

Home style

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Loft
living

in the River Bend

Former lawyer 'wood' rather make tables

For Dave Stine, creating a piece of furniture is more than just carving a piece of wood; it's about the entire process in developing the handcrafted pieces.

"My design process begins in the woods," Dave said. "As I fell a tree, I am always inspired by the tree's stature, by its perfections and imperfections and by how and where it grew."

Dave started working with wood as a child. He said he doesn't remember a time he hasn't.

"My father and grandfather taught me everything I know," he said.

Dave, 36, grew up in Jersey County. However, after his freshman year of high school, his family moved to Pennsylvania.

He attended Penn State University, graduating in 1993, then went to law school at George Washington University in Washington D.C.

Dave graduated law school in 1997 and worked nine months as an attorney before deciding he wanted



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to dedicate himself full-time to his craft. In 1998 he started Stine Woodworking.

In 2002, he and his wife, Stephanie Abbajay, moved to a 40-acre farm in Dow.

Dave said he produces handcrafted furniture and cabinetry using natural materials from forests that are responsibly maintained for sustainable growth. He personally selects, harvests and saws the lumber.

Dave has produced furniture and cabinetry for private individuals, designers, construction firms, corporations and other businesses. Some of his clients include I.M Pei, a Pritzker-Prize winning Chinese-American architect; architect Hugh Jacobsen; Crate & Barrel owners Gordon and Carole Segal; actor and director Chris Eigeman, who had recurring roles on "Malcolm in the Middle" and "Gilmore Girls"; and chef Ann Cashion and Johnny Fulchino, owners of Cashion's Eat Place and Johnny's Half Shell in Washington D.C.

Dave is producing a new line of furniture inspired by nature.

"I like to express myself with natural forms," he said.

He harvests trees native to Illinois. He uses oak, walnut, cherry, sycamore and maple.

Whenever Dave goes into the woods, he



envisions a finished piece. He said, however, that it's not until he saws the wood and the cross sections are revealed that he can actually determine what piece of furniture it will become.

"The wood always speaks to me and is the first and most important step in the creative process," he said.

His collection includes benches, tables, beds and bookcases.

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A favorite piece that he's created is a wave bench. The double-seat trestle bench is made of American black walnut and white oak.

Dave is also proud of the fact that earlier this year he took second place in the Madison County Arts Council exhibition at Jacoby Arts Center in Alton.

"It's my first award," he said.

To find out more about Dave's furniture, visit www.stinewood-working.com

Above: Artist David Stine of Stine Furniture LLC, looks over a piece of walnut after running it through a jointer in his workshop in rural Dow. Stine creates furniture and artwork that accentuate the natural aesthetics of the wood. Left: Stine will frequently start with fallen trees and turn them into creations like the bench pictured here. Stine uses techniques such as leaving tree bark on areas of his furniture and using linseed oil, which is lighter than most wood finishes, to help keep a natural appearance to the wood.

— Photos by JIM BOWLING