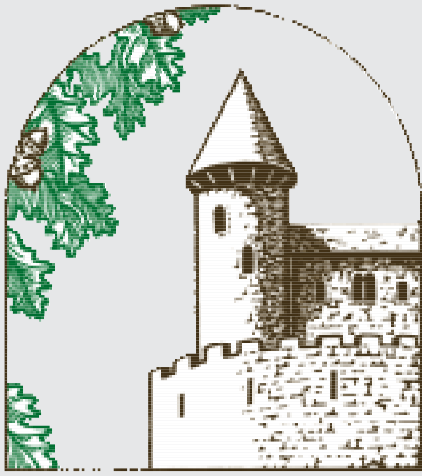


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# WOOD CASTLE Times



Winter 2002-2003

FOUNDER AND  
PRESIDENT OF  
WOOD CASTLE



## Some Words from Ron Loe

Today, forget where an item's made or how it gets to whatever store. If it's in inventory and looks worth the price, it sells at the speed of a credit card swipe. To borrow a phrase: We're not in North Carolina anymore, Toto.

We may as well be in ... well, in China, where lower labor and other costs are just above the dirt floors.

Bottom line for my company: How do we wrestle an 800-pound Asian tiger, whom pundits predict may force 60% of domestic furniture manufacturers offshore or bankrupt in 10 years?.

Bad news? We don't think so. We aim to be the best among the 40% who remain.

How? The key, in my view, is focusing not on China but on what we can and already provide for customers that others cannot:

- **Value.** State-of-the-art equipment, information systems and experienced craftspeople yield high quality, guaranteed furniture at excellent price points.
- **Delivery.** We expedite product and service quickly and personally. When you talk to Wood Castle, you talk to people, not a spreadsheet.
- **Design cycles.** From concept to production: we can introduce new lines within weeks, far faster than is possible offshore—and often onshore.
- **In the forest.** Wood Castle's location in the Northwest positions it close to wood resources, saving on time and freight.
- **Passion.** No one is more passionate about building fine furniture than my company. Our size nurtures this passion. Our handshake proves it.

China – like Japan, Korea and Mexico before it – one day will be too expensive. In the meantime we will continue to concentrate on what's important to furniture buyers. It's what we've always done best.

# innovation

Merriam-Webster: **Innovation**, *noun*.

1. The introduction of something new; 2. a new idea, method or device.



What does a hand-hewn stick of vine maple (*acer cirinatum*) have to do with innovation?

Glad you asked. We were up in the Coast Range of Oregon a few miles to the west of our plant when we chanced upon a vine maple plant. We pondered this species for a while as rain clouds gathered. Native to the Pacific Northwest, it resembles other varieties of maple (see article on Oregon maple on reverse) but is more shrub than tree and can often be wider than tall. It is especially prominent as an understory in old forests; it's also one of the first species to grow in forests disturbed by fire or logging.

We wondered if this otherwise un-commercial maple had any commercial value to our company. It's abundant, growing like a weed (woodland owners hate it) throughout the Northwest.

We don't know yet about the value. What's important at this stage, however, is that we "got out of the box." We stripped the bark off the piece you see here, and when we got home we popped it in the microwave. Why? Well, we wanted to see how it dried. We set the microwave for two minutes. We could see steam hissing out the ends, like cigar smoke. When we removed the stick, we were surprised by what we saw, a result we would never have anticipated.

There was no checking, no cracking, no splitting. No other wood that we know of behaves this way.

So what? We're not sure where all this may lead. But we are confident that our little encounter with vine maple one day will lead to an innovation. Rustic drawer pulls? Head- and footboard spindles? Lots more experimentation will have to be done before we embrace this species for accenting.

But that's how we work at Wood Castle. Whether it's from a trip in the woods or watching the waves on the Oregon Coast, we never stop searching for new ideas.

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 among the finest made anywhere, 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



Steve Holley

**Duck!**

What do you say to someone who learned boxing at five, can probably crush a softball in his hand, and is so big he probably scares his own shadow?

Usually a “Hi, Steve,” is all that’s necessary.

Gentle, generous and genuine: these words help describe Steve Holley. He’s near his fourth anniversary with Wood Castle, and is an important team leader in the manufacturing division. Whether on the chop saw or transferring hardwood with the forklift, Steve’s enthusiasm is as broad as his grin.

Smiling, Steve remembers his mother with affection: “She was my best friend, my mentor.” In a big house and property on the central Oregon coast she raised Steve, eight brothers and sisters, a slew of foster kids, and ... he’s lost count.

