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True to form

Attorney leaves D.C. to follow passion for carpentry

By LAURA PRANAITIS

The Telegraph

When Dave Stine realized that practicing law in a big city just wasn't the right fit for him, he decided it was time to get back to his roots.

Stine decided to leave his job as an attorney and restaurant owner in Washington, D.C., and in 2002 moved his family back to his hometown of Dow. He now lives with his wife and children in the small, rural Jersey County community and owns his own custom woodworking business.

"I actually started the business while we were still in Washington, D.C., but the more I thought about it, the more I wanted to come back home," he said. "My wife and I had started our family and we didn't really want to raise our kids in a place like Washington, D.C. I'm not against big cities or anything, but I knew that this area is a great place to raise a family."

Stine grew up on a small dairy farm in Dow but eventually left middle America to attend college at Penn State University and law school in the nation's capital. He practiced law for about one year before realizing his love of carpentry and working with his hands was his true calling.

"Growing up on a dairy farm, we did a lot of work and we did everything ourselves. It was a whole different world from practicing law," he said. "I've always worked with my hands and wanted to get



For The Telegraph/JAMES B. RITTER

Dow native Dave Stine recently moved back from Washington, D.C., and started a custom furniture business off Bartlett Road in Dow. Stine was a lawyer and restaurant owner in Washington but decided to come back to Jersey County to raise his family.

back to that."

Stine's version of carpentry is more than just cutting wood and hammering nails — it's an art. All the pieces he creates, from cabinetry to wood flooring to furniture, are true originals, custom-made to the specific details of each customer. He put his expertise to work on interior pieces for the owners of the Crate and Barrel stores, along with a period restoration of the woodwork in a Washington

house designed by famed architect I.M. Pei.

Of all the work he has done, however, Stine said creating custom furniture is by far his favorite form of woodworking.

"If it's something you can find on a shelf in a store, it's probably not something I would make," he said.

Stine works closely with each of his customers, taking aspects of furniture pieces they like and working

with an artist to create a rendering of how the custom piece will look. Stine even has put his skills to work in his own 1871 farmhouse in Dow, gutting every room and starting from scratch. He's now in the process of finishing the kitchen.

Stine said while he knows he and his family made a life-changing move almost three years ago, it was the right choice to make. "I love it here. This is my home," he said.