

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 A R T I S A N S ' " M I N I - P O R T F O L I O "

We are proud to announce the release of our ["Mini-Portfolio."](#) This 44 page booklet delivers a cross section of Artisans' commissions and restorations; 35 years in the making. It's actually quite amazing what has come out of our small shop over the past 35 years, even to us!

We are actively seeking representation to assist in expanding our client base. We plan to employ this new compact medium to reach into new markets, primarily through interior design firms across the United States. Copies are available upon request for \$5.

E R I C ' S O F F I C I A L P A P E R S

This year, we decided to officially document Eric's status as ["Master of the Shop."](#) In his usual style of going all-in; Eric commissioned hand scribed & illuminated parchment to commemorate the occasion. See [Eric's Profile](#) on our website.

Journeyman papers follow a long standing tradition of artisans and trades to certify their own.

Prior to colleges and trade schools, each craft had required an individual to step through from apprenticeships to journeyman levels, and finally reaching Master's level. The recognition of a Master Craftsman usually requires not only years of experience, but the demonstration of a set of skills through the delivery of specific works that each ensure mastery for one simple reason; the master work would not be completed if the individual's skills were not up to par. This scroll includes not only the formal version of Eric's journeyman and master's papers, but proclaims the fulfillment of Stanley Saperstein's obligation to his teacher, [Master C. N. "Larry" Grinnell](#) to pass his skills on to another generation, and it marks the official transfer of Artisans of the Valley from father to son.

The commission for Eric's pedigree went to [Rosemary Buczek](#), a Caldwell College graduate with a Bachelors in Fine Arts. Rosemary is master of her own studio, ["The Gilded Quill"](#). Her love of the Medieval Manuscripts of the Medieval Ages influences her designs and use of color. Commissions like Eric's journeyman papers present the opportunity to combine her calligraphic skills with creative and colorful illuminations and gilding techniques to develop truly original art on a hand crafted skin parchment by [Pergamena](#). Rosemary's skills have been recognized by the International Association of Master Penmen, Engrossers and Teachers of Handwriting (IAMPETH) whereby she achieved the title of "Master Penman", and served two terms as President. This net result of Rosemary's efforts is a work of art that is absolute must see in person; or at least visit our website for the high resolution images.

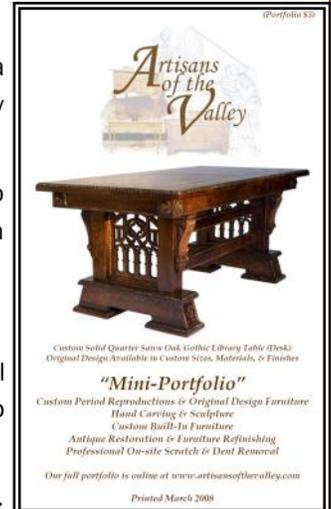


Photo by Henry Schweber

2008 Q Two

- Artisans "Mini-Portfolio"
- Eric's Official Papers
- The Gothic Desk is Complete!
- "Jeffrey Got a Bite!"
- Gothic - In Walnut
- Heading South- Eric & Teri's Trip!
- Parts and Pieces Remake
- Stickley in Pink & Useful Humidity
- Time for a Drink! & Buffalo Carving
- The Art of Dividing & Furniture Care
- Taking Artisans to Work
- Rushing to Caning Class

THE GOTHIC DESK IS COMPLETE



[Photo by Henry Schweber](#)

One can view a table as a functional device designed for the purpose of keeping objects off the floor; basically no more than a platform at which to comfortably eat, work, play cards, or whatever else you may do while sitting in front of a flat surface. Alternately you may see your furniture as functional artwork, providing an esthetic value and atmosphere to your home.

[Artisans of the Valley](#) is pleased to announce completion of this quarter sawn white oak [“New Wave Gothic Desk.”](#) also considered a library table, transitioning our line of gothic tables from the dining room into the office. The desk carries our signature themes with hand rope carving, cathedral style panels in each leg, select grade materials, and an heirloom quality finish.

