

Windsor Settees

BY GREGORY LEFEVER

EXPANDING THE ICONIC AMERICAN WINDSOR CHAIR TO ACCOMMODATE SEVERAL PEOPLE CHALLENGED THE BEST WOODWORKERS. YET COLONIAL FURNITURE MAKERS PREVAILED, AND TODAY'S SKILLED CHAIRMAKERS HAVE FOLLOWED THEM IN CREATING SETTEES IN MANY SHAPES AND SIZES.

Philadelphia furniture makers created a phenomenon in the mid-1700s with the American Windsor chair. With its elegant profile, considerable comfort, and unobtrusive strength, the Windsor chair rapidly became an icon for American ingenuity and craftsmanship. Certainly it would be only a matter of time before the multiple-seat

Windsor settee would follow.

But building a settee, these chairmakers quickly found, turned the individual Windsor chair's strengths into major woodworking challenges. The delicate spindles forming the chair's back—so essential to the Windsor's graceful lines—were put under duress when two or more people pressed against them. The beautifully turned legs

and stretchers forming the chair's strong base became a nightmare of alignment when four legs grew to the settee's eight or ten. Most challenging of all was retaining the Windsor's signature profile when the chair's fundamental lines were stretched to several times its original width.

Once again, America's Windsor craftsmen prevailed. From



COURTESY OF WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, GIFT OF JOHN BRILL, IN MEMORY OF HAZEL D. LEONARD

the 1750s through the 1840s they created a stunning series of settees—low-backs, fan-backs, sack-backs, and others—retaining the Windsor’s trademark strength and aesthetic form. These settees soon graced meetinghouses, courthouses, churches, taverns, and other public buildings as well as spacious homes throughout the new nation and in several foreign lands.

The tradition continues. Several of today’s most distinguished Windsor chairmakers offer beautiful settees and, without exception, freely discuss the challenges inherent in the settee’s elongated form.

SETTLE TO SETTEE

“Settle” and “settee” have long described bench-like seating for two or more people. From time immemorial, people have sat on crude benches and chests of one sort or another, and between the early middle ages and the Renaissance, furniture makers added paneled backs and arms to increase the comfort of the sitter, thus creating the settle.

“Settles are mentioned in the inventories of this country from the very first,” noted Luke Vincent Lockwood in his 1901 classic, *Colonial Furniture in America*, citing references to settles in Boston as early as 1643 and York County, Virginia, in 1647. The earliest—and still familiar—form of settle popular in the American colonies was a double-seated piece with a high back made of vertical slats and a front panel extending from beneath the seat nearly to the floor. The design, Lockwood wrote, “formed an effective screen against the cold winter winds, for it was the custom to draw these settles up close to the

OPPOSITE An early style of American Windsor settee is this small low-back, also known as a “double chair.” About 54 inches long and 30 inches tall, this particular one was built c. 1760 in Philadelphia. It features a contoured seat of yellow poplar with maple and oak turnings and back rail. Originally it was painted light blue-green over a gray primer and later was repainted in yellow ochre with a brown varnish.



WINFIELD ROSS

Windsor settees served as communal seating in meetinghouses, courthouses, churches, taverns, and other public buildings. Like the Windsor chair, the settee might well have been hauled outdoors on a sunny day for a garden picnic. Here Elise Piland of Gainesville, Virginia, is seated on a low-back settee made by Ralph and Caron Quick of The Windsor Chair Shop in Clarksville, Missouri.

large open fire, usually in the kitchen, thus making a sort of little inner warm room.”

Back in England, dominance of the settle was eclipsed around 1660 when square-backed double chairs in Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton patterns became popular with the affluent classes. These more refined, multi-seat pieces became known as “settees.” Meanwhile, a few miles west of London, an entirely new form of chair appeared. Historians believe this new style—with its legs inserted into a wooden seat and splayed for maximum support, much like a utilitarian stool—became known as the “Windsor” because it may have originated in the town of that name. Either that or the name derives from Windsor Castle, where legend has

this sturdy style of seating being used in the castle gardens.

