



WOOD FORUM

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July Meeting at Arborica in Marshall, CA

by Art Hofmann

This meeting will take place on July 9th at Arborica, the wood emporium of Evan Shively at 5600 Marshall-Petaluma Road in Marshall, CA. Evan has been in this business for several decades. He finds woods that are unique, and often in the form of massive trunks, mostly from northern California.



He then saws and re-saws them. He has furnished woods to our members for their projects, and is well-known to custom woodworkers in the Bay Area. Woods from his mill have made their way into the houses of the most wealthy people in California. Evan will explain the intricacies of his business to us. See *Directions*, page 6.

June meeting and Car Show at Andrew Jacobson's home

by Art Hofmann



The June 2013 meeting at the home of Andrew Jacobson and his wife, Peggy Schafer, was quite special. It consisted of a tour of the house with Andy expounding on the construction, design and furnishings of this highly composed, richly detailed environment. He was aided in this by contributions from Peggy Schafer, Kalia Kliban, who worked for Andy in the past and made some of the installed elements, and Greg Zall, whose marquetry graces panels in the dining room.

After the long ride to this home which is deep in the country south of Petaluma, some of the members took the opportunity to stretch their legs and walk the gardens surrounding the house. Peggy Shafer sells Chinese herbs; both the gardens and the house are imbued with Asian (mainly Japanese) sensibility.

The evening was alternately balmy and blowy. Don Ajello and Linda Illsey arrived in Linda's new Tesla-S, which generated a lot of attention and was duly admired, one motor per wheel, otherwise no engine, a large computer display, black-dyed lacewood dashboard. After a point though, all distractions were cast away and the meeting got underway on the porch of the Jacobson's home with Bob Moyer, our chairman, presiding. He asked for announcements: Don Naples has numerous sheets of 25mm Baltic Birch plywood, 8'x4' and would like to unload the whole lot for \$1600. Contact him at 473-0593. (He might sell you a smaller number.)

Following this, a few pieces of business were mooted up before the formal part of the meeting began. Art Hofmann announced July's meeting, which will be held

near Marshall at Evan Shively's wood emporium (see article, page 1). Evan has been buying, milling and selling locally obtained lumber for many years now, and his business is well worth the trip. Bill Taft then discussed the preparations for the upcoming show which will begin September 11th. Bill urged all members who are considering entering a piece in the show to concentrate their efforts in the home stretch. Finally, Joe Scannell had volunteered to become our Newsletter Editor, which he did very ably in June with Larry Stroud's tutelage. What remained was to formalize the arrangement, namely to elect Joe to the post. This was carried out quickly before he could change his mind.

With the preliminaries out of the way, Art Hofmann introduced Andrew Jacobson, who has been designing and making furniture and installations for private clients, interior designers and architects out of his shop on Skillman Lane in Petaluma for three decades. During that while, he has built the *Design in Wood* into a thriving enterprise that supports not only himself but five employees, an arrangement that leaves time to design projects and run the place.

Andy explained the background of the house: there were two houses on the property when they moved there seven years ago. Living in one of them, they originally intended to remodel the other, an intention that was scrapped after he concluded that the footprint of the house was all wrong for their purposes. The house was razed to the foundation, and re-built by a contractor friend and Andy himself, working evenings and weekends. Early on, it occurred to him that he would make the house a showcase for furniture and millwork built by himself, or from his shop to his designs, or built by his friends and associates. These expectations have been more than met. The house has been featured in *Fine Homebuilding* and several other magazines, and on occasion Andy brings prospective clients to the house to serve as a model for what they might want for their own homes.

The tour began at the front door. Andy told us that the frame is of jarrah, a very stable Australian hardwood, with a panel of wavy lines carved in a dark-finished mahogany by Michael Cullen, who was granted *carte blanche* as to its execution. Questions were fielded by Andy concerning frame and panel construction and wood movement. It is an impressive solid-looking entry

way. Andy then introduced his wife, Peggy, who welcomed us with the promise of tea and chocolate chip cookies. After we ditched our shoes, Japanese-style, we entered the home, immediately impressive with its dark woods, excellent fixtures, handsome rugs, and suffused light. Once everyone (about twenty five of us turned out for the evening) had negotiated the transition, Andy picked up on the tour inside the entrance area.