We are receiving inquiries requesting concepts for coffee and end tables, poker tables, and other configurations. We’re more than happy to design a custom [“New Wave Gothic”](#) piece to suit your requirements be they modern or medieval; as shown below our desks work equally well with laptops or feather quills! We are planning to complete a poker table in the latter part of 2008.



“ JEFFREY GOT A BITE ! ”



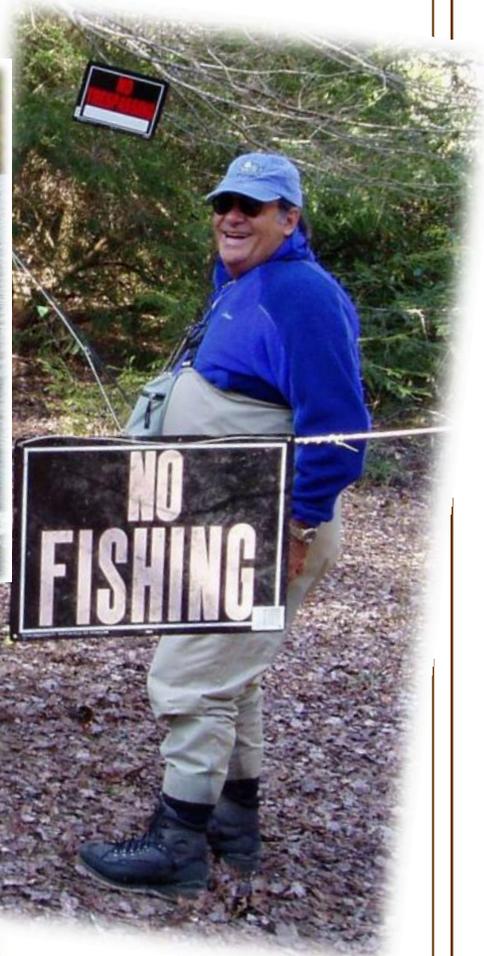
So the story goes that Jeffrey & his friend Steve travel the globe seeking the ultimate fishing adventures. Steve (bottom center photo left) decided to find a unique gift for his fishing buddy that reflected a unique, charismatic, highly expressive, and at times a bit over the top personality.

Steve also mentioned Jeffrey’s tendency to find boundaries as more of a suggestion than a rule; illustrated in the bottom right photo! Jeffrey’s fishing prowess is obvious from the exuberant display of just two of his catches shown below.

This unique folk art figure by [Stanley D. Saperstein](#) was commissioned by Steve as a gift for Jeffrey’s birthday. Stan decided to twist the perspective slightly when he conjured up this caricature. Every now and again a sign may just have something to say, and sometimes the fish actually do bite!

Projects that make us laugh and offer a never ending source of humor to our clients are always great commissions. Check out website’s [Figure Carving](#) section for some detailed images of this original carving, and a full gallery of Stanley’s folk art figure carvings.

