

MAY/JUNE 2019

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fruit of the wood

For this southern Illinois craftsman, every furniture piece begins with a walk in the woods.

HIS NECK OF THE WOODS In junior high, David Stine rejected the cheap wood in shop class. Instead, he brought in cherry planks harvested from his family's dairy farm in tiny Dow, Illinois. On the same property, he helped cut and mill trees to build barns as a teen. Granddad Stumpe taught him to repair antiques. When David went to law school, he built cigar humidors as a side gig. And ultimately, his first love won out. He launched David Stine Furniture in 1997 and within one year, gave up his job as an attorney. The decision sent him back to land that has been in his family four generations, and it stoked his farm-boy work ethic. "If I'm not exhausted," he says, "I haven't had a good day."

OUT ON A LIMB David specializes in harvesting damaged trees from native forest. He turns them into custom furniture that showcases natural shapes and colors: single-slab headboards that embrace a trunk's live-edge contour, tables and benches with dark knots and bark. After placing an order, customers can visit his land for inspiration. "I can twist wood into any shape you want," he says. "But isn't it more fun to find the piece of wood and let it be what it wants to be?"



↑
shop talk

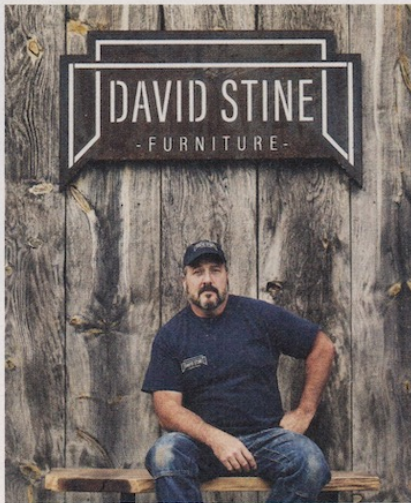
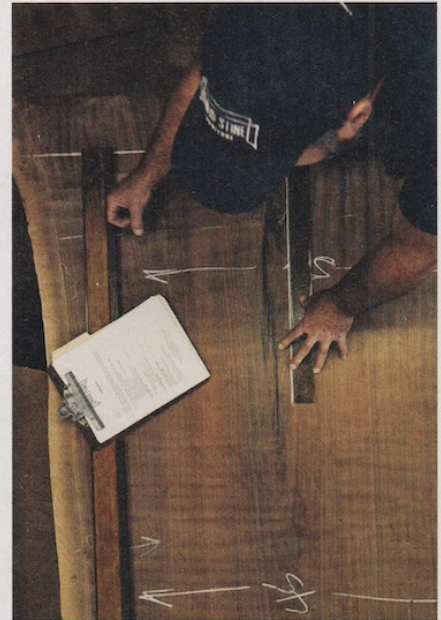
To view samples of David's work or begin a consultation for a one-of-a-kind piece of furniture, visit stinewoodworking.com.

here | now
tastemaker



“There’s no hiding the ball, no faux finishing, no trendy this and that. It’s just beautiful, natural furniture.”

David Stine
OWNER-FOUNDER



MIDWEST IS BEST David’s work earned Best in Show for sustainable design last year from the New York Metro Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers. The secret? “It’s honest and straightforward, and it’s made to last forever,” he says. “There’s no hiding the ball, no faux finishing, no trendy this and that.” His favorite projects are massive, single-slab creations, like an 18-foot walnut table in his shop. Recently, he turned trees killed by emerald ash borer beetles into an 80-foot bar at The Midwestern Meat and Drink (new this year in St. Louis). “We used almost every stick of ash and just made something lasting and beautiful out of it.”



ON THE JOB

Hover your phone’s camera to meet David and watch the wood chips fly.

PHOTOGRAPH: TABLE COURTESY OF DAVID STINE FURNITURE