

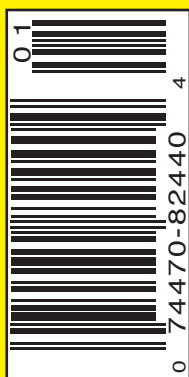
January-February, 2008

Woodworker WEST

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- **California Expo, WoodWorks, Lie-Nielsen Hand Tool Show**
- **'Design In Wood' People's Choice & Call for Entries**
- **Texas Furniture Makers Show**
- **Ian Kirby on Torsion Box Structures**
- **Inlaying Butterfly Tenons by David Marks**
- **The Coming of Eco-Woodworking by Paul Schürch**
- **Turning a Freehand Sphere by Fred Holder**
- **College of the Redwoods 25th Anniversary Exhibition**
- **Profile: Seth Rolland**

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Profile: Seth Rolland



Seth Rolland of Port Townsend, WA clamps up a bed frame.

"I strive to make my furniture into sculptures. Animated, balanced, interesting forms enhanced by color and grain that are comfortable and functional."

Barstool
Cherry
(41" h, 18" w, 16" d)



While spending my last semester of college in a Maritime Studies Program at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut, I took a boat building class with **John Gardner**. He was a true master of small boat building. At 83 years old, he could rip a 15-foot board with a hand saw in a minute or two and regale us by reciting old English poetry.

This led to a couple summers as the first mate on some old schooners in Maine, with some boatbuilding in between. During this time, I met a studio furniture maker—**Janis Colella**—who offered me a job. I worked for her for six months, and—had I known that this would become my career—I would have stayed longer.

A couple years later, I moved to New Mexico to live with a woman that I knew in college, who later would become my wife. Me'l was going to a craft fair every weekend to sell the clothing that she made, and she encouraged me to make something to sell in her booth. I sold my first patio chair that weekend, two the next, four the week after, and in a month I had my own booth next to hers.

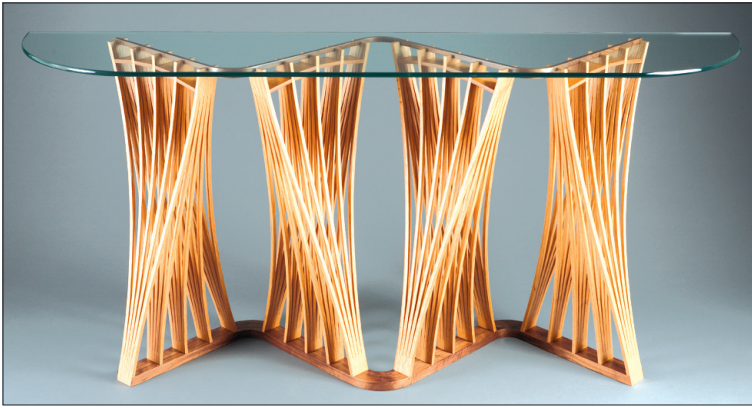
The next 6 or 7 years of woodworking were unremarkable—lots of production with a few more interesting pieces in between—but somewhere around that time I realized, like most woodworkers who have put in enough time, that I could make just about anything I could think up. Not necessarily easily, but I could do it. For me, that was when woodworking became more interesting, and designing became the real challenge.

Most of my furniture now fits into one of three groups:

One group is very organic, based on natural forms like the *Finback* chairs on the cover. The single back leg came from the arc and curve of a whale fluke. The *Bar Stool* is a taller version, exaggerating the vertical motion of animal legs.

Ash Explosion No. 1: Hall Table
Ash, Cherry, Basswood, Birch
(36" h, 60" w, 21" d)





Parabola Buffet Table
Sustainably Harvested Red Oak, Cherry, Walnut
(33" h, 72" w, 15" d)



Dreamcatcher Hall Table
Sustainably Harvested Ash, Mahogany
(36" h, 54" w, 15" d)

In another group of work, I am exploring the range of forms that can be created out of a single piece of wood. In these pieces, the bases are formed by cutting the wood part way through, expanding by steam bending, and then stabilizing with additional pieces. The *Ash Explosion Table*, *Parabola Table*, and *Dreamcatcher* are examples of these.

In the last few years, I have also been making furniture that combines wood with natural stone. The stones are essential parts of the designs, as I use their weight to anchor table legs, so they can stand independent of each other or to balance dramatic cantilevers as in the *North Beach Table*.

In 2001, we moved to Port Townsend, WA, mostly to be back by the water and boats. It is a great place to work, and I find plenty of inspiration on the water, along the coast, and especially in the Olympic Mountains. These days, about half of the furniture that I make is sold through galleries, at art fairs, or through my website. The other half are custom commissions made to suit a particular client's space. I also will be teaching at the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, TN, Mar. 23-29. More of my work can be seen at my web site: www.sethrolland.com.

North Beach Hall Table
European Beech, Natural Stone
(32" h, 61" w, 15" d)



"Over the last 17 years, my work has evolved to be more organic, both in design and technique. I admire the simplicity and economy of the natural world, where each material shows its full range of possibilities."

Karen's Dresser
Spalted, Curly, Quilted Maple
(71" h, 72" w, 22" d)

