



WOOD CASTLE FURNITURE

Times

*"fine people making fine furniture"
— since 1978 —*

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Beyond the Sawdust...

Ron Loe: President



Productivity's up.

And so are costs...

Inflation. It's a scary topic, especially among those of us who remember the steep price inflation of the late '70s, early '80s. From gas to grain and dollars to donuts, consumer prices were more on Monday than on the previous Friday. While savers did well, spenders panicked. It was not a fun time.

Things are not so bleak today. Nationally, we've enjoyed years of relatively stable prices. Productivity has risen, spurred greatly by the phenomenal rise of digital information technologies and resultant efficiencies.

Climbing efficiencies in information technologies, however, may not slow some recent, darker realities. Crude oil prices pushing \$50-a-barrel may point to the end of relatively cheap supply. Steel is up ... and climbing. So's milk. National budget and trade deficits are squeezing the dollar, pressing interest rates up.

Furniture manufacturers, of course, are not immune to these realities. Wood Castle doesn't need milk to build furniture, but steel (tools, hardware, buildings) and oil (transportation, finishes, heating) are big numbers in our budget. And then there's raw lumber: all species are climbing in cost, with cherry leading the pack. In short: while our gains in productivity are significant, they're outpaced by materials costs.

On the plus side: Wood Castle continues its initiatives to increase efficiency, control costs and improve service. And our mission remains unchanged: blending great people (read *Meet the Team*, back side), high precision (read *Drawers*, this side) and family pride in the manufacture of heritage wood furniture.

A final word: Consumers ultimately shop value — that's where price and quality intersect for each shopper. While price is keenly important at the time of sale, quality is a much longer-term consideration with respect to value. I believe customers, with our help, can easily understand this distinction. Even in these inflationary times.

As strong as a castle ...

Wood Castle Drawers

... handcrafted for life

Wood Castle's manufacturing philosophy focuses on details. And nowhere are details more important than in the construction of our drawers. Last issue we boasted about how strong our case goods are. Yet drawers do the real work, day in and day out. Below is the story of how our drawers are crafted, step by step. We think you'll agree that our drawers are world-class — fit for world-class customers.

Drawer assembly begins with the solid wood drawer front. A template determines how far each drawer side is inserted into the front's dovetail grooves. Dovetails and dados are precisely cut in Parts Production to ± 0.005 -inch accuracy.

Before assembling the drawer sides and bottom, a slow-drying wood glue is squeezed into the drawer-front grooves. Wood glue is extraordinarily strong — stronger even than the wood itself.

A drawer side is slid into the front's dovetail groove. Inset shows a side fully inserted. Sliding dovetail joints offer notable advantages, including superior strength and repeatedly accurate construction.

Staples augment the glue bond (Step 2) to assure a tight and strong joint. With two "legs," not one, staples are superior to nails or brads in holding power.

The three-ply bottom is inserted into the drawer side grooves until it traps into the drawer front. Note inset showing the bottom and side interface. In select chest and dresser drawers, the top ply of the drawer bottom is insect-repellant aromatic cedar, viewable in Step 6.

The drawer back is installed, completing the basic drawer box assembly. It locks precisely into the side dados while trapping the drawer bottom (see inset, Step 5).



Continued on back



MEET THE TEAM WOOD CASTLE

His San Francisco Giants hat is covered with sawdust. The

Team Leader in Parts Production, and **Employee of the Year**, Tony Reynolds wears the dusty cap to Wood Castle every day, adding another thin layer each shift as he feeds parts into the beam saw. The dust may cover an insignia. But it can never cover his love of baseball.

Or his “player-coach” role in Parts, where he oversees critical steps in our manufacturing process. Parts’s challenge: to convert sawn and milled lumber into final “kits” for the Assembly Department. Tony and his team ably run the most highly technical equipment in the factory, producing parts within tight tolerances (± 0.005 -inch).

“I love being able to control the process,” the forty-two year-old says. He loves the challenge of keeping ahead of schedule. “Our department’s experienced crew — they’re the ones who makes my job a joy,” he said.

Regarding Wood Castle: “We’re growing fast, but I still know everybody by name,” he said. “It’s the people I like most about Wood Castle Furniture.”

The feeling is mutual. Tony received the Employee of the Year award at Wood Castle’s annual holiday banquet in December. This follows being honored as Employee of the Month twice in 2004. To earn these awards, an employee must be nominated by his peers. He must also demonstrate exemplary skills and leadership to his supervisors.