Figure Photos by Henry Schweber



GOTHIC - IN WALNUT

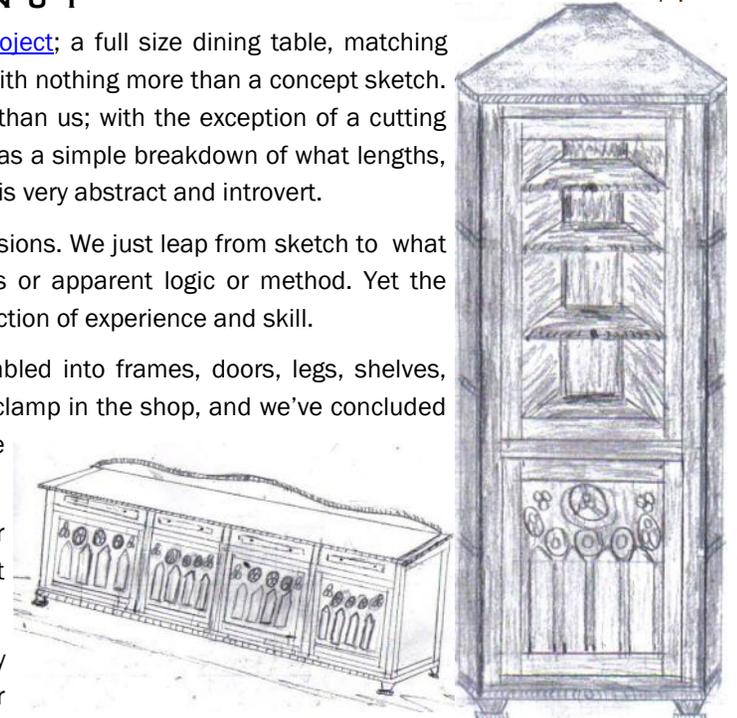
Entering Q2 means startup of our next [“New Wave Gothic” project](#); a full size dining table, matching server, and set of corner units. Most of our commissions start with nothing more than a concept sketch. The next steps are often baffling to just about everyone other than us; with the exception of a cutting sheet that provides us with the materials requirements as well as a simple breakdown of what lengths, widths, and thicknesses are required for each part, our process is very abstract and introvert.

There are no architectural CAD drawings for our artistic commissions. We just leap from sketch to what seems like a finished product sometimes without any obvious or apparent logic or method. Yet the process actually does require a great deal of both, with the induction of experience and skill.

Parts and pieces begin to take shape, and are fit and assembled into frames, doors, legs, shelves, tabletops and other components. We’re often employing every clamp in the shop, and we’ve concluded that no matter how many we own we still have yet to have enough.

Below left, Teri is working on removing clamps from the server frame, center; about half the project materials, and to the right the table’s trestle leg structures

Check out [“Creating a Priceless Heirloom.”](#) a documentary by [Eric M. Saperstein](#) published on our website that illustrates our creative process in detail providing a photo illustrated view from start to finish of an original Artisans design; a [New Wave Gothic Credence Table](#). e’ll be featuring the development of this walnut dining set on our website shortly. We’ll also be providing the story of our delivery Road Trip to Austin, TX scheduled for the summer of 2008, assuming fuel prices don’t surpass our mortgage payments, we’ll present this set in person!



ERIC & TERI GONE SOUTH

We decided to include a short blurb on our venture down south which included the wedding of Thomas Clark, Jr. and Jennifer Stracka in Jacksonville, FL, a boar hunt at the [Gopher Plantation](#) outside of Waycross, GA, hitting a few wineries, and a few hours panning for gold and gems. We’re still waiting on the wedding photos to come in and it’s past our publishing deadline so we’ll put them in the next issue! Here’s a few snapshots from the Gopher Plantation.



PARTS AND PIECES – REMAKE



Restoration often requires the replacement of missing parts and pieces; this is one of the more specialized and unique services that Artisans provides. When a table is missing a claw or paw toe, or even the entire leg we can reproduce the required part. Drawer pulls, bonnets, spindles, fretwork, finials, moldings, are all common items lost due to time, daily use, and especially during moves.

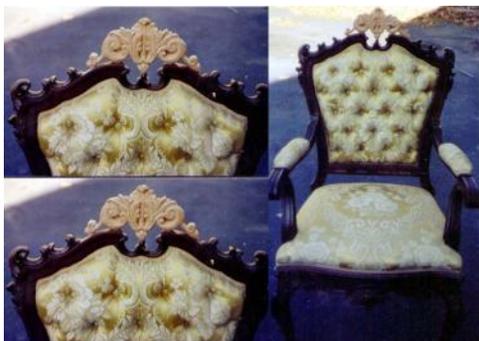
Above left illustrates an entire solid walnut bonnet, hand carved including the center bust, finials, dentil moldings, scrolls, and leaf work. To the right shows a claw toe in the process of being replaced. A few more coats of finish on the newly carved toe and the repair will be extremely difficult to detect.

