

ARTS & CULTURE

Handcrafted natural cherry wood creations

Showroom more than another roadside attraction

By Mimi Jett
The Northside News

With all the talk these days about the importance of buying locally, there is not a better example of local harvest, production and finishing than Cherry Creations of Wisconsin.

Meet owner Jack Hall. He was raised on a farm near Rio and has been part of the Northside community for nearly 30 years.

"The biggest thrill is the smell of the cherry wood, right when it is being cut, and looking at the unique grains. Wood is so beautiful to me," he said.

Since his first adventure in wood-working at 19 years old, Hall dreamed of having a workshop to build hand-made furniture out of the wood he harvests locally. You may have noticed his Roadside Showroom on County CV, which appeared this summer in front of his place. Inside this box are examples of many of Hall's creations. From large chests to coffee tables, all pieces are made from cherry or oak woods that come from within 30 miles of Madison. The distinct coloring, knots and pronounced grains of the wood all contribute to the beauty of these hand-crafted goods.

Hall harvests trees from lower lands, called coulees, that have more twists and turns in the wood. He prefers the



character of this wood and uses the unique visual elements in the design of many pieces. Recently, Hall purchased a stand of 22 cherry trees, which he will cut this winter. Once cut, logs are cut into boards at Schwenke Sawmill in Portage. Boards air dry outside for two to three years before being cut and planed into fine furniture. Most wood today is kiln dried, which takes less time, but Hall is true to his craft and insists that air-dried lumber is best.

Over the years, Hall accumulated all the equipment he needs to take a piece



Northsider Jack Hall shows his woodwork studio where he turns locally grown cherry and oak into furniture such as the dresser (above left).

Photos by Mimi Jett

of rough wood to its final form as a table or shelf. He built most of the furniture in his house, and the house as well, from his shop next door. Now that his shop is well equipped and his craft perfected, Hall is ready to realize his dream of woodworking as a vocation. As a professional painter since the 1970s, he learned a lot about the application of finishes to make his furniture look beautiful. Painting is not as

rewarding as woodworking, so Hall spends more time doing what he loves most.

Stop in at the Roadside Showroom (5865 Highway CV) and take a look at what is created. There will be an open house inside his shop on Nov. 31. See examples of his work at www.cherrycreationsofwisconsin.com. Contact Jack directly at jackwhall@sbcglobal.net or 206-6934.

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