

THE COUNTRY LIVING GUILD

Made by Hand

MEET FOUR DEDICATED, SELF-TAUGHT AMERICAN CRAFTSPEOPLE—
A FLOORCLOTH ARTIST, A WEAVER, A CHAIRMAKER, AND A FOLK
ARTIST—ALL OF WHOM HAVE REALIZED THEIR LIFELONG DREAMS



The Country Living Guild was founded in 2000 to honor contemporary artisans who are furthering the tradition of hand-craftsmanship. Joining the 12 previously inducted Guild artists are (clockwise from top left) floorcloth artist Dennis Belanger, weaver Phyllis Leck, folk artist William H. Roy, and chair maker Richard Grell. FOR RESOURCES, SEE ADDRESS INDEX. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM BASTARDO PRODUCED BY GYNA SLOMCINSKY WRITTEN BY LAWRENCE BILOTTI



RICHARD GRELL

Chair Maker

Inspired by watching his grandfather work, Richard Grell developed a love of woodworking at an early age. For the past 30 years, he has researched and crafted museum-quality Windsor chairs. "I've always been fascinated by the Windsor," he says, "not only for its historical significance, but for its simple design and sound structural integrity. I am still amazed that a chair so delicate could be so strong."



The continuous-arm Windsor (opposite page) is Hudson, Ohio, craftsman Richard Grell's favorite style of Windsor. "The single continuous piece of oak serves as the chair back and then curves gracefully into the arms," he explains. "It's pretty hard to beat from a design standpoint." His passion is fueled by all designs and regional distinctions of the late 1700s, with concentration on designs from Connecticut, like the Continuous-Arm Comb-Back (left) and the Writing Arm (above, center, right). Each Grell Windsor is entirely handmade and uses four woods: tulip poplar for chair seats; white ash for spindles; maple for legs and stretchers, and oak for bent top rails and hoop backs. While legs and stretchers are fashioned on a lathe (top left), spindles, seats, and crest rails (top center) are all individually carved using various-sized drawknives, chisels, and planes. The "bendings," which serve as curved top rails and hoop backs, are all fashioned from lengths of oak that have been steamed and shaped on pegged wooden molds (top right).

WINDSORS