The first row below shows two drawer pulls; one of which is the original and one is the duplicate. The original eight pulls were all hand carved for their host dresser so there are subtle differences inherent to the process. We can usually get a very close match to most pieces when we have a model in good condition to work with.

Below, bottom left, is an example of the replacement of a missing carving atop an armchair when no model was available. This carving was designed based on patterns available in our extensive library featuring hundreds of books illustrating furniture design, construction, finishing, and restoration.

Below bottom right is a classic example of a ball and claw foot. It is very common for pieces to be missing an entire foot, rendering them entirely useless in function and reducing their value to almost nothing. Replacing the missing foot obviously restores functionality and in turn a high percentage of the antique or collectable value.

If you have furniture in your collection, especially heirlooms, or if you find a great deal (especially curbside deals!) on a piece that is missing a part let us know. We can usually provide a fair estimate through photos and you can quickly determine if the deal is good, or if your dysfunctional heirloom can once again be displayed with pride in your home. Visit our website to see more on our antique [Conservation Services](#).



AMAZING TRANSITIONS STICKLEY, NOT SO PRETTY IN PINK?



Please, no matter how strong the urge, refrain from painting anything by Stickley pink. This action is not only in bad taste, it certainly reduces the value of such a highly respected and collectable piece of furniture to almost nothing. Besides it's just plain wrong!

That said, if someone else has already committed a furniture atrocity and left you to handle the unspeakable results ... don't lose any sleep; we can help. First we will take the piece out of your hands and immediately quarantine it until the pink can be safely removed. We'll then focus on the structure and veneer repairs, and finally apply a proper finish.

The finish is a hand rubbed garnet shellac which creates a proper warm rich deep finish. Shellac is great for filling the open pores of oak to help level out the overall surface. The finish can be completed entirely in shellac, but most clients today prefer to utilize tung oil varnish for the final coats.

Tung oil varnish creates a layer that is resistant to water, alcohol, and other general household use. A finish completed in pure shellac is susceptible to the dreaded "white ring" created when someone unknowingly places a glass on your furniture without a coaster.

We handle dozens of [Golden Oak, Stickley, Mission, and Arts & Crafts](#) pieces each year. Every one of these type of pieces has turned out with a great result. Age and wear and tear on oak generally serves only to improve the patina and character of the piece.

Furniture built in Quarter Sawn oak is the most highly prized of the oak furniture lines. Stickley took pride in using quarter sawn white oak almost exclusively. Be sure to check the inside of drawers, underside of the piece, and the back panels for labels to help identify the manufacturer.

We are happy to assist our clients in identifying their furniture, determining age, condition, and manufacturer. From these factors, we can provide an estimated value before and after restoration, as well as provide an estimate to bring your piece back to life.

USEFUL HUMIDITY

What do you do with that old falling apart old box you've had laying around the house for years? Well, being quite the pack-rats, we've never met a box we can't find a use for.

For this quarter sawn oak miniature chest, removal of the rusty steel liner and installation of a one in Spanish cedar, some veneer repair, refinishing, and the addition of a hydrometer and moisture pack converted what was a \$5 garage sale oak box into a custom fully functional humidor.

Don't overlook anything around your home; nothing is immune to a new functional use!



Photo by Henry Schweber

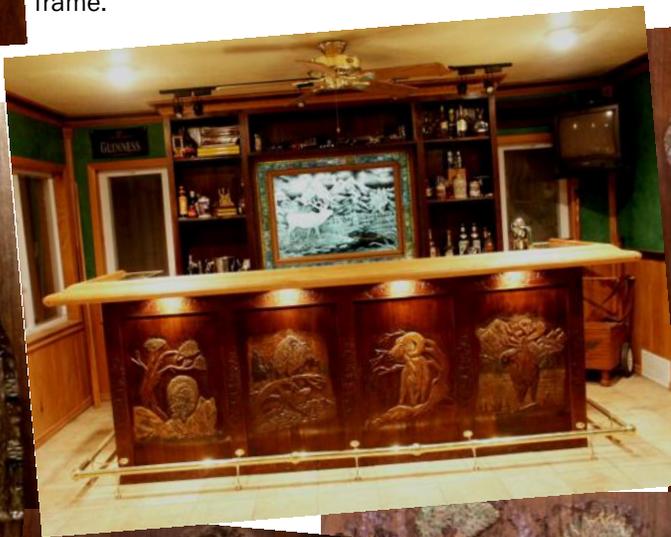


TIME FOR A DRINK!

