

# Artisans Quarterly Review

H A N D C R A F T E D C U S T O M W O O D W O R K I N G

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## M I G R A T I N G T O N E W M A R K E T S

Dominating the world of furniture with our new portfolio has been a primary objective since 2011 when we partnered with Michael Pietras. As our new line takes shape we're going to do something entirely new; we're planning to offer concept pieces ready for purchase in our newsletter. We'd love to be selfish and hang on to all of them, but honestly we're running out of space!

Check out our Lineup for Purchase feature to invest in an heirloom from our new portfolio. Our bubinga slab table is on the block, as well as an amazing redwood burl coffee table and two cedar round gaming tables featuring Swiss Pear and Leopardwood game boards.

We are kicking off an amazing flip mirrored cherry slab table, designing a glass and concrete pyramid coffee table, coming up with a walnut butterfly table, and rumor has it we're creating some interesting new designs for modern beds.

Meanwhile, we've begun work on a commission for four dovetail concrete benches. We're solidifying our foothold in the concrete furniture market with several projects coming this summer!

We already have three art and furniture events planned for this summer plus our regular lineup of commissions and restorations. It doesn't look like we'll be getting much sleep in the next few months. That said, one way or the other we're going to go fishing and hopefully pick some fresh muscles so stand by for some good fish stories to supplement our constant wood talk.

## T A N K E D R E V E A L E D A G A I N

We're hoping to make a regular habit out of getting ourselves tanked. This round we joined the Acrylic Tank Manufacturing crew in Long Island to install a custom cabinet surround for a 160 gallon refrigerator fish tank.

Can you imagine having any fresher fish? Sorry, we had to say it. This cichlid tank features an array of fresh water tropical fish and an assortment of creatively labeled products. The challenge was to create a fish tank that people will walk past and have to do a double take to realize what they just saw.

The European style frameless custom cabinet surround is created in a combination of marine grade fur and cherry plywood and solid cherry moldings and edgings. The interior is painted white and the exterior finished in a high durability conversion varnish.

Stainless steel handles matching the fridge, and adjustable full swing hinges lock in the look and functionality of this surround. The center doors open without interruption to allow easy access to care for the fresh fish.

The project is now the centerpiece of Plesser's Appliance in Babylon, NY. Nestled in a Long Island shore community, Plesser's is one of New York City's dominant local and online appliance superstores.

**This project appeared in the second-season premiere.**

**Original airdate April 14, 2012**



# TANKED REVEALED

The install and reveal went great; we had the opportunity to work hands on with Wayde and Brett and their crew and to meet Marc and Alan Howard, owners of Plesser's Appliances. Here's a few snapshots from behind the scenes and a rare treat-some on-set video thanks to Lawrence Greenberg and PoniTV.

[Link to Behind The Scenes Video: http://vimeo.com/40776415](http://vimeo.com/40776415)

Lineup in the photos below let's see;  
Left: Allen & Mark Howard, Wayde King  
Right: Wayde King, Heather King, Eric Saperstein,  
Mike Pietras, Brett Raymer



## BLENDING OF ART AND WINE 2012 GET'S DOWN!

Coming this June 2nd and 3rd is a small format "Blending of Art & Wine" event at Hopewell Valley Vineyards in Pennington, NJ. Although the weekend is downsized from our original planned format we have a lot going on.

Artists include Eric M. Saperstein, Stanley D. Saperstein, Michael Pietras, & Wayne Ouldcott.

We have a K-9 demonstration offered by Capital K-9 Association and Officer Down, Inc. These local organizations are dedicated to providing armored vests for service dogs and assisting Law Enforcement Officers and their families in their time of need. If any full-time Law Enforcement Officer in the State of New Jersey is in financial need, regardless if the injury or demise occurred on duty or off and regardless of their union affiliation, Officer Down will assist them.

Come out to enjoy a wine tasting, home made brick oven pizza, watch NJ's finest service dogs in action, and perhaps adopt a cat! Our friends from the Trenton Animal Shelter will be back on site with an assortment of furry critters looking for homes.

**Event Location: 46 Yard Road, Pennington, NJ 08534**

Visit [www.hopewellvalleyvineyards.com](http://www.hopewellvalleyvineyards.com)

**K-9 Demonstrations are scheduled Saturday & Sunday at 1:30pm**



### WINE & SPINE ?!

**In need of a little adjustment? - Meet Dr. Jennifer Fisher, Doctor of Chiropractic Medicine at the Vineyards June 2nd and 3rd!**

Dr Jennifer Fisher practices gentle specific chiropractic. Chiropractic is the art of adjusting slight misalignments in your spine which occur everyday because of physical, mental and emotional stress.

