

Restoring with care

An Astoria craftsman works to repair historic furnishings

By DWIGHT CASWELL

“I’m not a fixit shop,” Jay Rosen says, “I’m a restoration shop. Think of it this way: I’m a car mechanic, not a dealer. There are an untold number of antique stores in the area, but I’m not one. I don’t sell retail.”

What Rosen does is clean things, repair them, add to them, or build something new. Rosen has repaired everything from old chairs to antique toys to a purser’s cabinet that graced a 19th century ship.

“We live in a world of broken things,” he says. “You can throw away a modern mixer, but family heirlooms have emotional attachments.”

People and businesses come to him with more than heirlooms. Perhaps they want their house to feel more comfortable, or they want to furnish a business with items that reflect the classic exterior of the building. His commercial clients include Carruthers, 3 Cups Coffee House and the Commodore Hotel. Rosen can re-cane your chairs or provide a shaker tape woven seat. He can refinish you grand-father’s console radio and build you just about anything you want in wood or metal.

“We see people fixing up their old homes,” he says, “but we don’t see that they’re fixing up the inside as well. They want historic furnishings to go with their restored houses.”



PHOTO BY DWIGHT CASWELL

Jay Rosen works to replace the original worn-out cane seat of an antique chair.

‘WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF BROKEN THINGS. YOU CAN THROW AWAY A MODERN MIXER, BUT FAMILY HEIRLOOMS HAVE EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS.’

Rosen’s interest in restoration goes back to a childhood spent on the shores of Chesapeake Bay and a father who was a talented woodworker. “Southern New England is a hotbed of arts and crafts,” Rosen says. “My passion comes from living with these things, and even as a kid I could see that they needed repair.”

Rosen considers the period from 1890 through 1920 to be the pinnacle of American design. “We

had production furniture shops in America then, and mills that wove rugs and textiles. We made our own wallpaper.” That period, he points out, was also the heyday of the lower Columbia region. Fishing and logging brought money to a growing community, and what wasn’t made here could be brought in by boat.

When styles changed or money became scarce, Rosen suggests, a lot of these furnishings even-

tually made their way into basements, attics and garages. Now there is a new appreciation of older things, and people want these objects back in the house — but they’re wondering, “Who can fix this?”

Enter Jay Rosen and his North Coast FIX shop.

“I’ve had people break into tears when they see something of their grandmother’s restored,” he says.

The expertise Rosen



PHOTO BY DWIGHT CASWELL

With his North Coast FIX business in Astoria, Jay Rosen restores and repairs historic furnishings.

North Coast FIX is located in the Pier 11 Mall. For more information, call Jay Rosen at 503-709-3989, or follow him at [facebook.com/NorthCoastFIX](https://www.facebook.com/NorthCoastFIX)

learned from his father has stood him in good stead. “Who else has the skills to repair these things?” he asks. But there’s more to it

than that. “It’s a business, yes, but I feel a responsibility to the community. The houses have outlived their builders and most of their owners, but the tangible possessions are still there. Whenever a period piece comes in, I look at what it needs. I tell the owner yes, I can fix it, or no, and how much. But I also think about the legacy, about all the people who have used and touched these things. It’s a sense of preservation.”