving to be quite interesting. So far we salvaged a few unique trees otherwise destined for firewood, chippers, or landfills. We're implementing a trees-to-treasure program; if you lost a tree to storm fall or just have one that needs to be taken out it can be turned into heirloom furniture and other unique useful products.

If you have followed us you will have seen that last summer we picked up several mulberry logs. Shown above left are the slabs cut from those logs before drying and surfacing, half the pile is ours; soon we'll be ready to make furniture!

Our ideas so far include expanding our modern portfolio with a mulberry and steel trestle table with matching benches. We'll post dimensions and images of flitches available for commission on our blog soon. The pieces we create on "speculation" will be available for purchase.

Shown left is a pallet of Osage-Orange. Osage is a hard dense material that is extremely strong, durable, and even flexible. It's great for tool handles, kitchen utensils, cutting boards, and turnings of all sorts. Osage is even prized as the master of wood for hand made bows; we're hoping to get an opportunity to work with some local experts on a few personal bows soon.



The Osage-Orange tree, also known as the hedge apple, was essential to farming the vast open spaces as a young United States formed. The Osage-Orange is native to a small area in eastern Texas, southeastern Oklahoma, and southwestern Arkansas occupied by Osage Indians. Early settlers transplanted the

tree as they built their farms discovering the tree tolerated poor soils, extreme heat, and strong winds with no serious insect or disease problems. The Osage became the living fence (hedge) of the Midwest. When properly planted and intertwined it provided an impenetrable thorny barrier. Generations of farmers relied on this technique until barbed wire became the easier and faster alternative. Even then the Osage proved its value as a rot resistant fence post to hold the wires in place.

The Osage-Orange is dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers are produced, usually in May or June, on separate trees. The female tree then generates a green "monkey brain" or wrinkled green orange looking inedible fruit. One usage for the offspring of the Osage is insect repellent. Placing the otherwise nuisance droppings around your foundation or in the basement tends to ward off many invasive insects. They are also often an irritant to the skin, and the thorns are quite nasty so be careful when handling these trees.

Artisans is looking forward to using our stockpile of Osage-Orange this spring. We're also looking to harvest a few more nuisance and storm blown trees soon, so if you have any Osage or other interesting trees we may be able to salvage let us know!

INTERESTING OSAGE FACTS



Contact us if you need Osage Orange Lumber!

WHAT DO WE DO WITH OUR WOOD?!



Stumbling onto these two cherry slabs was a morning find for Eric, another fine example of how every trip to the lumber yard is a costly one! These slabs are destined to become a single table, merged by an artistic structure of reclaimed beams supported by four seriously substantial pyramid legs.

We're still arguing over the final design, no wait we'll call it debating! Our plan is to have this finished piece completed and available for purchase at ["The Blending of Art & Wine"](#) this coming June at Hopewell Valley Vineyards.

Contact us to discuss custom commissions; we'll work with you to find the perfect match in a unique slab or flitch for your personalized project. If you're really interested in this table, contact us VERY soon. There's only four more slabs available from this tree so feel free to quickly commission a matching set of three of these tables!

PAULOWNIA PENDING

Paulownia is the wood of the Japanese emperors. A species native to China, it is now cultivated in the United States as a highly sustainable material. Why so highly sustainable? It grows amazingly fast. This massive slab came from a tree that is only 25-30 years old. The photo below of Michael Pietras lofting the slab with one hand isn't a trick either. The wood is very light and very strong, when properly finished the surfaces are durable yet barely weigh a fraction of what you would think.

This piece is going to be a one-of-a-kind desk, a unique slab destined to become a functional and artistic modern work of art. We're not completely sure of the design for the base just yet, it will likely be either sapele or concrete. It probably will have one simple storage drawer and maintain a very open feel. This particular slab has an outstanding grain pattern, and a void that happens to fall into place to provide visual interest to the surface. We're scoping out to stockpile more unique paulownia soon!



WHAT? TOY TRUCKS IN ... AFGHANISTAN ????

LumberJocks is basically, well FaceBook for woodworkers. This social networking niche site is a virtual woodworking club, a venue for like minded wood nuts (or say Lumber Jocks) to venue

their projects, discuss products, generally show and/or occasionally mock each other's mistakes. Amateurs and professionals share banter and exchange knowledge and ideas.