Correcting these misalignments causes your nervous system and your whole body to work at its best! She is a 1994 graduate of Hopewell Valley CHS. Dr Fisher will be at the Blending of Art and Wine event. She will be offering free Chiropractic samples and full adjustments for \$40.

### LET'S MAKE THE WORLD A LITTLE SHARPER

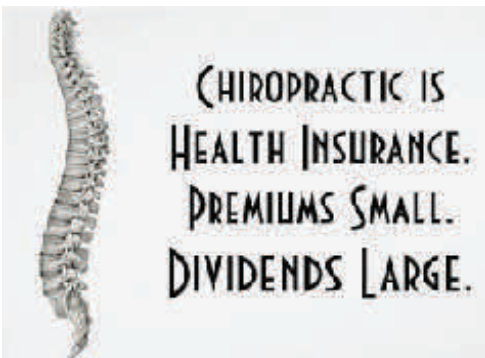
We are really really good at sharpening things! If you bring us your dull, nicked, chipped, and otherwise mistreated and neglected knives we will sharpen them for you and return them better than new.

Please note, we reserve the right to banter with you and point out your bad knife care habits. We will ridicule you about keeping steel implements that smash not slice through butter.

At the end of the day, you'll take home your knives and treat them much better going forward. You'll even return again to ensure they are properly cared for and remain razor sharp!

We really should advertise this service a bit more prominently. SO - here it is WE SHARPEN KNIVES! Be sure to tell your friends! For everyone you refer to us who brings us their knives, we'll sharpen one of yours for free!

Call for an Appointment 609-637-0450!



## LINEUP FOR PURCHASE!

Artisans of the Valley has been accepting commissions for custom designed original furniture and period reproductions, woodcarvings, and sculptures, and offering our restoration services for over 38 years. In this period, we have only on rare occasions engaged in speculation work. We don't publish pricing as every piece is unique, and every restoration plan is a specific case. We're not completely diverging from this general mode of operation, but we are expanding our portfolio in several new directions.

We don't believe we can truly divulge our creativity on paper or even in the world of CAD, so we are revealing our concepts in real life and full scale. This has a collateral benefit; we actually have original designs available and ready to purchase. These modern heirlooms are the antiques of a generation yet to be born.

The first official item in our Lineup for Purchase is our bubinga slab over marbled concrete. (Put in measurements) The photos really don't do this piece justice. If you're interested, please request high resolution images or better yet come see it in person! Our bubinga over concrete table is available at \$9,559. It is on display at Hopewell Valley Vineyards through June 4th, 2012.



**ARTISANS @ ART  
ALL NIGHT 2012**



Summer is turning out to be quite busy! This year we had a little time to think about it so we will be bringing in some larger pieces to Trenton's famous 24 hours of art, music, food, and fun! Art All Night will take place on June 16 & 17, 2012 at the Historic 50,000 square foot Roebling Wire Works in the Chambersburg section of Trenton.

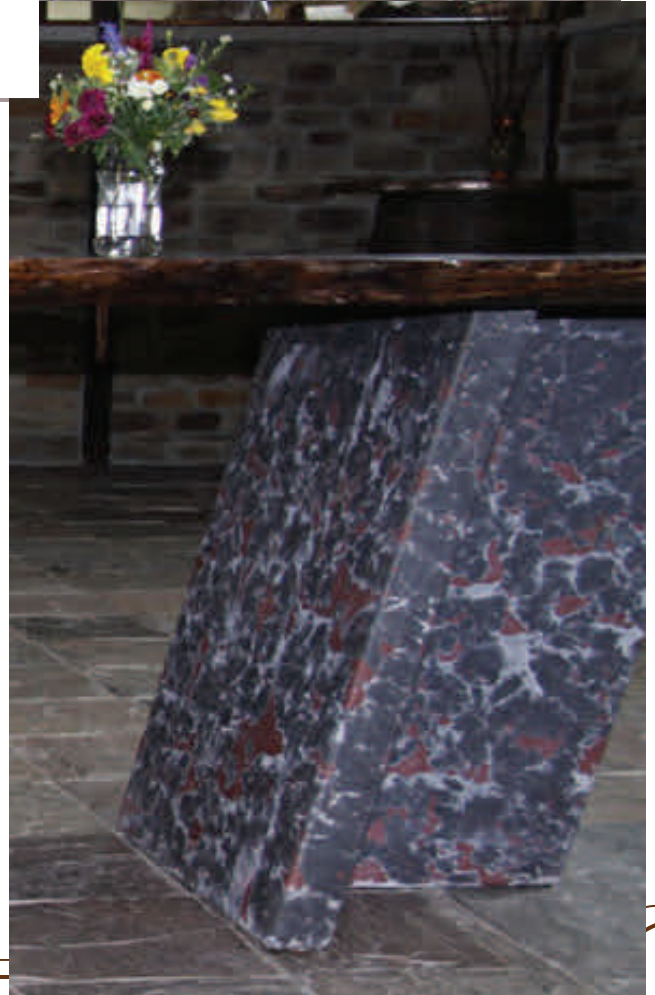
Last year almost 900 artists of all ages, skill levels and mediums submitted work and more than 13,000 people attended. Enjoy live music on indoor and outdoor stages, interactive art, art films featuring stop motion photography and animation, lectures about using art to revitalize cities, meaningful kids art activities, interesting food, and plenty of artful surprises!

