



About Your Handcrafted Wood Art

by

The Mountain Woodworker

Thank you for your purchase of a beautiful piece of wood art that has been handcrafted by The Mountain Woodworker. Whether you purchased a furniture piece, a home décor item, or a pen, it is unique and very much an individual piece.

At The Mountain Woodworker, we take extreme care in the selection of our woods and strive for the highest quality of workmanship that we can. Each item we produce contains solid wood, not to be confused with "all wood" in which case particle board is commonly used. We do use quality plywood in selected areas of the furniture we make and as shelves and cabinet racks. The exotic woods we use are harvested from reforestation programs throughout the world.

Wood is a unique art medium. Unlike other art materials its natural color, grain variations, and the condition it was grown under will cause the wood to react differently to its environment (sunlight, temperature and humidity) and the finish that is applied to it at the end of its making. It is not uncommon to find differing colors, hues, and contrasts in the same piece of art.

The lighter pieces were closer to the tree's bark, while the darker pieces were closer to the tree's center. Grain variations and mineral deposits should not be viewed as flaws but as natural markings have no effect on the item's durability or structural integrity. The swirls, knots, grains and color variations are natural characteristics of the wood and are much like the nubs you find in such fine fabrics as silk and linen, true indications of genuine quality.

The finish we use is an oil-based polyurethane that, when cured, is very hard and resistant to water and alcohol. Be careful not to drag items that may cause scratches. It takes approximately 30 days to fully cure.

The Care of Solid Wood Art

With proper care and treatment, your handcrafted piece will be with your family for generations to come.

Proper cleaning of your art ensures its beauty and longevity. We recommend simply using a damp cloth to clean. Never use a silicone based polish. Your local hardware may carry Guardsman Furniture Polish which is recommended for fine wood furniture finishes.

When spills occur, they should be wiped up quickly. Prolonged exposure to moisture may cause damage to the finish.

Extreme temperature and humidity changes will ruin wood. Solid wood furniture naturally responds to changes in temperature and humidity by swelling and shrinking. Every effort should be made to keep your furniture out of direct sunlight and heat sources such as radiators, hot air outlets or wood stoves. These conditions will cause the wood to dry out and subsequently split and will void your warranty. Do not place hot items, such as pots and pans, on the surface without protection.

Maintain a level of relative humidity in your home between 35% and 45%. This range of humidity guards against shrinking and cracking or expansion. If the humidity moves out of this ideal range, solid wood table tops could expand or contract, causing a gap in the center or at the ends where the two halves meet. It can also cause splits or cracks in the grain pattern and joints of the wood panels. These are not abnormal - the table is not considered defective. Areas with high humidity such as basements should be avoided. You may choose to humidify or dehumidify depending upon your environment.

Following these guidelines, along with common sense, will ensure that this fine solid wood piece that you have purchased will become an heirloom for future generations.

Tips for Protecting and Preserving Your Wood Art

Your mother was right!

Dust frequently.

Do not use a feather duster, because:

- It will simply move dust around, flinging it into the air.
- Feather dusters can't be washed.
- A feather duster quill could scratch the wood surface if a feather breaks off.
- Dust is abrasive.
- Infrequent or improper dusting can create a worn, dull surface over the years.
- Buildup of dust, accumulated in carvings, cracks and grooves eventually becomes hard to remove, making wood look dark and unattractive.

BE VERY CAREFUL USING WATER to clean wood.

- Wood should never get wet or soaked.
- Water can cause swelling, warping or staining when it penetrates a finish.
- Use coasters, pads, cloths or runners to protect against spills and water rings

How to Dust

Here are some detailed tips from the experts:

- Use a clean, washable cloth made of soft, lint-free cotton
- Best choices include an old T-shirt, diaper, cheesecloth, dish towel, piece of flannel, or chamois
- Dust cloth should have no snaps, buttons, zippers or thick seams that could scratch furniture surfaces
- Do not use a dust cloth that has hanging threads or unraveling edges, which could catch on wood slivers, molding, knobs or other loose pieces.

Dry Dusting versus Damp Dusting

Many experts believe that dusting with a dry cloth is abrasive and will ultimately dull the finish. A dry cloth will not really remove dust, they say.