This is not a 2008 project, or at least it didn't start in 2008, but given the constant influx of new projects Eric has yet to find the time to complete the last features of this custom built-in in this personal [custom solid walnut bar](#).

Eric started his "[wildlife carving period](#)" with the carvings featured on his bar. Each of these are on [Laura S. Irish](#) patterns, composite designs adapting them to the medium, scale, and his own carving style.

The bar also features a very unique [bugling elk glass carving](#) completed by Randy Mardus of [Permanent Reflections](#) and a stained glass frame completed by Eric's uncle Robert Saperstein. The glass carving is a reverse relief, with a custom fiber optic lighting harness to direct the light source into the top edge of the glass carving and subtly backlight the frame.



BUFFALO CARVING

Since we're on the wildlife carving theme, this [buffalo scene carving](#) is another one of Eric's long term personal projects. This theme is centered around a custom made Shiloh Sharp's Rifle, commonly known as a buffalo rifle. The challenge that Eric is now putting upon himself is to actually finish it before the next newsletter. See how that plan works out in Issue 3!



THE ART OF DIVIDING

When dividing a room requires more than a curtain, sometimes a custom folding divider is the only thing that will fit your needs. This commission was for two cherry folding dividers, not ultimately the most artistic project compared to carvings or period furniture, but blending a functional standing structure into existing décor without being obtrusive is more than standard finish carpentry.

Artisans has provided a few different configurations for folding dividers, free standing units on wheels, and built-in configurations. We have completed an assortment of configurations included [Mechitzas](#), bookcase units, and artistic screens featuring carvings or fabric panels. There is nothing stock or out of the box with these projects, each is a custom design and unique configuration.



FURNITURE CARE & FEEDING

Artisans of the Valley is now a retailer for Renaissance products including wax and cleaners for furniture maintenance. Our clients have been requesting our guidance to care for their commissioned pieces and newly restored furniture.

Artisans has been using Renaissance wax for over twenty years, the #1 choice of major museums, art galleries and institutions for the preservation of the precious pieces. Professional conservators, retailers, amateur restorers and private individuals throughout the world depend on Renaissance wax to protect their collections and for home use.

This micro-crystalline semi-synthetic product is entirely free of, damaging acids. It remains chemically neutral and is therefore completely safe, even on vulnerable surfaces. The British Museum approved manufacture of this wax for its own use and for distribution to the public.

This is all going to sound like an infomercial, but nobody is going to scream at you at 3am to buy this wax from us or from anyone else for that matter. In fact, we're kind of releasing one of our secrets by becoming a retailer for our favorite wax.

With one product you can lift oil, dirt and the murky accretions of other polishes, removing the residue of previous waxes. The process creates a hard, transparent finish that will not discolor, protecting your finish. A small dab goes a long way, unlike most waxes that need generous application. Artisans is providing our initial offering through a "Basic Furniture Maintenance Kit" for \$25 plus \$5 shipping and handling. The kit contains wax, cleaner, and appropriate applicators and polishing clothes, enough supplies to take care of the average size kitchen table for at least a year.

The list of just how versatile Renaissance wax actually is, is too extensive to publish here, but if you check out our website we'll provide the entire spectrum. Details are available in our [Cleaning and Maintenance Section](#).

TAKING ARTISANS TO WORK

Most of you know us through commissions or restoration work for your home, however that's not our only venue. We offer on-site restoration and touchup services to restaurants, hotels, offices, schools, and other commercial and institutional venues. We also offer carvings for corporate logos, commissions for executive gifts, and provide services for signs.