Make sure you stop in, Artisans will be including pieces this year by Stanley & Eric Saperstein, Michael Pietras, and Bob Eigenrauch.

We'll be including one of Stanley's period pieces, one of our New Wave Gothic tables, our redwood burl over concrete coffee table, and a chainsaw carving as examples of our portfolio.

For more information visit the website at:

<http://www.artworkstrenton.org/artallnight>



**MIXING PALLETS**

On April 15th and 16th, Artisans joined Hopewell Valley Vineyards for the Delaware River Valley Wine Trail's "Mixing Pallets" weekend.

From our traditional line we brought along a commissioned American Black Walnut block front chest. This period reproduction is all solid wood with hand hammered Horton Brasses iron hardware.

Our bubinga over concrete table remains a fixture display at the vineyards. We revealed the first of two of the concrete pyramid base cedar slab tables. These came out even better than we expected! The best part is we have seven more of these slabs in our wood locker so soon we'll have an army of new tables!

**SLABS OF GAME**

In our last issue we showed you the start of a series of nine cedar gaming tables, in the form of raw cedar slices. Two of these tables are now a reality and are available (as of this issue) for purchase. We've got seven more blanks, and of course there's more trees out there so please feel free to start a run on these unique chess tables.

Featuring inset Swiss Pear, Leopardwood, and Ebony solid surface chess boards these round slabs are mounted on marbleized concrete bases. Heavy and sturdy, built to be a subtle yet distinctive accent to your game room, bar, or office.

The first two of these unique gaming tables are available for purchase at \$1,949. We're planning to work on the other seven blanks as time allows crafting backgammon, chess, and perhaps a go or cribbage board.



## A CROOKED GAME; DRUNKEN CHESS

So, sometimes we have to admit we made mistakes ... or do we? One of our first chess boards clearly showed that the fence on our tablesaw got knocked out a few degrees. Unfortunately, we figured this out as we aligned the strips of cross cut squares to layout an actual game board.

Ooops?! - or maybe not. We obviously can't sell this board as a perfectly aligned hand made tournament grade chess board. We can, however, claim we did it on purpose by pairing up this anomaly with a hand carved drunken chess set! A perfect marketing scheme if we do say so. Not to mention, we got a bonus; we kept Stanley busy hand carving 32 unique individual chess pieces!

This project came out very cool, and we're actually NOT putting it up for sale. It's now in our personal collection of interesting projects. The game board is mounted on a walnut box containing two storage drawers to keep the drunk pieces out of harms way.



# A CROOKED GAME; DRUNKEN CHESS



## SOLID AMERICAN BLACK WALNUT CHEST

We like to make chests; they just always come out looking great. Of course, you can never go wrong with solid American black walnut. When you build a chest in walnut, there's no doubt you've created a treasured heirloom.

Custom black iron hardware for this chest is by Horton Brasses. Four original design chest lifts and two iron strap chest hinges.







# Culture & HERITAGE

NEWS UPDATE

Volume 11 Number 2

Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission

Summer 2012

## Artisans of the Valley Hand-made, Hand-finished, Hand-signed

Artisans of the Valley is a custom wood-working shop with an extensive portfolio of restorations, commissions and carvings. Sixth Generation Master Craftsman Eric Saperstein carries on an ancient tradition that he learned from his father, Stanley.