Many of the pieces in the home were done for shows or galleries where they generated commissions. A case in point is a console table that graces the hallway. Floors

are of jatoba, commonly known in the flooring trade as Brazilian cherry. We moved clockwise through the house, first to the living room. Andy told us that he had made all of the interior doors of VG Doug fir. We stopped to look at a room off of the living room, a home office, designed to double as a second bedroom. The sliding doors of this space were suspended on some German hardware, HaefeleSymmetric: push on one side and the other door slides open as well. The panels incorporated a special material featuring grasses that brought to mind Japanese shoji papers with embedded flow-



ers or grasses. This material is called 3Form, an eco-resin product that comes in many different patterns and effects - this one is bear grass -and can be treated with woodworking machinery. (Expensive stuff, \$600 to \$1K per sheet, though there are specials on smaller panels.) The office contained a number of large built-in chests that were faced in some very handsome quartered figured makore left over from a large job. The pulls were done by Avigal David, a metalworker, who manufactures tansu hardware at her studio in northern Israel.

The lime green plaster drew some questions; there are several colors in the house, and it was a finishing technique that a sub-contractor excelled in – wet plaster over sheet rock. Andy deferred to sub-contractors for the heating, framing, insulation, and some of the finishing work. One member commented on the staircase leading to the bedroom. Here Andy designed an optical illusion, making it curve inward to make it look longer than it actually is. Basically, the house is not all that large, about half of what many new homes boast these days. Was it worth it? Andy's answer: it's like

that in woodworking: you can spend a day on some little detail and at the end, you don't know, but you hope so. Tom Stockton made a complicated looking sofa for the home in the Arts and Crafts style, one that takes a right angle turn and comprises a whole seating area in the living room. Tom and Andy go way back, having shared a shop when Andy was beginning. Thus the work of another friend and associate is reflected in the home.

There was a raised section connected to the living room, almost a kind of stage area, with tatami mats covering the floor. It is a special area, off bounds for the dogs, meant for relaxation and meditation. One of the elements of this area was a screen with an intricate pattern used as a kind of low wall. This was the work of Kalia Kliban, who expounded on making the pieces, a long, arduous process, involving lots of chop saw work, and hours of

careful placement with drops of a synthetic hot glue. Kalia termed it a weirdly satisfying and hypnotic project. The effort was well worth it, however. Both Andy and his wife enjoy watching this web through the seasons.

The ceiling in the living room is 1x12 vertical grain Douglas fir, a find that one of his vendors made in Oregon. It was shipped to S.F., where Andy had it milled into t&g boards for the ceiling – to wonderful effect, the quiet wood giving off its amber tan. Final Touch came into the house and in two days finished all of

the raw wood, one sealer coat and one of lacquer.



Andy pointed out an impressive cabinet in the corner, which at the touch of a button on a remote raised its shelf and its top, an arrangement for a bulky old-style TV set. Larry Stroud suggested that it would make an effective bar. From there, we moved on to the dining room, which is dominated by a large glass window looking out onto the garden with its flowers and herbs, another Japa-



nese touch, drawing the outside world into the inside of the home. In each corner there is a cedar post, a rather creamy yellow color, scraped clean with a wooden knife; these are toko-bashira, used here as non-struc-

tural decorative elements. The dining table is one that Andy made many years ago of cherry. The legs are a split turning: four sticks glued to newspaper and turned as one and then split apart. The top had some inlay work, stripes that widened in the center of each side. Designed to be small, it oddly enough brought in many commissions of larger tables. There were four dining chairs, each one different. When making sets of chairs over the years, Andy always made one extra to show clients; now four of these orphans serve in the dining room. The lighting in the dining room gave off a soft glow. It is recessed in a soffit made of quarter round plywood material sold by a company in L.A. Andy veneered the material and coped the corners. Fabrics covering the chairs were admired. This is one of Peggy's specialty areas. The exquisite selection necessitated many trips to the City.



There are some large door panels decorated with marquetry by Greg Zall that cover a pair of closets that flank an alcove, all of this on one wall of the dining room. The left closet door features a kingfisher perched in a tree. The right hand closet features another kingfisher, this one flying in mid-air outwards to the right. Greg talked about the marquetry process, of cutting his own veneers – including the vertical grain fir background panels – to obtain hard-to-find colors and textures, toasting light woods for shadow and depth effects, using spalted wood for the tree trunk.

Between the marquetry doors is a large recessed panel that forms the center of the alcove. The bright background is formed from broad strips of bleached hawthorn veneer arranged in a rhythmic pattern. The top of the recess covers a cabinet of drawers, and is an ideal spot for floral arrangements.



To summarize, on the window side, there is the view to the natural world of the garden, imitated in turn on the interior wall by flowers and images of trees and birds; and in between this well-conceived and appointed space to enjoy one's food – and life in general.