We've come across a few interesting characters on this site, one of whom is Doug Perkins. Doug is a retired electrical contractor, well temporarily retired. When his retirement plans didn't pan out he found himself facing the challenge of reestablishing his career at 59 years old. In 2010 he accepted a contract in Afghanistan, his position allows him private living quarters and a great deal of free time to kill being away from his family.

Doug's ingenuity, disinterest in television, and isolation inspired him to build; what we found on LumberJocks is the net result. Created from scrap wood, random parts, and materials he shipped himself from home is an intricately detailed fleet of vehicles, construction equipment, trains, and farm implements. Keep in mind these are made from pallets, crates, discarded plywood, etc.

Projects like this are especially fascinating to us. Even though we are artists and we get to be creative, we work on commission. We don't get to spend months building a toy truck just because we can. Doug gets to work on these simply for as he states it "A child's smile is payment enough."

He has 30 months left on this tour in Afghanistan. We're thinking we're gonna send him some wood, sit back, and be really curious to see what he creates next!

[Check out Doug on LumberJocks!](#)



ARTISANS OF THE VALLEY

HAND CRAFTED CUSTOM WOODWORKING



[Artisans of the Valley](#) offers museum quality period reproductions and original modern designs by commission, We provide antique restoration/conservation services, hand carving, modern furniture refinishing, onsite furniture repair, hand made walking sticks, and educational programs. Our website is now over 250 pages, including galleries, feature articles, educational sections, company background, and our new adventure album section. We extend an open invitation to explore our site, and contact us directly with any inquiries or questions you may have.

Eric M. Saperstein is Master of Artisans, Owner, Webmaster, Editor, Bookkeeper, Buyer, Office Manager, Legal Pit-bull, and he's in charge of vacuuming the shop: eric@artisansofthevalley.com

Stanley D. Saperstein, Master Craftsmen, Author, & Historian founded Artisans of the Valley and spawned Eric in 1973. Stanley offers historic presentations, impressions, and various lecture series ranging from Civil and Revolutionary War, American Folk Art, and Interactive Role Play of Characters ... sometimes trying to reenact American Chopper episodes in the shop: woodcarver@artisansofthevalley.com



**Michael Pietras, Eric Saperstein, Alicia Friday
Producer Lawrence Greenberg, Lead Actors Kirk
Patron and Michael Markiewicz**

C O N G R A T S T O V E L V E T E L V I S !

Our friend and Artisans official Executive Producer, Director, Camera Man, and Editor Lawrence Greenberg (The zombie next to the Velvet Elvis) has been entrenched in a project developing for the last year or so called "The Velvet Elvis." Directed by Jeff Stewart and written by Brenton Lonkey the production features demons, serial killers, hell's whispers, mangers, dead actresses, and of course our friend Kirk Pontron the black (Velvet) Elvis.

"The resulting amalgamation of horror, comedy, and action-adventure is a genre-bender that Mr. Stewart says is too broad to put an easy label on. "It's 'Pulp Fiction' meets 'Bubba Ho-tep' and 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' (the television series, not the movie) meets 'Superfly,'" he says. It's biggest influence, "Buffy," is "where the DNA comes from." - Scott Morgan on centraljersey.com

Artisans was represented by Eric & Mike at the national premier screening event this March; we extend our congratulations to Lawrence, Jeff and their cast and crew for bringing art and movie making to Trenton, NJ, for the successful completion of this full length feature film ... AND ... Amazon selected this film as one of two for their new "Test Film" experiment. Help support these independent film makers by writing a review on the link below.

[Watch trailers and purchase this film through Amazon!](#)

2 0 1 2 W I L L W E M A K E I T T O Q 2 ?

Progressing towards June 2nd & 3rd - ["The Blending of Art & Wine 2012"](#)

Work Begins on Four Concrete Dovetail Benches; a Memorial Project

Tanked AGAIN - We'll be able to reveal our latest fishy project!

(Well maybe if our episode airs?!?)

Artisans Reality TV Demo Video - We'll have a public screening!

We promised we would be blending materials - well here it comes!

A Solid Walnut Blockfront Chest; Custom Commission

Pyramids ... for some reason we decided we like pyramids, more to follow!



Our studio hours are by appointment. Please call ahead!

Office Address: 60 Bakun Way Ewing, NJ 08638

Shop Address: 103 Corrine Drive Pennington, NJ 08534

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www.artisansofthevalley.com

**Don't forget TANKED! Season 2 Starts
Saturday April 14th @9pm EST on Animal Planet**