A master craftsman has studied his art for many years under an established master, first as an apprentice, then as a journeyman. An apprentice would usually live in the master's household and receive room and board as compensation. After exhibiting sufficient competency, he would be promoted to journeyman.

Journeyman, of French derivation (jour meaning day), has earned the right to charge a fee for a day's work and would no longer have to live with the master. In parts of medieval Europe wandering journeyman would move from town to town gaining experience from different workshops as part of their training to become a master. Journeymen were sometimes called *jacks* or *knives*, which spawned the expression *jack of all trades, master of none*.

A master craftsman owns his shop and may employ workers. Years of study from apprentice through journeyman ensured that a man attained mastery of his craft, before becoming master of his shop.

Today very few craftsmen follow this tradition, but Stanley Saperstein is one who did. He served a seven-year apprenticeship with Clarence N. Grinnell of the well-known Grinnell family of woodworkers, who have passed down the trade from 1614. The Grinnells were among the first settlers of Providence, Rhode Island. They later established themselves in Medina, New York, a furniture center of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Grinnell, Iowa was founded in 1854 by an ancestor, Josiah B. Grinnell.

Clarence Grinnell was the last of the Grinnell craftsman and Stanley was his last apprentice. As a taskmaster, Mr. Grinnell would expect Stanley to *make things as*

*good where they can't see it as you do where they can.*

Stanley founded Artisans of the Valley in 1973 with simple commissions for household furniture, carvings, and accessories. As his formal training progressed, and he

journeyman, he displayed an ever-growing talent and skill level through the completion of literally hundreds of restorations, commissions, and carvings.

His father transferred Artisans of the Valley shop and his Master to Eric in 2008 when Eric earned the title of *Ars Artisan of Custom Furniture Making and all its branches*.

The shop specializes in hand-carved, custom woodworking, museum-quality reproduction of period furniture, restoration and conservation of antiques and collectibles, and original designs through commissions.

Eric is taking Artisans into new creative areas with a modern portfolio that includes concrete furniture and projects that combine concrete, steel, and glass. New designs involve creative use of re-

cycled and renewable materials to develop environmentally sound and durable furniture. As with Artisan's other custom designed pieces, each will be hand-made, hand-finished, and hand-signed.

Season 2 of *Tanked* on Animal Planet network featured Artisan's original design Sea Chest Bed for a child with special needs who received a story-themed nautical fish tank and a cabinet surround for a refrigerator converted into a fish tank.

Along with his historic presentations and reenactments, Stanley has worked with local historical organizations to complete such restoration projects as rifle stocks, swords, and bayonets for the National Guard Militia Museum, large-scale timber framing for farm buildings and assistance with the farmhouse restoration at Howell Living History Farm.

There is extensive information, not only about the shop, but philosophy of restoration, history of period furniture and a glossary of woodworking terms, Revolutionary War and Civil War historical interpretations and demonstrations, on the Artisans of the Valley website: [artisansofthevalley.com](http://artisansofthevalley.com).



*New Wave Gothic Library desk, a commission, was one of two designed along with a client. Handcarved Friesian Desk Box is an exact museum-quality reproduction.*

gained experience, his projects became more elaborate including antique restoration and conservation services. Stanley received his journeyman papers in 1977.

Stanley moved his business to a larger shop in Hopewell Township in 1979, thus completing his transition to a formal fifth generation master (C.N. Grinnell was a fourth generation master). The larger facility allowed him to expand his business to museum-quality antique restoration, period furniture reproduction, woodcarving, sculpture, and original furniture design services.

Stanley holds a BA in History and Political Science, and he earned an MA in History/Education from the College of New Jersey in 1971. His specialty is military history, which he calls upon when doing living history and reenactments. He authored an historic novel entitled *Sharpshooters*, which tells the story of the elite green clad Union troops known as the widow makers, the United States Sharpshooters.

Eric randomly played the role of apprentice throughout his childhood and adolescence. After being promoted to

PLAQUES & SIGNS



We're always working on a variety of plaques and signs, small projects seem to find their way into the shop each month. This solid mahogany plaque has a simple clover simple and CNC carved lettering. (Shown Left)

Two solid Osage Orange name plaques (Below) will note the occupants of horse stables. These were both carved from trees harvested on the property of the horse's owners.

We can offer signs in any solid wood, MDF, sign foam, or even in metal or concrete. Brass or plastic plates can be mounted to provide space for names, dates, and events.

