

bowled over
PARTY PUNCH

rise to the occasion
4 SEASONS BAKERY

ditch the dip
OFFICE POTLUCK

FEAST

Inspired Food Culture | **Saint Louis**

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**ELEVATED
SEASONAL
COOKING**

DAVIES BENCH

WRITTEN BY **Erin Callier**

Just as Michelangelo's stone had a statue waiting to be discovered inside, the trees that woodworker David Stine sustainably harvests from his family's farm in Jersey County, Ill., are destined to become the custom furnishings he handcrafts with care. Available in a variety of local wood species, the Davies Bench is rustic yet refined - ideal for cozy family gatherings and holiday feasts.

\$2,750; David Stine Woodworking, stinewoodworking.com



Local designers suggest three dining tables to complement the rustic artfulness of this handcrafted bench:

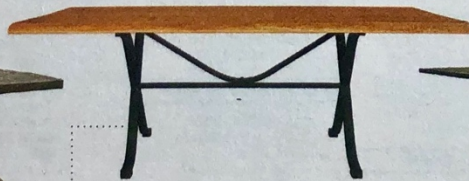


MANOR HOUSE TRESTLE TABLE

"I would pair the Davies Bench with this trestle table by Furniture Classics because the strength of the table complements the rustic style of the bench. I also love how the bench has a 'found' look and feel, and the wood is similar to that of the table, but they aren't matchy matchy."

Maureen Russell, Diane Breckenridge Interiors

\$2,630; Diane Breckenridge Interiors, 501 S. Lindbergh Blvd., Frontenac, breckenridgeinteriors.com



CHATHAM DINING TABLE AND BASE

"The Chatham Dining Table is a perfect match for the Davies Bench. Bucolic and elegant, the Chatham table is a stylish mix of rustic wood on a cast-iron base. Like the Davies Bench, each tabletop is custom-made with heirloom quality. The eclectic lines of both the tabletop and bench make for an exquisite combination."

Kathleen May, Arhaus Furniture

\$1,999 to \$2,899 depending on size and finish of tabletop; Arhaus Furniture, 1657 S. Brentwood Blvd., Brentwood, arhaus.com



ICONOCLAST TABLE

"The Iconoclast Table, with its deviation from the standard, four-legged design; asymmetry; and solid-wood elements, would complement the Davies Bench very well. While the bench is free-flowing, organic and conforms only to the will of the wood, the Iconoclast is strictly mathematical. The two complement one another in material but contradict one another in execution, which creates a dialogue that results in a pleasurable aesthetic experience."

Thomas Wall, Mitchell Wall Architecture and Design

\$7,600 for 110-by-42-inch table; IZM, izm.co

ONE ON ONE

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DAVID STINE OWNER, DAVID STINE WOODWORKING

WRITTEN BY BETHANY CHRISTO

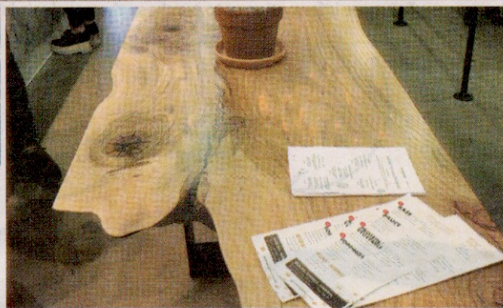
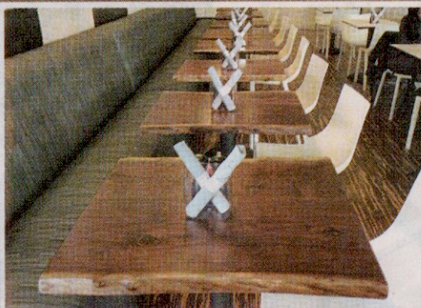
DOW, IL. Off 1,000 acres of land in southwestern Illinois, an hour north of Downtown St. Louis, David Stine operates a small, two-man shop where his specialty monolithic, single-slab dining room tables, coffee tables and beds, as well as desks, benches and headboards are crafted for **David Stine Woodworking**. He caters to both residential and commercial clients, the latter including Niche, Planter's House, Whitebox Eatery and the recently opened Porano Pasta in the St. Louis area and many high-end clients on the coasts. Ninety percent of the wood comes from Stine's 500 forested acres of Midwestern hardwoods - cherry, walnut, oak, white pine, sycamore and 50 other species - all harvested, logged and milled by Stine himself, the same way four generations did before him.

How did your business begin? I'd always worked with my hands growing up on a dairy farm in Illinois and logging our land's timber. I worked in high school and college as a diesel mechanic foreman. When I got to Washington, D.C. for law school, I got myself a small set of tools and found a small work space. I started making humidors for people in 1995 and

taking other wood work until moving back to the farm and the forest in 2002 with my family. **Why do you like creating pieces in large, monolithic style?** I'm a big guy, and I always like working big. I respond strongly to the boards coming right off the log without having to do a single thing to it. The best thing about living and working in the Midwest is that you have some of the best raw materials in the world right here: When you drag it out of the woods, it's almost done - the grain, the knots, the scars, the character. The differences are what make it interesting. **How are your pieces unique?** I've never sold a piece of furniture to anyone. People fall in love with it, and then they buy it. I can't talk you into this stuff - you either respond to it or you don't. We pick the slab of lumber together; we talk about shapes, sizes, colors, bases, finishes, everything. I've seen the same style of table look fantastic in a Greek revival dining room with padded chairs and also in a super-modern, sleek, stainless steel and glass and in a super-modern apartment in SoHo. **Tell us about the forest.** I probably have 10,000 slabs of lumber, dry and ready to go, sitting here in my shop, and I probably have five options for what you're looking for. I take whatever falls, whatever

died - I'm not out there cutting down the best stuff. I was taught to use what you need and leave the rest for the next guy. That way, it will always be possible to make a living off the land. It's not a hobby for me. It's a way of life. **Tell us about your most recent St. Louis project with Porano Pasta.** [Chef-owner] Gerard [Craft] and I speak the same language - he understands that I have to make a living with this, as well, but we're both trying to achieve a common goal. We both want our clients' experience to [be to] leave happy. Gerard and his team picked all the slabs out for Niche. [At Porano], we worked together to come up with pieces that could be easily reproduced at other locations across the country. I used Midwest mixed oak for two- and four-top random-width tables with a straight edge, as well as the 15-foot-long but really narrow (30-inch) ordering table and a single-slab, 14-foot-by-36-inch-wide community table. The cool thing is that they're sequential slabs - the ordering table is No. 3 from a log, and the community table is No. 4, so they have a really similar shape and color.

David Stine Woodworking, by appointment, Dow, Illinois, 618.946.1413, stinewoodworking.com



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