

The creation of fine furniture is also an art

During the past several years, artists of many talents have been profiled in this annual Vernonia Jamboree tabloid. One of the quieter artists in the community, Dan Brown, is also one of those who earns his living at the work he loves.

In 1977, while a student at Vernonia High School, Dan Brown didn't know what he would be exposed to when he started working part-time there. He was exposed to...wood!

More specifically, he started helping industrial arts teacher Terry Nimz, who was building cabinets for the Washington Grade School library and office. And he found a profession that allowed him to expand his artistic talents while earning a living.

But we're jumping too far ahead.

When Dan started attending Vernonia High School, in 1976, he and his Christian missionary parents had just moved back to the United States after spending seven years in Peru. After graduating from VHS, he attended Prairie Bible College in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada, where he earned a bachelor's degree in religious education.

Back in Vernonia, he started working for Cabinet Makers Inc., in Forest Grove, a national company that is now in Salem. Then he was employed by Oak Unlimited, when the well-known furniture manufacturers were working out of a backyard in Manning. Thirteen years ago, he decided to strike out on his own and started Hardwood Originals. Since that time, Dan's business has been in Manning, though in a building, not in a back yard.

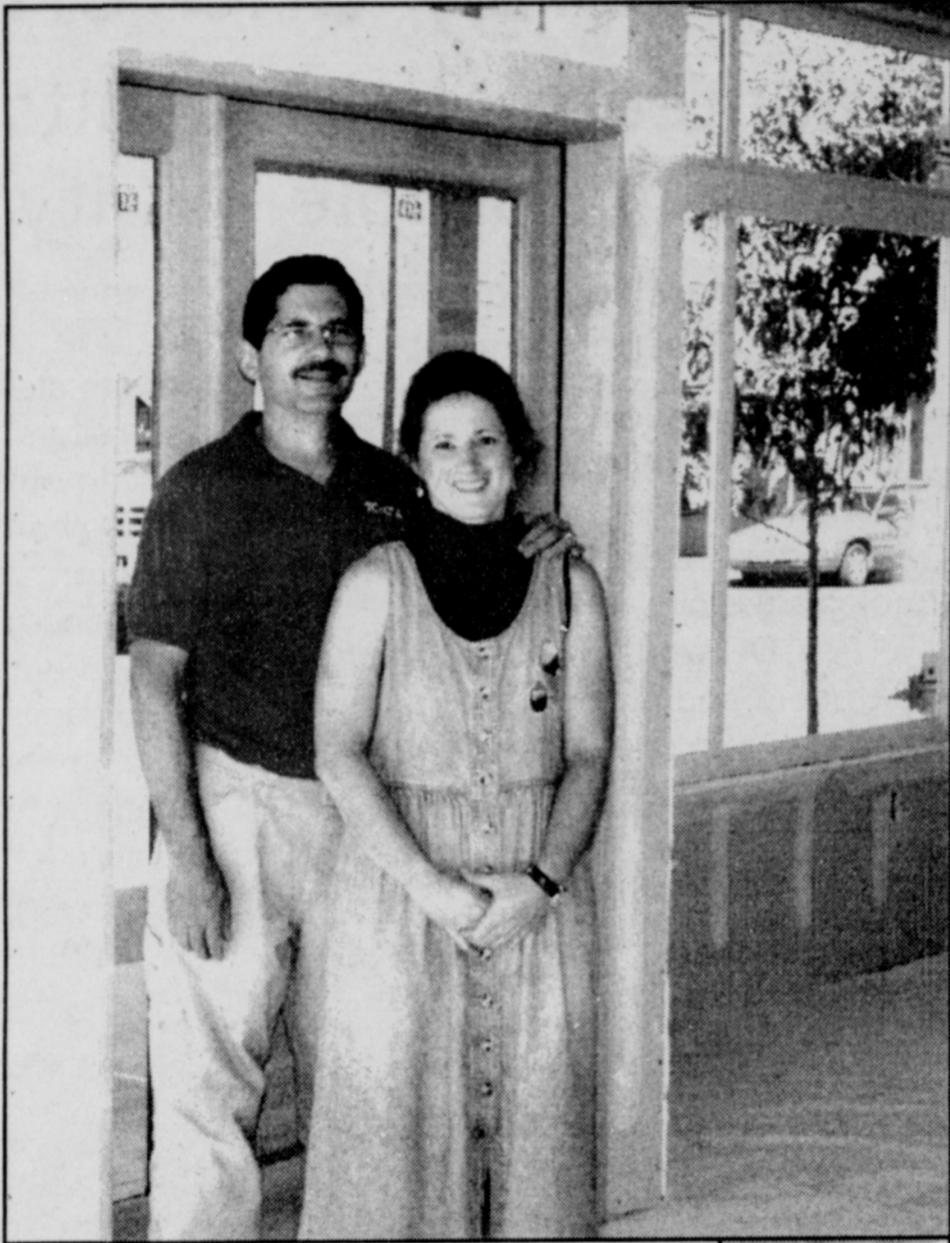
With control of his own business, Dan could incorporate his creative talents in wood-working with original designs, while continuing to make cabinets for kitchens, libraries and offices. Using hardwoods from South America, Africa, Indonesia and other locales, he also makes intricately inlaid table tops, chests and other custom furniture.