SLAB IN PROGRESS



This 375 year old white oak slab will be a custom coffee table featured in our next issue. We have eight of these ready to go for various projects throughout the year. Tables, possibly a desk, a server, and well we're not sure yet?!

These projects are all from the same tree harvested from our client's property. Please keep in mind when you take down an old growth tree like this we can arrange to have it milled to specifications for various custom projects. Local harvest wood helps preserve our forests for future generations!

## INTRODUCING PHEASANT WOOD

“Pheasant Wood” – Hawaiian Pheasant Wood or Golden Shower Tree (Kolohala) This extremely rare ornamental tree is normally found in yards and landscapes. Its distinctive yellow flowers and foot long pods makes it an interestingly beautiful tree. The wood’s grain, when cut, looks like the golden brown tail feathers of a pheasant ... and hence the name pheasant wood.

Ever since Eric has been receiving weekly newsletters from places like [Cook Hardwoods](#) the temptations to investigate interesting new materials has been irresistible. We added a few pieces of pheasant wood to our exotic inventory including a bowl blank and some stopper and pen blanks. A bowl coring rig is one of the few toys that we have yet to acquire, so we are not about to waste the bowl blank on a single bowl. A wine stopper seemed like a logical project to experiment with this material.



## STOPPING OAK BARRELS

In line with our new years resolution to turn scrap wood into useful objects (ok let’s get down to it CASH!) ... Eric decided one day he was going to chop up some small pieces of white oak into squares and turn them into barrels. What’s more fitting to be to a wine stopper than a miniature wine barrel?

Well it worked out great, so the next task was to convert apple taken from Terhune’s Orchard, Vineyard, & Winery’s 2011 winter tree pruning into more unique turnings. The first theme is barrels; more intricate designs are pending soon.

Now available for sale at for \$24.95 each these unique functional stoppers make a great gift or cute item for your personal wine stopper collection. The walnut and apple display pallets are outfitted with four miniature barrel feet. Sometimes these very simple pieces can be a fun rabbit trail to keep us entertained when we’re in between steps of ongoing complex projects.



## ROUND ABOUT RESTORATIONS



This rosewood table was rescued from a flood, and from its original colored lacquer shell. Now boasting a hand rubbed Waterlox tung oil finish, it's ready to face a few more generations of use. This is not a particularly old piece, it's another great example of how a proper finish can unmask the beauty of wood that spent so many years buried under colored lacquer.

## HARDWOOD CHOP STICKS &amp; MAKI BOARDS

One of Mike's random bouts of ADD resulted in him spontaneously rigging up a jig and producing chop sticks. We keep referring to this seemingly endless supply of random scraps.

These hand made custom exotic wood chop sticks are a great use of "scrap" material from larger projects. We can provide any custom length and a variety of options for tapering and shaping.

A personal set of custom chop sticks is a great gift for someone who already has everything else. Chopsticks will run from \$15 to \$50 per set. Options for custom presentation boxes, sushi plates, bowls, and laser engravings are available upon request. Maki boards start at \$150.



STANDING PENS

We've decided to keep Chuck Hill of Pens of the Past busy turning more of our rather expensive scrap wood into pens and, in addition, Eric began his official quest to own a pen made of every known species of wood.

If we include all the variants such as spalting, burl, mineral stains, and other unique qualities that is over 75,000 pens to obtain! We're figuring this is going to be a lifetime adventure; we'll keep you posted on his progress.

Now beyond the simple pen, we have added a variety of interesting bases, stands, and business card holders. The black walnut models are simple and elegant while the Osage orange, well that's just a bit louder and more noticeable!



We're also taking this opportunity to introduce a new material into our portfolio. These pen stands are Eric's first opportunity to play with manzanita burl. 'Arctostaphylos Pungens' or Pointleaf Manzanita, a scrub plant common to desert edges in Mexico and the South Western US bordering pine and oak forests. Mature plants often reach 10 to 20 feet in diameter. Spreading through decumbent branches which often form independent root systems; burls are rare but form on occasion at ground level on the new root growths, ranging from one to thirty inches plus in diameter.



Manzanita burl is prized by wood turners for its tendency to show an extreme display of unique grain and vibrant spectrums of color. The extreme and abusive nature of the of the environment, including wildfires, contributes to the dynamic and random nature of the grain.

So our the first mazanita burl project quickly reveals the fiery grain in this simple turned vase that imparts a drastic contrast with the Gaboon Ebony hand turned in one of Chuck's pens. The set is featured on a mild African shedua plank; this unique material is actually a "second" from the Maki board selection process. The more simplistic grain allows a better contrast with the manzanita.