If you have a project at your place of business that requires custom woodworking, or furniture that requires some onsite attention, don't forget to check with us!

RUSHING TO CANING CLASS



Teri decided to try her hand at caning this year so she and Eric enrolled in Sandra Holland's class at Princeton High School's adult program. She, and Eric, worked on their practice chairs (freshly plucked from curbside on bulk day last fall) and with Sandra's careful guidance they actually achieved a not so bad result! Check out our website for some before and after photos of the chair projects.

Eric decided to rush a small rocker to provide a perfect bear sized chair for a birthday gift for his mother. These two projects were both completed on chairs restored by Artisans prior to installation of the new caning material, a critical step to ensure the longevity of furniture. Installing new cane or rush into an unstable chair will simply result in having to repeat the process in short order.

We're not ultimately sure how far we'll take the caning services ourselves, as we have two pro's on hand for the more difficult or time pressing projects, but we are figuring we'll handle some of the caning work in-house ourselves as time allows. Between Patrick Dunigan & Sandra Holland pressed cane, hand caning, rushing (natural & fiber), weaving, even French caning projects can be completed.

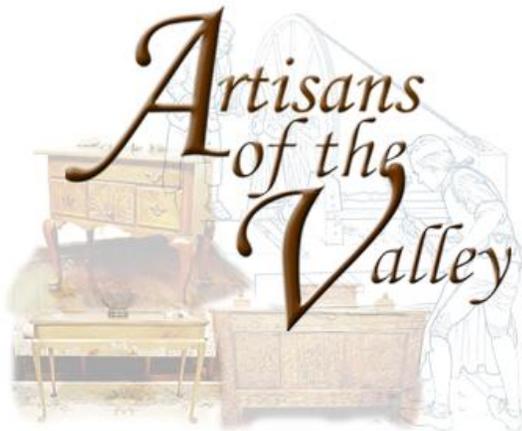
We're moving along, but moving slow, so you'll just have to check in Issue 3 to see the photos of the first two chairs Eric and Teri completed!



ARTISANS OF THE VALLEY

HAND CRAFTED CUSTOM WOODWORKING

[Artisans of the Valley](#) offers museum quality period reproductions, original designs by commission, and antique restoration/conservation services, hand carving, modern furniture refinishing, onsite furniture repair, handmade walking sticks, and educational programs. Our website is now over 250 pages, including galleries, feature articles, and educational sections, company background, and our new 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, Marketing Director, Legal Pit-bull, and he's in charge of vacuuming the shop: 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

Theresa Tonte is the Owner of Smooth Finish by Artisans of the Valley. Teri provides onsite touchup & repair services for residential, corporate, and institutional clients as well as serving to fill a variety of roles in the shop including referee: terri@artisansofthevalley.com

EDITORS NOTES

Feedback is good, Issue 1 was well received. We have a growing number of subscribers, and we're continuing to get the hang of our subscription management and publication software. Please be patient; a few of you may have received two, three, or ... well in any case - Sorry! We'll do our best to prevent that from happening again.

We've also decided, based on overall feedback, to continue releasing the quarterly newsletter to our entire mailing list which contains approximately 1300 addresses. If for some reason you do not wish to receive any newsletters, please send a note to eric@artisansofthevalley.com with a request to remove your address.

We also have one clarification from Issue 1; Eric & Teri's engagement took place December 31st, 2006. Go figure, the "eve of 2007" isn't actually before 2007 begins, like every other eve, it's at the end of the year!

SOME THINGS COMING IN Q3

Gothic Dining Set Completion & Delivery Run - Texas Road Trip 2008

Hitchcock Chair Restoration

Antique Spinning Wheel Restoration

Quarter Sawn Oak Armoire & Bookcases

Diamond Willow Walking Sticks

Buffalo Carving - A Hand Carved Wildlife Scene

Keep The New Project's Coming; We'll Keep Featuring Them!

Our studio hours are by appointment. Please call ahead!

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