

• solid wood excellence since 1978 •

# WOOD CASTLE Times



Fall 2002

FOUNDER AND  
PRESIDENT OF  
WOOD CASTLE



## Some Words from Ron Loe

While traveling with my family by car to Arkansas in July, we passed within sight of ravaging Colorado wildfires. Looking into the pall, I thought how easy it would be for most folks to despair of the grandeur vaporizing into towering clouds of smoke. They probably couldn't imagine these forests growing tall and strong again someday.

But, oh, how I can imagine.

A devastating fire razed our production plant one evening in April 1996. The next day, I looked at the smoldering ruins representing 18 years of commitment. No words could describe my distress. I knew that even before the ashes cooled, I must find the strength to make a tough decision: quit or rebuild?

My bankers gave lousy odds: a very small percentage of companies survive rebuilding after fires, they said. And outside the bank, only one business associate gave me much reason to be optimistic. The nay-sayer chorus was deafening.

I looked back at my heritage, then deep into my heart. The Loe family in Norway built furniture. My American roots were deep into forest products. And how could I forsake a dedicated staff and crew, not to mention our wonderful customers? How could I leave what I loved—working with wood.

I don't normally gamble, but I had to bet against the nay-sayers.

Thankfully, I—no, we—won. We rebuilt. Stronger, smarter, better.

Luck, of course, played a part in our rebirth, but three P's—pride, patience and perseverance—figured at least as prominently. Customers and creditors were understanding (I didn't say happy), as we moonlighted with leased space and equipment, slowly struggling back to life.

Nightly exhausted, a fourth P, our passion for building great furniture, helped us reenergize for the next day.

The smoke will clear from the scorched forest of the West, as it has from our old factory's ashes. Dormant seeds will germinate and tiny trees will take root. The grandeur will return. Nature is proud and patient and persevering. And, thankfully, it is passionately deaf to nay-sayers.

*Announcing:*

A contest to challenge your knowledge

**Know the Answer? You could win a Bed.**

Wood Castle Furniture has enjoyed wonderful growth over the past several years, thanks in full to the great efforts of "front-line" store managers and sales associates. We wish we could reward each of you some how, but of course that is

not possible. But we've come up with an idea: Why not have a contest—one that encourages participation? Here's the idea:

Each newsletter we will pose a question about furniture. A question that tests knowledge, that makes you think. You send us your answers. We have a drawing from all those who answered correctly to determine a winner. The winner gets a piece of Wood Castle Furniture on the next



normally scheduled truck/container to the store.

Sound fun? Then sharpen your pencils and flex your brains. The winner this time around gets a bed similar to that shown here (actual bed is item 3810a, maple twin).

**Question:** You've probably ingested this furniture finish in its other applications, though we doubt it put much polish on the inside of your tummy. What's the name of this venerable finish?

Send your answer to Wood Castle, c/o Fall Contest, 29855 Hwy 34, Albany OR 97321. Include a daytime phone number where you can be reached. Winner will be notified by letter and announced in upcoming Wood Castle Times newsletter.

Please, only managers and sales associates at authorized Wood Castle resellers may enter. Void where prohibited by law.

Wood Castle Furniture

## Century Guarantee

We're as proud of the way our furniture looks as we are about the way it is crafted. Continuing Old World traditions, we use only premium grade materials, from the finest hardwoods to the best drawer hardware. We're so confident that our furniture is the finest made in America, we offer *the Wood Castle Century Guarantee:*

***Your family and heirs will enjoy Wood Castle style and craftsmanship for at least 100 years. Wood Castle warrants all its manufactured furniture against defects in original materials and workmanship for 100 years from the date of purchase.***

## Face to Face

meet Team Wood Castle

John Smart

## Sawdust and Whitewater



His serious ice-blue eyes gazing out from under the bill of his cap, John Smart recalls what he's done in his 52 years. Among other highlights, he recounts schlepping Goodyear tires, monitoring dials on a Navy nuclear sub, and generating miles of bookkeeping adding machine tape for an Oregon gaming casino.

But now he enjoys "making sawdust" for Wood Castle in the Assembly Dept. It's a natural complement to his home hobby of watching the wood chips fly while hand carving wood pieces.

John's been at Wood Castle for three years, a couple of years less than his hearing-impaired brother, Eric. The oldest of six siblings, John signs to Eric during company meetings.

Both brothers, along with other local kinfolk, look forward to the Mill City Bob, their name for their annual family raft trip challenge. They put in where the slack water perfectly reflects Oregon's deep blue summer sky. Soon enough, however, the river churns into wells and walls of wild foam. Everybody has fun, even as they all get soaked.