A Manzanita Tree - Amazing how something so unique comes from a desert scrub tree!



IRON & WOOD TAPPING BEER

Next in our manzanita lineup is a flaming beer tap, a turned fiery burl perched atop an iron spindle hand forged by Dana Osterman. With just two simple turnings as our entire combined world of experience with this material we can already tell you we are burning to use it more!

We Googled “osage orange beer taps” just to see what happened, we found one. That was disappointing we hoped that we would be the ONLY. Well, give it a 48 hours from when we release this newsletter and we should be on the top three search returns for these keywords!

Moving on with the tapping experience and implementing our scrap wood usage theme we plucked a short piece of diamond willow from the bin. This walking stick cutoff is now repurposed to be a one-of-a-kind beer tap!

(“Diamond Willow Beer Tap” - just ignore this we put it into the text content purely for spider food. Give it a few days and try it in Google!)

Why did we suddenly make three random beer taps? Because we are willing to work for our beer! We’ll be dropping these off at Round Guys Brewing in Landsdale, PA as our contribution to their goal of having 250 unique taps made by local artists.

Check out:

<http://www.roundguysbrewery.com/>



## BEDDING IN WHITE



An original design by Michael Pietras this bright white modern four post bed features a unique outwardly canted profile. Each post is positioned and cut to bloom just slightly beyond the footprint of the bed.

Built in solid poplar, the piece is designed with a central frame where the box is permanently assembled. A normal bed consists of two side rails, a headboard and footboard. Slats are put in place to hold the box spring and mattress.

This design is often weak. It's not up to our standards for durability so Mike fixed a frame structure in 6/4 poplar including a 3/4" plywood base to support the mattress. No box spring is required. The frame structure mounts to the headboard and footboard on heavy duty bed hardware. This design assures that the piece can be easily transported and brought into upstairs rooms but will sustain the constant stress kids are renowned for putting on furniture.

A single frame design is applicable up to a queen size bed, a full king will require a box configuration to ensure the bed can fit through the average doorway in your home. We have lots of ideas for beds in modern, period, and we're dying to build one in our gothic line!

# ARTISANS OF THE VALLEY

## HAND CRAFTED CUSTOM WOODWORKING



[Artisans of the Valley](#) offers museum quality period reproductions, original designs by commission, antique restoration/conservation services, hand carving, modern furniture refinishing, onsite furniture repair, hand made walking sticks, and educational programs. Our website is now over 250 pages, including galleries, feature articles, educational sections, company background, and our adventure album section. We extend an open invitation to explore our site, and contact us directly with any inquiries or questions you may have.

Eric M. Saperstein is Master of Artisans, Owner, Webmaster, Editor, Bookkeeper, Buyer, Office Manager, Legal Pit-bull, and he's in charge of vacuuming the shop: [eric@artisansofthevalley.com](mailto:eric@artisansofthevalley.com)

Stanley D. Saperstein, Master Craftsmen, Author, & Historian founded Artisans of the Valley in 1973. Stanley offers historic presentations, impressions, and various lecture series ranging from Civil and Revolutionary War, American Folk Art, and Interactive Role Play of Characters ... sometimes trying to reenact American Chopper episodes in the shop: [woodcarver@artisansofthevalley.com](mailto:woodcarver@artisansofthevalley.com)



### LET'S GET MORE FROM FACEBOOK

Artisans of the Valley, LLC. Timeline Now Highlights Liked

Artisans of the Valley, LLC. 290 likes · 6 talking about this · 52 were here

Artistic Services  
103 Corrine Drive, Pennington, NJ.  
1 (609) 637-0450  
Add Your Hours

About Photos Likes 290 Map Videos

With hundreds of millions of "likes" out in the world, we're feeling a bit unloved!



We need your help to get more visibility on FaceBook; please take a moment to like Artisans of the Valley. We appreciate your support!

<https://www.facebook.com/ArtisansOfTheValleyLlc>

### 2012 TWO QUARTERS LEFT

Recap of "The Blending of Art & Wine 2012"

The Redwood Burl & Mulberry Splat Tables Are Revealed!

Two SERIOUSLY cherry slabs of cherry - One amazing modern table takes shape.

A giant walnut butterfly - this is hard to explain without photos so next issue PHOTOS!

Up all night for Art All Night?

Conquering Concrete, we move ahead with our curved dovetail benches.

Lingerie Chest Restoration



*Our studio hours are by appointment. Please call ahead!*

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