Although an occasional Windsor chair might have arrived in the American colonies a few years earlier, it is certain that in 1726 Patrick Gordon, the new governor of Pennsylvania, brought five Windsor chairs from London to his home in Philadelphia. The governor’s chairs undoubtedly embodied the popular English Windsor style of the day—intricate back slats, cabriole legs, and sumptuous ornamentation. What happened next is a landmark in the history of American furniture.

DISTINCTIVELY AMERICAN

Skilled furniture makers in Philadelphia examined the English Windsor and soon retooled it. They



Lawrence Crouse of Kearneysville, West Virginia, said he first made this low-back settee several years ago after studying the original late-1700s piece at Winterthur Museum. Initially concerned about the substantial size of the piece, he has found it to be one of his workshop's best-selling settees. It is available in a variety of finishes through dealers across the country.

enhanced its fundamental strength and stripped away its ornamentation to create a comfortable chair with a distinctively elegant profile. By 1760, local chairmakers each year were manufacturing thousands of American Windsors, which by then had become known as "Philadelphia chairs."

Windsor chairmaking soon spread northward to New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, and eventually to locales still farther north, west, and into a few Southern colonies. American furniture makers applied the Windsor's basic design to variations such as writing-arm chairs and rocking chairs. Earliest among these specialized Windsor forms, how-

ever, was the settee.

First mention of an American multi-seat Windsor piece was in 1754 in Philadelphia. "Jebediah Snowden, a Windsor chair and cabinetmaker, in a bill dated September 14, 1754, charged merchant John Reynell for '2 Double Windsor Chairs with 6 Legs,'" wrote John Kassay in his 1998 *Book of American Windsor Furniture: Styles and Technologies*. "The six legs indicate the items sold were short settees."

It would be a few more years before American Windsor furniture makers actually called these pieces settees. "The first recorded use of the term settee for a Windsor product occurs at New York City

on August 15, 1765, when Andrew Gautier, a retailer of Windsor furniture, advertised 'Settees, or double seated' Windsors, suitable for piazzas or gardens," according to Nancy Goyne Evans in her highly respected 1997 book, *American Windsor Furniture: Specialized Forms*.

The American Windsor settee became immediately popular in buildings where the public congregated as well as in homes of the gentry. While their manufacture remained centered in Philadelphia and the Northeast until 1810, the settee's popularity expanded beyond production centers through America's growing export trade.

"Settees sometimes accompanied sets of chairs destined for ports

along the southern coast or in the Caribbean, although for each long seat shipped, hundreds of chairs were exported,” Evans wrote. “The trade gained momentum during the 1780s and continued at a fast pace during the 1790s.”

AN ARRAY OF STYLES

To the contemporary eye, Windsor furniture is associated with well-designed seats and tall backs with fan-like slender spindles bounded by pleasingly contoured arms. The earliest American Windsor settees had much lower and sturdier backs, better for accommodating the weight of multiple sitters.

Like its counterpart chair, the Windsor settee evolved into several different models because of the preferences of individual chairmakers, varied functional settings, and the popularity of new Windsor chair shapes over the course of a century. Tapered feet eventually replaced ball-terminated legs, heavily turned legs evolved into popular bamboo shapes, and makers enhanced medial stretchers, baluster

lengths, and even the way they carved (or not) saddle depressions on the plank seats.

“By the time chairmakers in the Philadelphia area updated the baluster-turned, low-back settee with bamboo legs in the 1790s, the ‘new fashioned’ bow-back settee was equally popular,” Evans stated. “Although of less sturdy construction than the low-back settee, the bow-back settee copied a prevailing chair style, making it more suitable as the long seat in suites of Windsor furniture.”

Among the most complex settee models, the triple-bow-back of the 1790s featured a back with three curved crest rails. “Inspiration for the triple-back Windsor probably sprang from a formal settee design with multiple chair backs linked to make a long seat,” she speculated.

Square-back settee styles prevailed after 1800. “From the 1810s, consumers chose between slat-back patterns (the crest framed between the back posts), and the tablet-top patterns (the crest framed above the posts),” Evans wrote. “The broad,

flat surfaces of the slat and tablet proved suitable for the introduction of painted or stenciled ornament, an important feature of nineteenth-century design.”