Being a caring fellow helps, too. Like when he began working at Wood Castle two-and-a-half years ago. Tony went to the library to learn sign language so he could communicate with a deaf member of the Parts Production Team.

“I’m still learning phrases, but I knew the alphabet in three or four days,” Tony said.

Tony and his wife Letha share the joys of three children, ages 12, 14 and 16. The family is very active in their church.

When there’s spare time, you might find Tony swinging at golf balls or casting a hopeful hook into the water.

It’s a better bet, in the summer at least, to find Tony watching a baseball game. With a dusty San Francisco Giants cap on his head.

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Staples secure each drawer side to the drawer back. Wood Castle drawers at this step rival the strongest in the industry, exhibiting superior materials, joinery and craftsmanship. But we go further ...

Before the wood glue dries and further assembly occurs, a carpenter’s square and a soft-rubber mallet assure every drawer is perfectly square at the corners.

Staples affix the bottom to both the back and front sides of the box. These staples lock the drawer box into its final trued shape, so essential to perfect performance.

On wider drawers, a 5/16-inch-thick hardwood strip is installed on the bottom, spanning front to back. Stapled to front and back, this reinforcing strip helps support heavy drawer loads without sag.

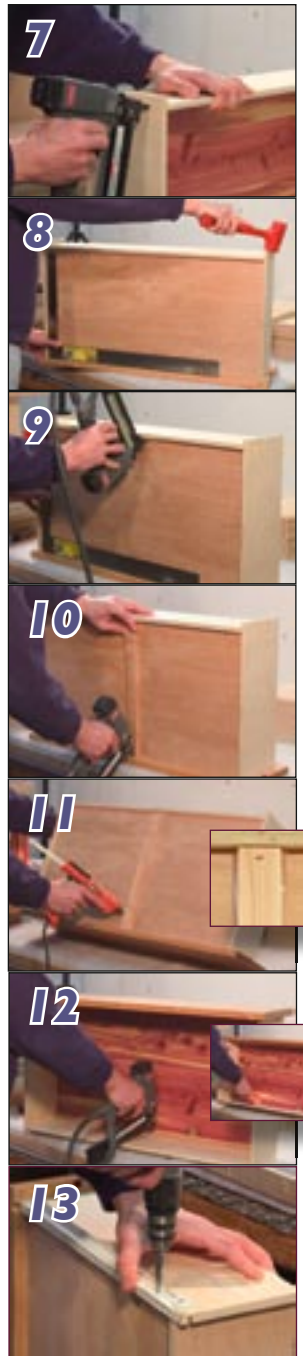
Fast-drying hot-melt glue seals all underside perimeter edges, including the reinforcing strip. This seal helps reduce drawer rattle. Inset shows glue detail.

A quarter-round hardwood dust molding is installed in the back of the drawer. It provides for easier cleaning without removing the drawer. Glueing (inset) and stapling the molding further strengthens the drawer.

The final step is the installation of drawer-glide hardware, rated for up to 125-pound capacity. Two screws secure the hardware after it is positioned against the drawer front.

At ± 0.01 -inch assembled accuracy, same-size Wood Castle drawers swap easily within the same collection.

From start to finish, Wood Castle’s precision-crafted drawers are built for lifetime performance. We guarantee it.



Wood you like to know? Trivia for lovers of natural wood.

In the early eighteenth century, a typical coastal redwood tree (*Sequoia Sempervirens*) might require a two-man team six twelve-hour days to cut down. And, as saws of the day were inadequate, loggers were limited to using to fell these towering giants, some reaching over 360 feet. In the right conditions, redwoods can grow up to six feet a year. Redwood is a great choice for outdoor furniture, as the wood has no significant pitch and is resistant to insects and harsh weather.

And the Wood Castle Contest Winner is ...

Linda Irish, a representative with one of our independent retailers (Newport Furnishings), supplied the best answer to last issue’s challenge. We asked for the longest common word you might spell using only the letters within the words, *lignum vitae* (a.k.a. ironwood). Linda’s offering: **VIGILANTE**. (Your editor’s best try was a not-so-commonly used eight-letter word, *MINUTIAE*.) Good work, Linda. For your efforts, you now have a \$250 credit toward a purchase from Wood Castle. **Watch for the next contest in the Spring edition of the Wood Castle Times.**