- Experts typically recommend spraying a few drops of water onto the dust cloth
- Moisten the cloth just enough to make dust adhere to it
- The cloth should not be so damp that it wets the wood.
- If you can see any trace of water on the wood after you wipe, your cloth is too damp.
- Wipe off dust using gentle, oval motions along the grain of the wood.
- Turn or fold the dust cloth as soon as dirt is visible on any section.
- Lift, don't slide, lamps and objects to dust under and around them.

Use of Polishing Products

Although it is not necessary, you may feel free to use commercial polishing products on furniture.

- Do be sure to use the same type of polish consistently.
- Your furniture finish may appear cloudy or streaky if oil-based and wax-based polishes are interchanged.
- Does my furniture have a lacquer finish?

Watch the Humidity

Wood is very sensitive to changes in relative humidity.

As the weather changes, so does the relative humidity in your home and in the moisture content of the wood in your furniture.

This means that furniture is constantly expanding and contracting.

- Wood does best in moderate conditions of around 70°F-72°F and a relative humidity of about 50-55%.
- Frequent and sudden changes in relative humidity are especially bad.
- Wood is most likely to crack when the climate in a home suddenly changes from hot and humid to cool and dry.
- Use a humidifier in winter and an air conditioner in summer for best results.
- Furniture ages more quickly if stored in a basement, attic, garage or warehouse.
- Excess heat and dryness can cause wood to split and crack.
- Place furniture away from all heat sources, in front of radiators, heat runs or fireplaces, if possible.
- If you must put furniture near an air duct, use a shield or guard plate to direct heat away.
- Store table leaves as close as possible to the table so they adjust to the same humidity conditions.

More Tips for Dealing with Relative Humidity:

- If furniture is to be stored, it generally does better in an unheated environment because the relative humidity will fluctuate within a much narrower range. Air can hold more moisture at a high temperature than at a low one.
- Wood can best handle temperature and relative humidity changes if they occur gradually. Abrupt changes (closing or opening a vacation home, for example) can cause serious stress to your furniture.
- When air conditioning your home, it is best to keep the intake of outside humid air to a minimum.
- Humidifiers or vaporizing units can be added to a heating/air conditioning central system to help stabilize the humidity level.
- Dehumidifiers need to be used during wet, rainy times and in damp rooms to remove excess moisture from the air.

Avoid Direct Sunlight

The ultraviolet rays of the sun will damage a finish and bleach the wood underneath.

- Prolonged exposure to sunlight can cause the finish to crack, sometimes in a pattern resembling the skin of an alligator.
- Tablecloths and doilies slow down the process, but they don't stop it.
- Try to keep furniture out of direct sunlight.
- When this is not possible, reduce the amount of light streaming on any piece of furniture.
- Use window shades, drapes or blinds to block light during the time of day the furniture is exposed.
- Uniformly expose surfaces to light.
- Especially avoid letting the sun hit only part of a surface.
- Occasionally move lamps, doilies and other objects so the wood ripens uniformly.

Avoid Chemical Exposure

- Keep solvents such as nail polish remover, alcohol and paint thinner away from wood furniture because they can harm the finish.
- Alcohol is contained in colognes, perfumes and medications as well as in wine, beer and liquor.
- Fingerprints, perspiration and body oils can harm a finish over time, especially on chairs.
- Plants and flower nectar that touch the finish can also cause permanent stains.
- Placing hot items on furniture can cause a chemical change in the finish which results in white rings or spots.
- Products containing ammonia should never be used as it will harm your finish. We recommend the use of hot mats, coasters even though the finish is water and heat resistant.
- Do not leave plastic objects lying on wood surfaces.
- Color from plastic tablecloths, appliance covers, wrappers, place mats and toys can leach into wood over time.
- Plastic can also stick to a finish, damaging it when it is pulled up.
- Firm writing on the finished surface may cause indentations to the finish/wood.
- Lift, don't slide, objects on wood.

- Place objects on trivets, tablecloths, doilies or others covers to protect the finish.
- Use felt bottoms on lamps and other decorative objects.
- Avoid brightly colored felt because its color could leach into the wood. Some experts say brown is the best color choice.

Carefully Move Furniture

- Lift heavy furniture with the help of at least two people.
- Lift cabinets, chests and dressers from the bottom. Take care not to lift a cabinet by grasping only the top.
- Sliding pieces could hurt your wood floor and damage furniture legs by applying too much sideways pressure.
- If necessary, place furniture sliders under the legs of furniture pieces to make moving easier and safer.
- If a drawer has two handles, use both to open it. Avoid stuffing drawers with too many items.