The group migrated to the kitchen and after some buzz, Andy once more took up his role as tour guide. A sizable walnut slab that does duty as a serving board for the dining room rested one of its ends on a black granite counter. Otherwise, the Japanese aesthetic continued, this time in the form of a large tansu-like chest, built into the south wall. Lots of doors and drawers. The wood is recycled elm, obtained from Evan Shively. This piece, too, was built by Kalia Kli-ban to Andy's design. Andy indicated some curves in the cabinetry here in the kitchen. He



likes this element in his furniture as well and it is a design element he is known for. Curves, he finds, soften the work without making it wimpy. The cabinets have top of the line Blum Tandem fixtures, under mounted, expensive. *Design in Wood* uses about \$10K of these per year. The kitchen cabinets are full inset type with a face frame on the cabinets, far fussier than European or traditional cabinets, more akin to building furniture. For one thing, getting the reveals just right is time consuming. Andy went on to point out some other details, like a motorized pullout unit, another Blum product, for a trash

container and compost bin; a pull-out stainless steel shelf meant as a landing pad for pots and



pans coming out of the double ovens; and a grate that covers a skylight left over from another job.

Most of his work is for clients he has worked with for a long time, but he does bring new clients to the home selectively. Recently, after seeing his dining room, clients ordered a table and chairs. His favorite things about the home are the front door, the screens that Kalia built, and also the tansu-cabinet of elm in the kitchen. Asked if he is satisfied with everything, he says, no, but mainly, he is. And the membership, too, was satisfied with the meeting, and showed it with a big round of applause for Andy's tour and in appreciation of his years of dedicated work. Somewhat after 9 pm, the evening ended in a swirl of cookies, tea and conversations.

Artistry in Wood 2013 Important Schedule Change

The 2013 Artistry in Wood Show has been rescheduled to be held three weeks later than originally planned. The Show will now open to the public on Saturday September 21st. This will be the 25th Annual Artistry in Wood Show at the Sonoma County Museum. For those entering work in the Show, new schedule information and Entry Forms can be found on the SCWA website, www.sonomawoodworkers.com. Entry Forms will also be available at the Museum on entry day. Entry Day is Wednesday, September 11th between 9 am and 4 pm. If you wish to enter the Show and this change in Show schedule means that you cannot deliver your entry on Entry Day, please contact Bill Taft at wghtaft@aol.com or call Bill at (707) 794-8025 to make other arrangements.

New Show Schedule

Wednesday, September 11th, 9 am to 4 pm - Entry Day

**Wednesday, September 18th, 7 pm - Judging and
Annual Show Awards Meeting**

Saturday, September 21st, - Show Opening Day

**Tuesday, October 15th, - September SCWA Meeting at
the Museum**

Sunday, October 20th, - Show Closing.

**Monday, October 21st, 9 am to 4 pm - Pick-up day for
all entries**



Red Tail by Bill Taft

Directions to Arborica

From Santa Rosa, go to Cotati, take Gravenstein H'wy west to Stony Point Rd, turn left and take a right at Mecham Road, turn right onto Pepper Rd and then right onto Bodega Avenue. Take the second left onto Tomales Road, and continue onto Tomales-Petaluma Road and then onto CA-1 southbound, then turn left onto 5600 Marshall-Petaluma Road.



From Petaluma: Take D St and proceed to Point Reyes-Petaluma Road, turn right onto Hicks Valley Rd, then left onto Marshall Petaluma Rd. Destination will be on the right. Address again is 5600 Marshall Petaluma Road, Marshall, CA 94940

Further important details: There is no sign on the road for Arborica. It is on the same property as Strauss Family Dairy. Since I haven't been there in a while, I asked Michael Cullen for some advice about getting there, so when you get close to the address, look sharp. Here is what Michael Cullen has to say: "The Shively lumberyard is indeed next to the Strauss dairy processing facility. There are two roads off of M/P (on the right) that lead into the lumberyard; essentially they are side-by-side. I prefer the second because it leads you directly into Evan's compound whereas the first will take you past Strauss and then you'll have to make a right down a fairly rough road over to Evan's place, which is marked by a large sign that reads "S2" out on the M/P. Just past the turn off to his place, the main road swings right and begins to climb--that's an indicator that you've gone too far." - A.H.

Making Music with Wood

by Joe Scannell

Some readers of this publication may have come across this URL in their net surfing: <http://blogs.kqed.org/makingof/2012/11/09/the-making-of-a-violin/>

I found it to be a very interesting story about a very interesting woodworker. But let me start at the beginning. My daughter, a woodcarver, heard about this video while listening to NPR, and sent me the link. Now this is the amazing part: she then (don't ask me how) contacted the man and arranged a "field trip" to his shop for me and my woodworking father. So on Friday morning, as sort of a pre-Father's Day outing, we journeyed south to the City and met Remo Del Tredici, a self-effacing and genial man who has logged 93 years on the planet.