Evolution of the Windsor settee continued into the 1840s, with makers creating styles that the untrained eye would not typically recognize as members of the Windsor family. Shaped slats replaced spindles. Backs were often topped by heavy roll-tops or scroll-like tablet-tops that served as a canvas for elaborate and colorful painted decoration—setting them well apart from the more familiar austere painted surfaces of earlier Windsor chairs and settees.

SATISFYING A NEED

Today’s Windsor settee shopper has an impressive variety of styles to select from, most of them historically focused on the period from 1790 to 1810: bow-backs and sack-backs, continuous-arm models and the like. Seating lengths generally run from 44 inches for a double-seat up to 84 inches.

Aside from these, some

This triple-sack-back Windsor settee is slightly over 8 feet long and likely was built between 1790 and 1805 in either eastern Connecticut or Rhode Island. It features a rare ash seat, maple and oak turnings, and a poplar back rail. The rare pattern was probably inspired by formal English Windsor settees with linked multiple chair backs, although the long, low arches on the back of this settee are more aesthetically successful.



COURTESY OF WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, BEQUEST OF HENRY FRANCIS DU PONT

SINGLE ARTISAN OR SHOP, QUALITY PREVAILS

Say you want to buy a Windsor chair or settee—a handcrafted piece that accurately reflects the historical period of its origin. Eliminating mass-produced, assembly-line products, you narrow your list to those with years of woodworking experience and a heart-felt respect for the country's historical pieces and the dedicated craftsmen who created them two hundred years ago.

But looking at your list, you quickly realize there's a trade-off. On one hand you have traditional workshops where teams of skilled craftspeople create Windsor furniture and charge "X" for a piece. On the other, you have individual artisans who create the same type of piece and charge considerably more, sometimes "double-X." This situation—trying to ascertain what you get for what you pay—extends across many areas of traditional American crafts but particularly period furniture.

Your eventual selection will depend on what you're looking for in terms of standardization versus individual creation—and what you're willing to pay for it.

PRODUCTION WINDSORS

Benner's Woodworking exemplifies the workshop approach, in which skilled woodworkers assemble a wide range of reproduction period furniture using modern machinery and traditional methods of joinery.

Mike Benner and his peers—workshops such as Lawrence Crouse and David T. Smith—can sell a high-quality Windsor settee for \$775, or nearly half of what some individual chairmakers charge.

"We can charge less because we're not building one chair at a time," Benner explained. "A hand-built Windsor is going to cost double a production Windsor. We can build that chair much more quickly than they can build that same chair. And our chair is every bit as nice, possibly even tighter or better built because it's done with precise machinery.

"But there's a difference, you know," he continued. "Some people want to say, 'This is a hand-built Windsor.' We call ours bench-built Windsors because we're still building them on a traditional bench, but we're scooping the seats out with machines. We still do some hand-carving on our pieces, but we've just got it down to a science."

While economies of scale help reduce costs in workshops supplying dozens of dealers, sometimes just the fact that a team is working on a piece can lower the price. Lawrence Crouse explained, "What I've done is assemble a small group of craftspeople, and we do everything in-house. We don't buy any components from anybody else. We turn all of our own stock, we go to the sawmill to get our materials, we even do our own bending. That's one reason that, hopefully, our price can be a little bit better."

LONE CHAIRMAKERS

The key difference between the workshop approach and the lone maker is that the latter creates a piece of individual art with each chair, settee, or highboy.

Chris Harter embodies the one-man operation. He and his dozen or so peers might use an electric lathe, maybe a band saw, but everything else is by hand: splitting the log, using a spoke-shave and draw-knife to shape spindles, gouging out the seats, assembling, and finishing each chair.

"I go to the sawmill, buy the log, bring it back, and hand-rive all the material out," he said. "When I bring it into the shop here, you'd think I had a wheelbarrow full of firewood because it's split down to the size of firewood. Then everything is sized down out of those pieces of wood. Everything is worked green. I use red oak and that's all hand-riven, so each spindle is hand-formed with a spoke-shave and draw-knife and then hand-scraped down to get it smooth. They're done green and put aside to dry." And that's just the spindles.

