

Masterpiece projects from the Peter Sefton Furniture School

This month we showcase works by graduates of the Peter Sefton Furniture School

Students on the Long Course at the Peter Sefton Furniture School develop the skills and confidence needed to become successful furniture makers. Here we find out how six students approached the design and making of their 'masterpiece projects'.

For more information, visit: www.peterseftonfurnitureschool.com

'Campaign of Curves' console table, 1200 x 400mm. The legs and carcass are made from American black walnut with African blackwood, and the top and drawers are walnut burr veneer with American black walnut lippings and ebony inlays

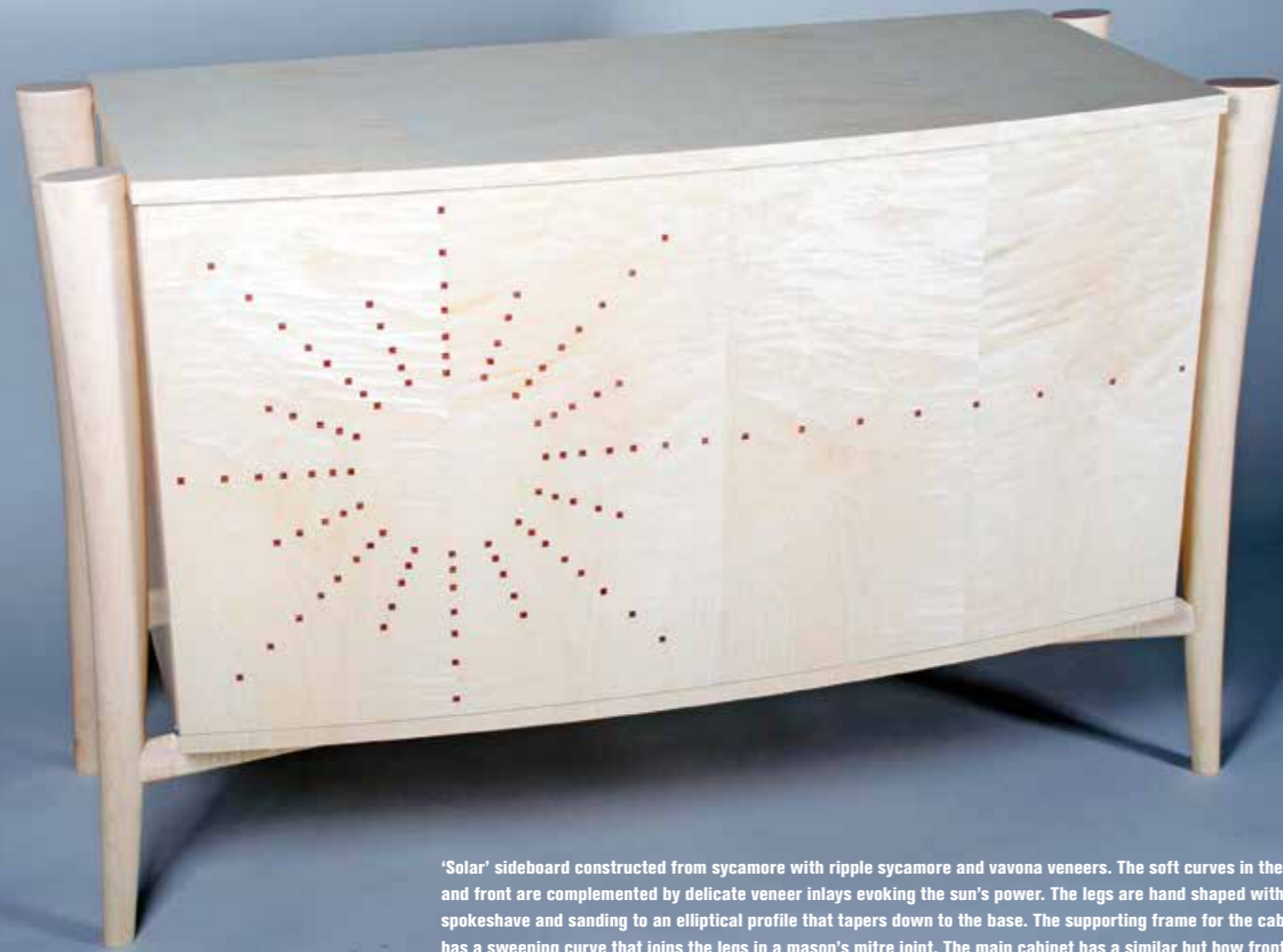


Adam Burtenshaw

Adam Burtenshaw has been interested in fine furniture from a young age; he chose to study at the Peter Sefton Furniture School as preparation for becoming a self-employed designer-maker. He enjoyed the curved work on the course and wanted to incorporate this in his table: "I wanted a campaign style console table that had been brought into the 21st century. It needed to incorporate my favourite materials of black walnut burr and African blackwood, and the legs had to be curved, spanning the full width of the table. They were to be held together

with curved bowtie-shaped brackets, which would incorporate burr detailing. Blackwood feet were added to the bottom of each leg, in order to improve the visual stance of the overall piece. Blackwood was used again to finish off the front of the carcass. This was necessary in order to protect the drawer edges, but it also helped balance and link with the contrasting colour of the feet."

Now that he has completed his training, Adam says he has 'the skills to match his ambitions' and is setting up a commercial workshop in Cirencester.



