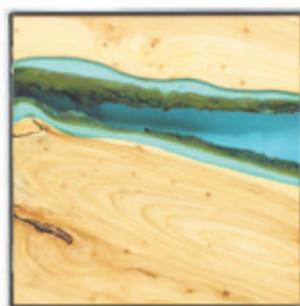


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AN ARTIST'S BLUE STREAK

Greg Klassen creates sculpted tables that suggest flowing rivers—and is deluged by fans of his work



BY THE RIVER Greg Klassen, above, in his studio. His river pieces are made of slabs of wood with the edges turned toward the center and covered with blue glass. Top, a wall hanging. Right, top and bottom, samples of his work in his Everson, Wash., home.

BY ALINA DIZIK

A meandering blue river seems to wind through the tables of furniture-maker Greg Klassen.

His pieces are crafted from a single piece of wood, cut in the middle and arranged so that the tree's exterior edges point inward, creating a curvy gap that is covered by hand-cut blue glass.

A post about his work on the art and design blog, Colossal, took off in the summer of 2014. Now, there is a 15-month waiting list for Mr. Klassen's River Collection.

Based two hours north of Seattle, in Everson, Wash., Mr. Klassen, 34 years old, takes advantage of the Pacific Northwest's temperate rain forests in his search for materials. Local sawyers cut salvaged maple and walnut trees like "slices of bread" that go into the creation of his furniture.

The unique edges of the cut wood are the most important element, Mr. Klassen says. He can recall the specific grain and knots of the individual pieces of wood that become part of his collections. "I'm strangely able to remember all of these introductions," he says about seeing the trees for the first time. Finished tables rest on

legs made of iron, steel or bronze. He also does wall hangings.

He leaves the wood to air dry on his property for about three years before using the pieces. Only about 20% of the wood he sees makes the final cut, he says. The blue glass is added last, and is carved to match the shape of the trees' jagged exterior edges, like a river.

Mr. Klassen, a native of Dinuba, Calif., who studied woodworking at the College of the Redwoods in Fort Bragg, Calif., is in his seventh year in a career that he feels he just stumbled upon. When taking time off from completing a degree in theology, he

worked recycling wood and started to take materials home to build his own furniture to sell at farmers' markets.

He completed an exchange program at Sweden's Capellagarden craft school on the island of Öland that inspired a clean aesthetic. "Some of the sensibilities I have toward design were born there," he says.

A simple coffee table takes anywhere from 50 to 100 work hours. But it can take close to a month for Mr. Klassen to finish a piece, as he typically works on a handful at a time, moving across projects when he hits an impasse. "Some wood is more needy," and requires more time to

work with, he says.

Last year, Mr. Klassen moved into a 102-year-old farmhouse with his wife, Barbara, and their three children, and is building a warehouse and gallery on the property to help showcase his designs. Orders are coming in from places as far as Japan, Australia and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Prices start at \$5,600 for coffee tables and \$8,200 for dining tables.

Mr. Klassen has no plans to expand to accommodate the growing demand. "I'm not interested in managing people," he says. "What I do is really personal."

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WEEKEND



OFF DUTY

Bacon, Egg and Happiness

Fuel for weekend road trips and a host's salvation in the face of hungry house guests, the breakfast sandwich is hard to improve on. These chefs show how to do it right.

Credit: Armando Rafael for the Wall Street Journal, Food Styling by Heather Meldrom, Prop Styling by Carla Gonzalez-Hart



REVIEW • MIND & MATTER

Practice Makes Perfect—Sometimes

What does it take to play as well as B.B. King? New brain research shows how music students can benefit from a bit of genetic luck, says columnist Susan Pinker.

Credit: Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

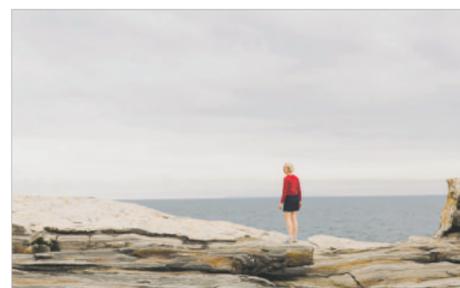


REVIEW • WEEKEND CONFIDENTIAL

Fitness Is Her Business

Sarah Robb O'Hagan, president of fitness company Equinox Holdings, on the rise of hardcore workout enthusiasts, how technology is changing health and the upside to losing your job (twice).

Credit: Allison Michael Orenstein for The Wall Street Journal



OFF DUTY

Edward Hopper's Maine

Fishermen, fir trees and the legacy of the American artist, who painted lighthouses and much more on the coast for nine summers. Plus a visit to a flourishing art scene.

Credit: Greta Rybus for The Wall Street Journal

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