

HOMEmade

SHARON MEHRMAN, Northampton Furniture maker



A move from New York to Nantucket years ago was the nudge that prompted one-time graphic designer Sharon Mehrman to shift her focus to a new design field: wood. “It was just something that drew me,” she says. She began by making carved signs for the island’s historic district, and took on more complex projects as her skills grew.

After relocating to the Valley Mehrman studied furniture making at the Hill Institute in Florence (where she now teaches) and worked as a kitchen designer. A year ago, she says, she made the shift to full-time furniture maker.



Her early work was inspired by classic American styles — pieces reminiscent of the Federal era, for instance — but over time she began adding her own twists. A desk, for instance, might feature traditional hand-carved lamb’s-tongue details on legs with decidedly contemporary contours.

Mehrman often works with sapele, which is similar

to mahogany, and tiger maple — “woods that have a natural dynamic grain,” she says. She uses them for an eclectic range of furniture, everything from stately grandfather clocks to Arts and Crafts-style beds to sleek desks like the one shown here. She also crafts smaller pieces, like towel holders made with vintage faucets. “They’re these beautiful little sculptures,” says Mehrman of the copper and brass faucets, and she spends considerable time finding just the right wood to mount them on. “Sometimes I get lucky and can situate the faucet to make it look like the grain of the wood is sort of like water flowing out”

Mehrman’s furniture and other pieces are on view at her website, www.sharonmakesfurniture.com. She exhibits at some of the Northeast’s best-known craft events, and has displayed locally at Twist, a twice-yearly Northampton design fair. This weekend she’ll be at the Paradise City Arts Festival in Northampton. □

— Margot Cleary