'Solar' sideboard constructed from sycamore with ripple sycamore and vavona veneers. The soft curves in the legs and front are complemented by delicate veneer inlays evoking the sun's power. The legs are hand shaped with rasp, spokeshave and sanding to an elliptical profile that tapers down to the base. The supporting frame for the cabinet has a sweeping curve that joins the legs in a mason's mitre joint. The main cabinet has a similar but bow fronted curve with double doors featuring the 'Solar' motif in vavona

Andrew Strickland

After working in various creative design roles for over 25 years, Andrew Strickland felt the need to change tack and create something more permanent, so he signed up to Peter Sefton's long course. The inspiration for his 'Solar' sideboard came from his love of Art Deco and contemporary furniture. "I remember some of the pieces my

grandad had in his house when I was growing up," he explains. "I have tried to capture this in my 'Solar' sideboard with a contemporary twist." Andrew says that training at the Peter Sefton Furniture School has given him the confidence, knowledge and skills to kick-start his new career as a furniture designer-maker.



'Bubble' cabinet, 960 x 900 x 440mm. Constructed from sweet chestnut with ash and padauk columns, with end grain turned ash domes and padauk plinth and top. Extra storage has been created through a push-to-open dovetailed drawer and side mounted shelves; these have been designed with storage for magazines in mind

Benjamin Baxter

Benjamin Baxter's masterpiece project provided him with the opportunity to incorporate two of his childhood passions: Lego and *Doctor Who*. "When designing the cabinet I was inspired to create a piece that took the playful contrasting colours of Lego bricks and aimed to incorporate them into the design. After careful studying and consideration of timber choices, I chose to balance out the exotic rich colour of padauk with the lightness of European ash, both of which have been blended against the darker contrast of sweet chestnut," he says. "The padauk and ash make up the colour-infused columns located either side of the cabinet. The columns and subsequently the 'Dalek' domes enabled me to utilise what soon became my favourite machine within the workshop: the lathe. Each column comprises of seven large cylinders with seven joining spigots all of which were turned with accurate measuring on the lathe. The padauk and ash combinations continue to run throughout the design more subtly through the spacings of dovetails on the drawer front. The spacing of the domes on each door proved to be a very difficult but satisfying challenge with many changes being made to the spacings and pattern throughout the design process. Each dome within the design would become 10mm smaller meaning each of the 28 domes had to be spaced with the same divisions. This proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the design overall."

Since completing the course, Benjamin has secured a work experience placement at The Morgan Motor Company where he put his new-found skills to the test in the woodshop.

Darryl Jones

Darryl Jones had already completed two short courses at the School and now wanted to pursue his dream of becoming a furniture maker. He created the 'Minimal' desk for his home office. "I selected these very clean ash boards while out on a timber yard trip and later matched it with some wide olive ash from Mundy Veneers. The selection of the timber was critical to the overall appearance

of my 'Minimal' desk. The tapering legs and undercut top give it a light feel but it is still a very solid traditional construction. The drawers have Lapped dovetails on the outside edge and a dovetail housing near the division between the drawers," he says. Darryl says the course has improved his skills and given him the confidence to tackle high quality projects.



'Minimal' desk. A mixture of solid European olive ash and wide ash veneered top - the legs were selected as rift sawn to match the straight grain on the quartersawn apron rails and drawer fronts. Minimal in design with twin hand-fitted dovetail drawers and concealed pulls, and clean white ash drawer sides to act as a contrast

David Partington

David Partington's background is in engineering and boat building but his love of wood led him to the course. His media unit was designed specifically to draw on the joints, techniques, machining and veneering skills he'd acquired as the year progressed. "I also wanted to gain confidence from using those skills myself and not to be over-reliant on the tutors, although their presence and

promptings were timely and helpful," he explains. "My inspiration for the 'White Walker' table [see page 16] came from the wonderful patterns created from the book-matched consecutive boards. Its location in my seaside home inspired the 'wave legs' and organic edge off the table." David says the course has set him on the path to realise his potential.



'Brindle' media unit, 800mm wide. Made in solid brown oak with cat's paw/pippy oak veneer top inlaid in ebony. The frame construction highlights the extraordinary grain flow, while the ends are rebated slatted panels. The top drawer shows traditional lap dovetails with brown oak muntin/slips contrasting with European oak sides and veneered drawer base in a conventional drawer design. The lower drawer is on modern soft-close runners with housing joint construction. The drop-down top glazed panel has push magnetic catches held open with black dyneema to match the ebony inlay, instead of a traditional brass stay



'White Walker' table, 2300mm long and 800mm wide. Made in solid stained brown oak and constructional veneer legs, this pair of consecutive boards from the tree were just too good to cut up, so this timber-led design was born. The wave legs were formed from 2mm thick quartersawn construction veneer concealed bolted to the cleats on the underside of the table

Jim Boocock

Jim Boocock's aim was to expand his skills to a professional level. His masterpiece project was inspired by historical writing desks. "I liked and wanted to use dark solid and veneered woods. I also wanted to bring a more contemporary look to my design and so incorporated lighter woods and geometric shapes into the different parts of the desk. The use of glass shelving and polished stainless steel rods within the side cupboards, adds to the contemporary nature of the piece," he says. Jim says he now has the skills to open up opportunities as a designer-maker of high quality furniture.



'Lily' writing desk, 1100 x 510 x 1041mm. A contemporary take on the traditional writing desk in solid and veneered walnut, with veneered maple inlays and interiors, masur birch square details and leather writing pad insert. The legs are machined in solid walnut with a two-way internal taper, ending in an octagonal shape at the base of the leg. The desktop is a mixture of straight grain walnut veneer, walnut cross banding and maple veneer inlay. The leather writing insert follows the traditional layout of a writing desk but it was designed to be flush with the desktop to keep the clean lines