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HETHER YOU ARE a skilled amateur or professional woodworker—or even an enthusiast who wants to explore your own creativity while learning new skills—there may be a place for you at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship.

The world-renowned school draws students from dozens of states and several countries to its 18-acre campus on the Oyster River just outside of Rockport, Maine. Inside four barn-like red buildings, students immerse themselves in woodworking activities, from traditional crafts like carving or marquetry to 21st-century techniques such as CNC (computer numeric control) mill-

ing. Class sizes are intimate, with no more than 12 in any one course.

While there is definitely time for some fun (in good weather, there's always a Thursday night potluck and a weekly game of croquet), this is a serious school with a stellar reputation in the international furniture-making community. Classes are taught by well-known visiting and on-staff studio furniture makers with years, if not decades, of experience.

It's no mere craft school. "When you learn furniture-making or woodworking here, you're not just learning techniques," says founder Peter Korn. "You are also im-



**TOP:** Students break for an impromptu game of croquet on the campus lawn. **ABOVE:** A student in one of the three Intensives held each year.

## CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Weekend community workshops, one- to two-week courses on a single area of focus, and 12-week intensive courses are offered in a variety of furniture and turning techniques. A nine-month comprehensive program for aspiring furniture makers runs September to June.

- BASIC WOODWORKING** June 5–16; July 3–14; July 31–Aug. 11; Aug. 28–Sept. 8 Two-week introduction to furniture making, focusing on traditional skills including hand-cutting mortise-and-tenon and dovetail joints and completion of a simple piece. \$1,380
  - INTRODUCTION TO RELIEF CARVING** June 5–9 Learn the art using V-chisel and curved gouges. Students draw and carve designs in shallow relief, learning to visualize overlapping elements and layering techniques. \$770
  - DRAWER MAKING** June 19–23 Learn to make traditional inset drawers and fit them into a case with techniques including half-blind and through dovetail joinery; cutting bottom grooves, and planing stock. \$770
  - LEARN TO TURN** July 3–7 Learn basic techniques for spindle, end-grain, and face-plate turning. \$770
  - THE ARTFUL SPOON** Aug. 14–18 Use spoon carving as a springboard to creative carving and design. Curriculum includes historical precedent, traditional hand carving techniques, and use of power tools. \$770
  - CHAIR MAKING** Sept. 11–22 Students create their own chair designs, using techniques ranging from steam bending to jig-making, and joinery for curved and angled components. \$1,380
  - TURNED AND LIDDED BOXES** Oct. 9–13 Intermediate turners advance their skills by creating lidded forms such as bowls and boxes, and two-piece hollow forms such as bottles and urns. \$770



**LEFT:** Students hand shave wood stock in the Windsor chair class.  
**BOTTOM LEFT:** Carving wood spoons can be a springboard to creative sculpture and design.  
**BELOW:** Hand-turned wood bowls are by Mark Gardner, a teacher at the turning Intensive.



mersed in learning how to design, how to find your voice. Everyone designs every project they build, almost entirely, and that's quite distinctive."

All three workshop buildings are laid out the same way. There's a bench room, where every student has his or her own European-style work bench, a classroom for instruction and critiques, and a well-equipped machine room with full dust collection and an array of table saws, planers, jointers, and other tools scaled for fine furniture building.

The Center helps students arrange for housing in the area (a private room in a house shared with other students is \$325 per week, for example), but many

participants bring their families and turn their visits into family vacations. Rockport is one of the most beautiful spots on Maine's mid-coast, with opportunities for world-class sailing, kayaking, hiking, and other adventures, including the pursuit of the perfect lobster roll.

The school and its instructors believe in using and teaching a combination of hand skills and machine skills. "We're not Luddites who think you need to do everything by hand all the time," Korn says. "But we are keenly aware that to do the finest work, you have to be able to use hand tools well.

"One of the things that's special about the school is the degree to which everything is open and built on trust." Students simply write down whatever materials and lumber they take from the school's stores and settle the bill at the end of the course.

Participants may eat, breathe, and sleep woodworking, but the environment also allows them to detach from other aspects of daily life. "The world has stopped for me in a way that it hasn't in I can't tell you how many years," said one attendee of a 12-week course. "And that's

been just a wonderful experience."

When a finished piece of work is as tangible as a piece of furniture, the level of satisfaction is hard to match. "You learn a level of quality that you won't learn from most other things in life," said the late Craig Satterlee, the Center's founding board president. "In furniture making, if you design your own work, you'll never see anything like that again."

The campus is open to visitors every weekday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Messler Gallery, which holds ongoing shows of work by past and present students and faculty, is open up to seven days a week depending on the season. Visitors are always welcome. **Center for Furniture Craftsmanship**, Rockport, Maine: (207) 594-5611, woodschool.org \*





**The nonprofit school** was begun nearly 25 years ago in the backyard of founder and executive director Peter Korn. A furniture maker since 1974, he is the author of multiple books on the craft, design, and philosophy of woodworking, including *Why We Make Things* and *Why it Matters: The Education of a Craftsman* (David R. Godine, Publisher, 2013).

Korn realized early that the school needed help to complete its mission. In 2001, unable to keep pace with the number of students who wanted to take its courses, the Center's Board of Directors launched a successful \$2.4 million capital campaign, establishing the beginnings of an endowment. A large part of the money came from the program's 400 alumni. Another \$3 million was raised in 2012 to fund scholarships, raise faculty pay, and begin a visiting artist program.

The Center offers six studio fellowships to woodworkers who want a place to work full time developing new designs or perfecting new skills. The fellows have free, round-the-clock access to the furniture-making facility, the Thomas Miller Jackson Building, and the Center's library.

**TOP:** An Amish student arrives by horse and buggy; Melody is the horse's name. **BELOW:** School founder Peter Korn is a master furniture maker and the author of numerous woodworking books.



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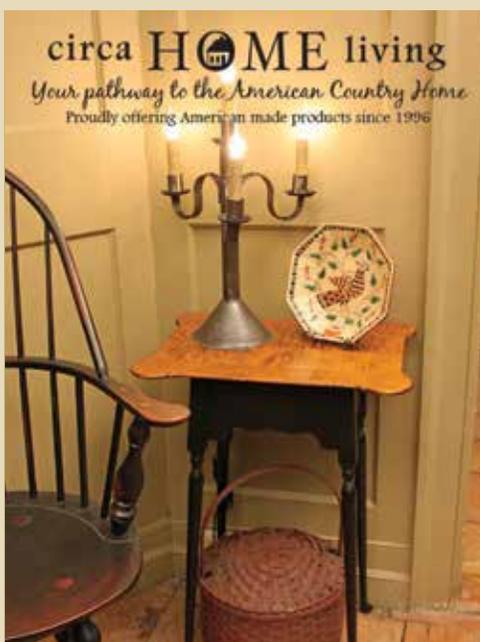


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