

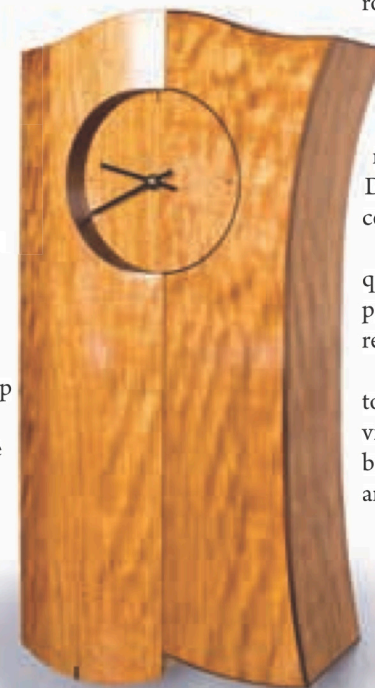


# The Wood Whisperer

Mike Korsak's handcrafted furniture has been featured in several prestigious museums along the East Coast.

BY MICHAEL BUZZELLI

*“I continued to find inspiration in wood, and was inspired by the process of creating things that are both beautiful and purposeful.”*



Korsak says, “I still use power tools, but the fitting and the finishing are where the hand tools come in. Only after discovering hand tools, and becoming infatuated with the precision and feel of working with them, did my desire to pursue furniture making as a career become evident.”

He’s built a beautiful rack for the aforementioned hand tools, which are reverentially displayed hanging on the wall above his workbench. On the rack rests a vintage hand plane that belonged to his grandfather. The hand-held device with a large flat blade smooths the wood, and produces curly shavings. He cites his grandfather as his earliest influence.

“My passion for wood developed when I was young. I was inspired by watching my grandfather create things from wood.” His grandfather was a utilitarian carpenter. Korsak later learned to approach the wood differently as art.

“Wood is my material of choice. I’ve always had an aptitude for working with my hands.” The furniture artist does commissioned work and speculative pieces. The commissioned work sells all over the country, but is best known on the East Coast. He works in a variety of wood types, lovingly describing each one for its own unique properties. He says, “Plywood is not good for fine furniture. It’s not aesthetically pleasing.”

He picks up a piece of East Indian rosewood and peels away strips of it with the antique hand plane. He smells the wood shaving; it leaves a slight chocolate aroma in the woodshop. Korsak explains, “I’m working a lot with the East Indian rosewood. Currently I’m working with Douglas fir, and I really like Port Orford cedar.”

Korsak describes in detail the individual qualities of the unique species of wood. His passion for each can be seen in every lovingly rendered creation, both sturdy and delicate.

Korsak says, “I had to ship off a piece to the Fuller Craft Museum. I provided a video on how to unpack and repack the box for the museum curators so that my artwork will return unscathed...I continue to find furniture making a rewarding and challenging pursuit – one where skilled hands are as important as determination, focus and thought.” ■

For more of Mike Korsak's work, go to [mikekorsak.com](http://mikekorsak.com)

The more you look at Mike Korsak’s furniture, the more beautiful it becomes. Woodworker Korsak has an eye for details. He is meticulous. As you inspect each piece, a new detail emerges. The wood is smooth. Two types of wood flow together seamlessly; each piece is rare and beautiful. Even though he is still a young man, he has been working with wood for a long time.

Korsak says, “Working with wood remained a central theme in my life throughout high school, college, and various positions held after college as a timber framer, timber frame designer and carpenter, among others... As my experience as a

furniture maker grew, I continued to find inspiration in wood, and was inspired by the process of creating things that are both beautiful and purposeful.”

The artist is always experimenting with new techniques. He explains, “With each piece I continue to learn and grow as a woodworker. I continue to increase the complexity of each design.”

His furniture has been featured in some prestigious museums on the East Coast. He currently has work at the Fuller Craft Museum in Massachusetts and a clock at the Pennsylvania State Museum. The clock won an honorable mention in a juried Art of the State competition.

Korsak says, “I’m always asking myself, ‘How does the look of a single element affect the overall piece?’”

Walking into his workshop on Saxonburg Boulevard, located outside the entrance to Hartwood Acres, you’ll find a vast array of old-fashioned tools. The artisan uses a mix of old-fashioned and modern techniques to create art from wood.