Dad died when he was 12, but not before teaching him how to throw – and take – a punch. In 1979 he earned the Oregon Heavyweight Golden Gloves Championship belt. Even as a pro, he “never kissed the canvas, never lost.”

Steve stepped out of the ring years ago. And off the ball diamond, too: after 25 years, he no longer plays softball. Today, work, three daughters, five sons and one grandson are his universe. “They mean everything to me,” he says.

Well, almost everything. Ask him about the University of Oregon sports teams. He’s a hardcore Duck fan. All the way down to his shadow.

## Contacting Wood Castle

We welcome your comments, questions and visits.

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www.woodcastle.com / info@woodcastle.com

... did you know?

## Furniture Facts: Oregon Maple

Pass the syrup?



*Acer macrophyllum* Pursch. Big leaf maple. Western maple. Oregon maple.

They’re all the same. Native in a narrow corridor along the western edge of North America (California to Canada/SE Alaska), Oregon maple is Wood Castle’s most oft-used hardwood.

Compared to eastern U.S. varieties (sugar maple is the most well known), Oregon maple is faster growing (up to 80 feet in 20 years; 100 feet at maturity) and usually less dense in grain and not quite as hard. Oregon maple, seed genealogists tell us, has closer European kin due to Ice Age seed distribution.

Whatever its heritage, the wood is abundant and widely used. And not just for fine furniture manufacturing. According to a local stringed instrument maker, Oregon maple’s grain makes it a natural for the rich, warm tones of cellos.

Historically, indigenous folks used the inner bark for fashioning ropes, baskets and clothing; tribal cooks used the inner bark uses for thickening soups, cereals and breads. Today’s products include veneers, flooring, the occasional jug of syrup, and, of course, furniture.

Yet few manufacturers choose Oregon maple. Part of the reason may be geographical. The great majority of American furniture builders are concentrated on the East Coast. But another reason may be grain. Traditional planing, molding and sanding techniques are problematic with Oregon maple. But Wood Castle, over years of research and refinement, has perfected techniques and tools for working with this beautiful wood species.

According to Ron Loe, Wood Castle’s founder, Oregon maple performs better than its domestic cousins in a critical area: dimensional stability. It is less apt to warp or split due to humidity and temperature swings. Ron also notes that Oregon maple color is less bland, its warm tone reminiscent of un-aged cherry wood.

With abundant nearby supply, and with proprietary tools and technology, Wood Castle Furniture proudly produces some the world’s finest – and most beautiful – maple furniture.

## Win-a-bed contest

# ...the envelope, please

**Fall Contest** Name a venerable furniture finish that you can ingest. The clue is the word “venerable,” hinting that this finish has been around a long, long time. The answer: **Shellac**, processed from the crushed and ground up bodies of the tiny lac bug native to parts of Asia. Pill capsules and waxy apple coatings use shellac. Cabinetmakers past and present like it for ease of use and quick drying. Its downside: easily marred with moisture (though easily repaired).

While no one correctly answered this question, we decided to do a drawing anyway from all entrants. The winner is: **Nelly Corbilla**. Nelly works at the **Woodland Hills Plumbers** store in Southern California. Congratulations, Nelly!

**Winter Contest** This issue’s challenge is: **How many commonly used English words can you derive from ... oh, what the heck ... from “shellac”?** Here are the rules:

- Each word must use only those letters comprising SHELLAC, and no more often than each appears in SHELLAC
- To simplify, no plurals ending in S are allowed

We have no idea how many words there might actually be embedded in SHELLAC, but we came up with over 20. So, give a try. Everybody starts with a free word, SHELLAC. The person who comes up with the most words wins the bed (a Maple Meadowbrook Youth 3810a twin).

**Fine print:** Send answers with your business card and phone number to Wood Castle, c/o Winter 2002/2003 Contest, 29855 Hwy 34, Albany OR 97321. Only managers and sales associates at authorized Wood Castle sellers/distributors of Wood Castle products may enter. Void where prohibited. The winner will be advised by phone, and his/her name will be published in the next edition of the Wood Castle Times. Delivery is at the discretion of Wood Castle.

**Lowly Furniture?** Typically made of scrap wood, shoeshine boxes often featured a heel-and-sole rest secured to the lid. Inside the box were all the tricks of the bootblack: cloth rags, polishes, cleaners, brushes. “Finished” with the smears and smudges of daily use, we doubt Sotheby’s and Christie’s (or eBay!) may ever request bids on shoeshine boxes. But these humble boxes launched more than one poor child into prosperity, if not fame. A recent example: Alejandro Toledo, Stanford Ph.D. and now president of Peru.