

Legacy of Talent: A Moser Reunion

Skill and artistry forged in the workshop
of Maine's premier cabinetmaker



CRAFT OF MAINE
by Candace Karu
Photography Scott Dorrance

In a career that spans four decades, Thomas Moser has established himself as an icon of American furniture design and craftsmanship. During this time, Moser has employed some of the country's most talented woodworkers, while influencing a new generation of fine furniture makers.

The current exhibition at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship's Messler Gallery in Rockport features the work of seven furniture makers who started or advanced their careers in the workshop of Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers. Building upon the legacy of their mentor and friend, four of them have gone on to start their own successful businesses in Maine.

When asked what is most satisfying about the show, Moser responds thoughtfully: "In the more than thirty-five years we've been in business, we have developed a distinct aesthetic, which is derived from the best of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century furniture design. We have always been committed to an economy of form and sensitivity to materials, and combining that with a dedication to superior craftsmanship. I am gratified to see that aesthetic represented in all the work in this show."

The Maine artisans whose work is on display at the Messler Gallery have each incorporated into their own practice the unique experience

of working alongside Thomas Moser. "I remember long philosophical conversations around the woodstove at lunchtime," recalls Bill Huston of Huston & Company in Kennebunkport. "We were young and naive and figuring out where we wanted to go." When he started in 1976, Huston was one of only three craftsmen working in the studio; by the time he left in 1988, more than 100 woodworkers were employed by Moser.

Both Kevin Rodel of Kevin Rodel Furniture & Design Studio in Brunswick (who was with Moser from 1979 to 1985) and Peter Thompson of Cornville (2002–2004) describe their time at the Moser studio as an incomparable education in the art of fine furniture construction. "Working at the bench at Moser was my formal training," says Rodel.

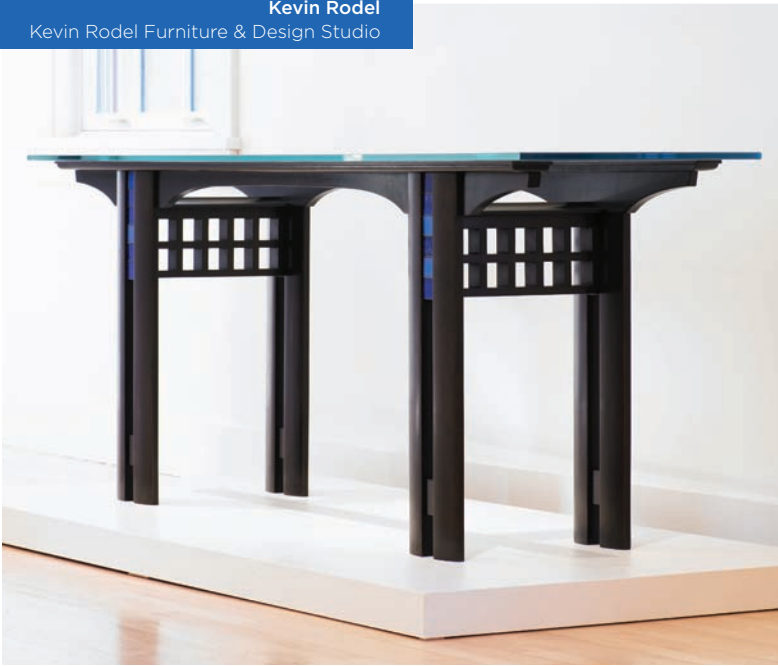
Though he was at the Moser studio for only a brief time, Doug Green of Green Design Furniture in Portland was lured in by the opportunity to work with colleagues of extraordinary skill and dedication. "I had a lot to learn," recalls Green. "Thomas Moser was a magnet for talented people. It was an intimate atmosphere that was very social and very passionate—about wood and about the business of making furniture."

It is this passion—along with the indelible imprint of Thomas Moser—that imbues every piece in the show.



David Moser
Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers

Kevin Rodel
Kevin Rodel Furniture & Design Studio



Bill Huston
Huston & Company

Peter Thompson
Peter Thompson Furniture Maker



Doug Green
Green Design Furniture