The designs are sometimes representative and sometimes purely abstract but, regardless of the design and regardless whether the furniture is meant to be decorative or utilitarian, they always feature the warmth and beauty of pure wood.

There is no particle board in the work manufactured by Hardwood Originals, Dan explained, and oak is still the most frequently used wood.

Dan and his wife, Heidi, who both do extensive volunteer work, have now embarked on a new venture. In August, their new building on the corner of Bridge Street and Madison Avenue will be home to Hardwood Originals and, in early fall they will open Grey Dawn Gallery in the front part of the building.

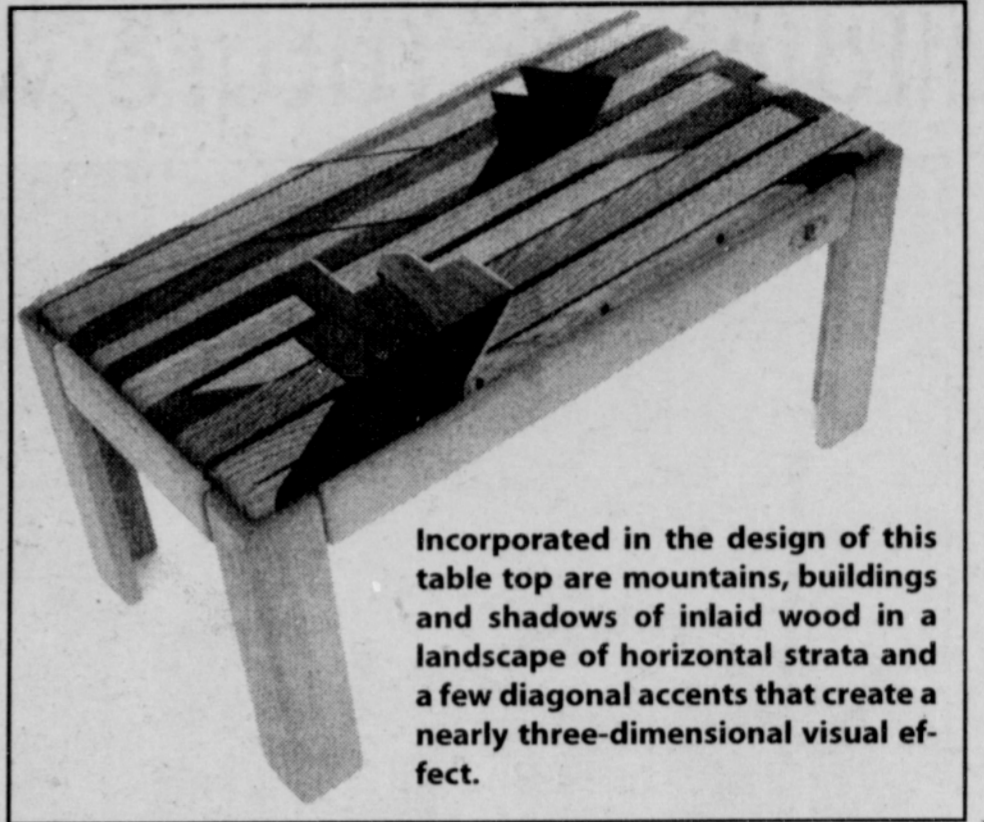
The gallery will display Dan's work, in addition to representing photographer Christopher Burkett and ceramicist Jeff Patterson. The Browns will also provide custom framing.



Dan and Heidi Brown in the, as yet, unfinished Grey Dawn Gallery. They plan to open the gallery in the early fall.

Although the gallery isn't open, you can get a preview on Saturday, August 5, and purchase raffle tickets for two Burkett posters — framed by Grey Dawn Gallery of course — as a benefit for Vernonia Cares. For details, see article on page five.

Detail at right shows vees of dark wood inlaid in the corners of a chest that is otherwise simply designed.



Incorporated in the design of this table top are mountains, buildings and shadows of inlaid wood in a landscape of horizontal strata and a few diagonal accents that create a nearly three-dimensional visual effect.

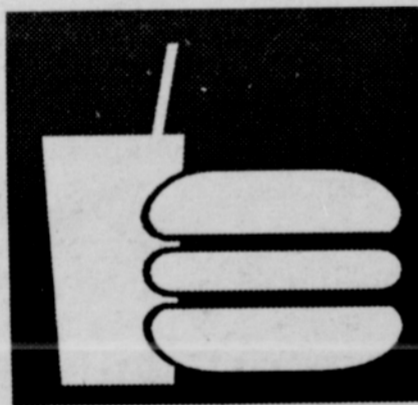
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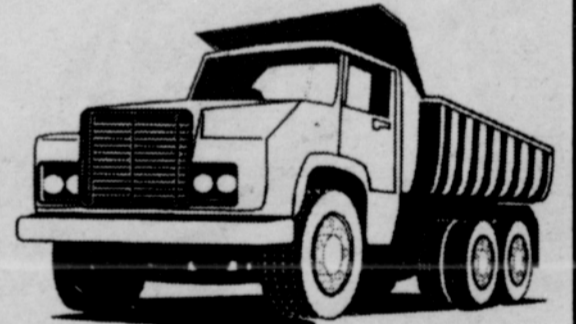
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