We began with a visit to the music room, where he has a collection of more than 30 violins hanging on the walls.



These are by no means all the violins he has produced. As mentioned in the video, he has sold or given away many of his instruments already. He then whisked us down to his shop, a snug little cubbyhole that seemed just the right size for the work he was doing. He has efficiently arranged a lathe, table-saw, bandsaw, drill press, disk sander, workbench, and storage into perhaps less than 120 square feet.

He began by showing us a shop-made wood form around which he constructs the violin. He had several of these forms, one for each size or style he wanted to build. They were predrilled for clamp locations. He then took us through the steps in building a violin, starting with temporarily lightly gluing two small blocks

to the form. Next he bends the figured maple sides with the aid of a hot pipe, and glues them into place



with hide glue. He uses spruce for the soundboard (aka the "belly" or the front). The best timber is from Croatia, a place with harsh winters, cut from trees that grew on a certain side of the hill (I can't remember which side), then air-dried for ten years minimum. He edge joins two quartersawn spruce boards for the front, and two flame maple boards for the back. Both of these assemblies taper from about 1/2" down through the center to about 1/4" at each side. He then traces the outline of the instrument using the glued-up sides, and cuts it out a bit oversized. This is followed by cutting the F-holes (with a knife), purfling the edges, and lots of carving, starting with the outer face. A violin front is essentially convex, although there are a couple of "dimples."



When the outer face is satisfactory, he uses carving gouges to thin the board from the inside to exact thicknesses according to a "road map" passed down from previous makers, probably from Strad himself!

There is much more to the process: shaping the back, carving the neck and mortising it into the body, adding the ebony fingerboard, and, of course, finishing. He often starts with an application of bichromate or gamboge. This latter is an interesting dye, obtained from the resin of a variety of trees that grow in SE Asia. The pigment varies from saffron to mustard yellow, and is the traditional dye used for Buddhist monks' robes. The name gamboge derives from Gambogia, the Latin name for Cambodia. After coloring the wood, many coats of varnish, sometimes also colored, are applied. Only varnish is used - nothing else has the right sound quality. In fact, many experts believe that Stradivarius' real "secret" was his varnish, the recipe for which has been lost.



Remo estimates he can build a violin in about one week, if he applies himself 8-10 hours per day. That estimate does not include finishing. Perhaps the most interesting thing I learned from meeting this man was how he got started. He was a mechanic by trade. When he was eighty years old, he decided to take violin lessons (which he still does). After playing for awhile, he thought, "I can build one of these." And so

Near the end of the project comes a tricky operation, placing the sound post. This is essentially a dowel roughly 2" long which is placed between the front and back. Slightly too long, it acts as a spreader and is held in place only by pressure. Glue cannot be used, because it is necessary to move it around slightly to find the most responsive location. So it is gingerly inserted through an F-hole and stood up with tweezers, and moved around with a long hook tool. String tension has already preloaded a bit of pressure on the soundboard, and this pressure holds the post where it is placed. Then the instrument is played, the sound evaluated, and the position tweaked as necessary until the sound is just right. By the way, if you decide to restring your Guarneri, do it one string at a time. If you release all the string pressure, the sound post may move or fall out, and you'll be making a trip to Remo's shop!

he did, learning from books he gathered along the way. Before heading home, we returned to the music room for a recital on two of his favorite instruments. He obviously was enjoying himself, and treated us to several pieces which he sight-read beautifully. Then, on the way out the door, Remo and my father (who is 89) began swapping joint-replacement stories, and Remo advised, "You just hang in there." Happy Father's Day.

Looking for Your Input

The staff of the Wood Forum is considering a "Letters to the Editor" column, and perhaps an occasional special article featuring the current work of an individual member. Please contribute your suggestions, photographs, stories, etc. - J.A.S.

Officers of the Association

<u>Chairman</u>	Bob Moyer	762-3713	<u>Secretary</u>	Steve Thomas	568-7062
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Wood Forum is the monthly newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association. Please feel free to submit articles and photographs for inclusion in the publication. You can send your submissions to the Wood Forum Editor at SCWAMESSAGES@gmail.com. Advertisements are also accepted with a per-entry cost of \$5 per column inch.

Membership Application

I would like to join the SCWA to meet other people interested in the craft, the art and the business of fine wood-working. Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$35 for the annual dues. I understand that this fee entitles me to attend monthly meetings and to receive the Wood Forum newsletter by email or via the SCWA's website.

[] I am enclosing an additional \$15 to receive the Forum by regular mail.

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Please send check and completed application to:

Sonoma County Woodworkers Association, PO Box 4176, Santa Rosa, CA 95402