John looks down at his clipboard as he shuffles through the dog-eared, saw-dusty pages. There it is: a picture of him and his raft swallowed in river froth. He sets the clipboard down, looks up and smiles, thawing his ice-blue gaze just a bit.

## Contacting Wood Castle

*We welcome your comments, questions and visits.*

### Manufacturing and Showroom address:

29855 HWY 34 / Albany, OR 97321

### Mailing address:

P.O. Box 805 / Corvallis, OR 97339

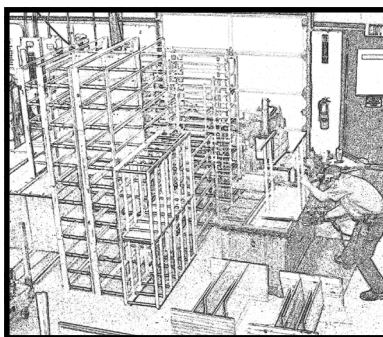
541-754-9304 voice / 541-754-0511 fax

### On the Net:

www.woodcastle.com / info@woodcastle.com

... did you know?

## Furniture Facts: Internal web frames



## Skin and Bones

Often buying furniture is like falling in love as a teenager: only what can be seen on the outside is important. Skin-deep beauty trumps everything.

Wood Castle Furniture believes that good looks may ultimately lead to disappointed frowns when shortcuts in construction compromise a cabinet's integrity and usefulness.

Many early cabinetmakers could not take shortcuts. Poor performing horsehide glues available at the time required building a case around a skeletal internal web frame. This frame, typically of hardwood, served at least two purposes: (1) it compensated for the weak joinery; and, (2) it

provided a stable, somewhat independent structure to accommodate drawers.

Many of today's case goods manufacturers skip this traditional step of cabinetry. They rely instead on the vastly improved wood glues available today. Why bother with a web frame when joints now can be locked so solid?

Wood Castle, too, employs the new adhesives. But it honors traditional cabinetry as well. The extra expense of an internal web frame, it feels, "buys" confidence, trust and lifetime satisfaction—solid foundation blocks helping to connect our family company to our family customers.

But there's more to internal web frames than tradition.

Take "racking," for instance. Racking is the twisting stress visited upon case goods when placed on uneven floors or when muscled around. Twisting multiplies loads and stresses on the weakest joints. Good glues protect the interface joint to a point, but persistent racking can lead to sudden structural failure. Like bones in our bodies, web frames help hold up a case good against normal and abusive loads.

Precision drawer fit and function is another advantage afforded by a web frame. Wood Castle's drawer accuracy ( $\pm 0.01$ -inch) is not possible without a supporting internal frame. In fact, same-size drawers from one of our collections will fit perfectly well in any other cabinet, no matter the collection.

Wood Castle's mission: provide durable all-wood fine furniture whose beauty is much, much more than skin deep.

## Report Card: give us a grade

## 12 easy questions

We normally quote from "end-user" customers in this space. In this edition, however, we'd like to ask you, our front-line sales forces, to share your thoughts about Wood Castle by responding to a short survey. There is no obligation to respond, of course, but your answers are important to how we help you. Please take a moment to review and respond to the following:

*(Note: Please answer each question with a "grade" from 1 to 5, with 1 representing excellent and 5 representing poor. Only one number answer per question. Please answer anonymously, but let us know your sales force status (manager, asst. manager, sales associate, etc.). Mail your responses to Wood Castle Furniture, c/o JB/Customer Care, 29855 Hwy 34, Albany OR 97321.)*

1. Grade Wood Castle's "fit and finish"
2. Grade Wood Castle's price point for beds
3. Grade Wood Castle's price point for case goods
4. Grade Wood Castle's price point for occasional tables
5. Grade Wood Castle's on-time-as-promised delivery
6. Grade Wood Castle's performance in satisfying your customer service (phone, fax or letter) requests
7. Grade Wood Castle's overall performance as a vendor
8. Grade Wood Castle's furniture styling—Cascadia
9. Grade Wood Castle's furniture styling—Tuscany
10. Grade Wood Castle's furniture styling—Occasional tables
11. Grade Wood Castle's support of your sales efforts (in materials, manufacturing rep visits, etc.)
12. Grade the average potential buyer's reaction to Wood Castle furniture, as displayed on your floor.

## Musical chairs, anyone?

The sole intact deck chair from the Titanic is displayed at a museum in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Pay \$3 Canadian, and you marvel at the finely crafted mahogany relic, which seems to beckon ... your eyes blur ... you're snugly reclined under a laphrow, listening to the band striking up *Nearer My God To Thee*, and you raise your champagne to toast the calm cruise ... and then you remember that you forgot to pay your last life insurance premium.