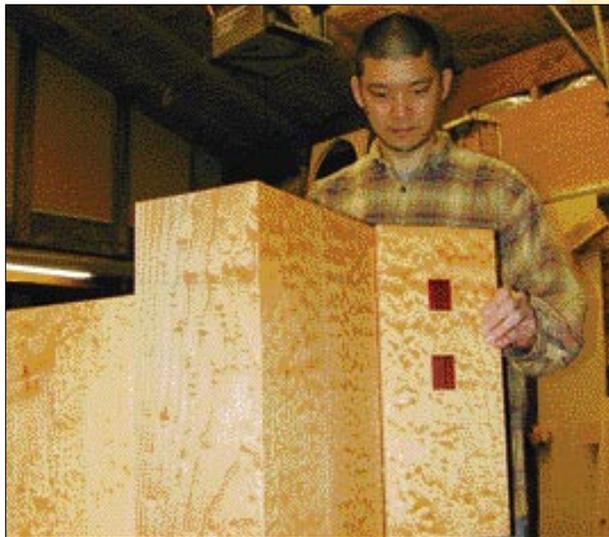


# Profile: Peter Loh



Peter Loh assembling a cabinet in his shop.

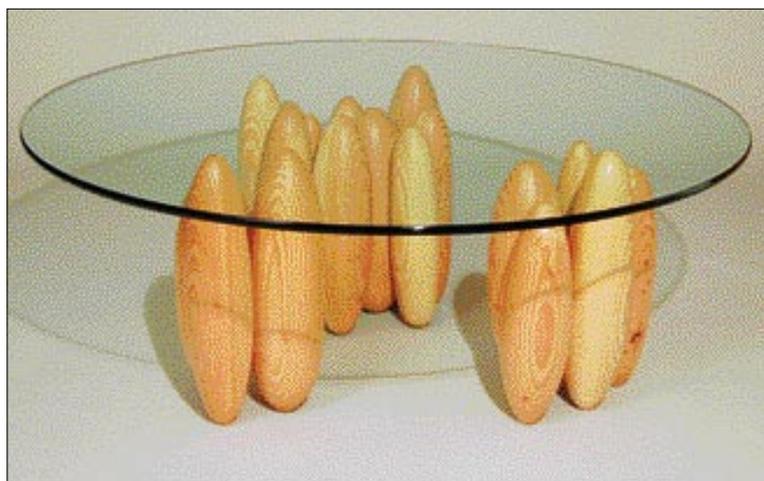
*“What drives me to create furniture is that it is my vehicle for creative and personal expression.*

*This is most evident in my spec designs, but is apparent in many commissioned works as well.*

*These designs trace their origins to a particular event, object, or idea in my life experience.*

*The process of turning an idea into a physical object is thrilling and is what I most enjoy.*

*Making furniture is my passion.”*



Another example is the *Clutch* table (left). If you look carefully in a garden, you might notice clusters of tiny yellow pods clinging to the undersides of leaves, clutches of ladybug eggs. In *Clutch*, the glass is the leaf, and the turned Douglas Fir forms are the eggs.

I also celebrate monumental forms, such as rock formations, architecture, and sculpture. The chair *Arch* (right) is inspired by the rock formations found in the American Southwest. This chair features

*Clutch*  
Reclaimed Douglas Fir, glass  
(16" h, 44" dia)

*Peter Loh of Bellevue, WA approaches woodworking with the eye of a photographer. With a Masters in Fine Art, he seeks out images of nature, but rather than capturing them on film, he blows them up larger than life into functional furniture pieces.*

*Meet Peter in his own words:*

I was exposed to woodworking in my final year of graduate school. I was visiting a friend who was teaching at the Penland School of Crafts in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina and decided to sign-up for a 2-week furniture class. Though I undertook a project far beyond my ability—a chair—I became familiar with the range of techniques: hand tools, machine tools, and steambending. Working 12-14 hours a day, I saw the possibilities and became captivated with the process.

After returning to complete my thesis exhibition for my Masters degree, I continued to make furniture. Visitors to my photographic studio saw my woodwork, and I received numerous purchase inquiries. As my photographic work evolved into large-scale installations, it became very apparent that furniture-making would be a more practical way to make a living.

Having a fine art background has become very beneficial in my furnituremaking. Not only am I able to do my own photography, design and other classes gave me an aesthetic sensibility to develop my own creative expression and the vision.

The natural world is a great influence on my work. I am fascinated by the complexity of things so small: a lot of shapes operating on a small scale creating interesting visual elements.

Once on a hike, I had an allergic response to a spider bite. Learning that it might have been a recluse spider, I did some research and became intrigued with its long, thin, bowed legs. This became the catalyst for the design of the *Recluse* table (upper right).



*Recluse*  
Bolivian  
Rosewood,  
Zebrawood,  
Maple  
(35" h, 66" w,  
16" d)



*Atlas*  
Ash  
(18" h,  
21" dia)

sweeping arcs and soft, rounded edges, similar to the natural sculpting of rocks through wind and water. It is available in a variety of woods that reflect the colors of the rocks during dawn and dusk. *Arch* is shaped by hand, including the saddle seat.

Much of my work is commissions. I enjoy the collaboration process, and I have been fortunate to work with many wonderful clients. The *CPF* bed (on the cover) is a commissioned piece for a client wanting a bedroom set that was contemporary, but based on Ming dynasty furniture. The bed is a combination of graceful arcs, bevels, and shallow insets, with subtle shadow lines that add depth. The nightstands, *BOB*, actually poke fun at the bowl haircut that I had as a child.

However, it is my spec work that allows me to fully explore my creative expression. I show these pieces at Northwest Gallery in Seattle, WA and Kebanu Gallery in Bend, OR, as well as such shows as the *International Contemporary Furniture Fair*, *Materials: Hard & Soft*, *Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair*, *American Craft Council Shows (San Francisco)*, *Best of the Northwest*, and *Design in Wood*. I also have been invited to provide work for the *House at Sagaponac* project in New York this Spring.

More of my work can be seen at my web site: [www.refinerydesign.com](http://www.refinerydesign.com).

*"I approach my work with a sense of investigation and wonderment. Every project is like a puzzle to be solved. It involves the challenge of creating an object that has to satisfy the needs of function, form, and concept. While the end goal is to have a well crafted object when the project is completed, the paths taken to realize it are just as important, if not more so, than the final product."*

*Arch Chairs*  
Purpleheart, Jatoba  
(30" h, 20" w, 21 1/2" d)



*Leaves of Grass Coat Rack*  
Birch  
(73" h, 26" w, 26" d)