Another lone chairmaker, Jock Jones, noted you can recognize the creator of a piece of furniture by his or her highly individual techniques, something not possible when more than one person builds a piece.

"To me, using pieces created by someone else can take the personality out of a piece," Jones said. "The one place where you can look at a chair and pretty much tell who made it is by the turnings. Everyone has his own subtle ways of turning."

Whether individual or shop owner, all agree that there can be no compromise on traditional American craftsmanship. Not if you're going to accurately reproduce the efforts of the skilled early American furniture makers.

But like nearly every other sector of American manufacturing, traditional furniture is facing a familiar threat.

"I had a fellow approach me a while ago," Crouse related, "and he asked, 'How would you like to have your chairs made for you offshore?' I said, 'Offshore? What the hell does that mean?' And he said, 'You know, made in China.' So there's this new wave in furniture where people are buying things made in China or wherever. I'm sure the quality has come a long way with them, but when you're representing our traditional American craftsmen, that's a different arena altogether. It should be made here."



This late-18th-Century sack-back settee is the work of one of the country's most renowned early Windsor chairmakers, Ebenezer Tracy of Lisbon Township, Connecticut. He used his chairmaking experience to systematically eliminate weaknesses in the form—setting all the legs to slant outward, adding rounded projections at the front corners of the seat where holes normally were drilled for the side supports, and, most significantly, framing the long seat with a sawed top rail instead of a bent bow. Windsor scholar Nancy Goyne Evans concluded, "Although the design is not as aesthetically pleasing as it is interesting, it represents a unique solution to a construction problem and demonstrates the craftsman's versatility."



Mike Benner's River Bend Chair Company bases this impressive 84-inch low-back settee on a c. 1750 Philadelphia piece. For several decades the low-back was the most popular style of Windsor settee because of its inherent strength and ability to comfortably seat several people.

Windsor chairmakers also reproduce earlier models—such as the Philadelphia low-back settee that gained popularity in the 1750s—and later square-back settees dating to about 1820.

“I’ve seen settees go in every room,” said Chris Harter of Madison, New York, who for three decades has been creating Windsor furniture. Because his settees are mostly custom ordered, he has a good idea of how his customers intend to use them. “A lot go in hallways and entryways. They go in living rooms. I’ve seen them go in kitchens and even bathrooms. Once in a while, around where I live, they might go out on porches.”

People usually select settees to satisfy specific needs. “Years ago,” Harter recalled, “a mother came to my shop. She had two sets of twins plus two other children. Come dinnertime, these six kids were now old enough to sit at a table, but that’s a lot of chairs. So she and I looked at a bow-back settee—which is a Windsor settee with basically no

side arms—and I made it the same length as her table. This way, the kids could simply slide in from the ends of the settee and she wouldn’t have to keep pushing chairs around. I always considered that a very practical use of a settee.”

At the time of the interview, Harter was working on a Windsor settee based on his popular comb-back Windsor chair. “Now I’ve never done that particular settee before, and in my opinion, it’s going to be beautiful,” he said. “It’s going into a kitchen with a large fireplace, and they want to sit in the settee and read in front of the fireplace. They didn’t want a low-back but something that would have substantial height. With a comb-back Windsor you have that wonderful airiness, with all of those spindles that you can still see through.”

Lawrence Crouse of Lawrence Crouse Workshops in Kearneysville, West Virginia, offers an extensive line of Windsor settees. “Our best-selling settee is the double-seated sack-back,” he reported,

but his company also has had success with the less-common low-back form. “Originally the low-back was the most common Windsor settee, but now it’s about the least common,” Crouse said. “But we do really well with them, despite how large they are. It takes a pretty big wall, so I’d say they’re going mostly in hallways.”

Mike Benner of Benner Woodworking in Lebanon, Ohio, agrees in terms of bestsellers. Like Crouse, Benner’s company relies on dealers to distribute his extensive Windsor line, and they tend to prefer the two-seat settees. “We sell more double bow-backs than any other settee,” Benner noted. “And we sell more of the 44-inch model than we do the 66-, 68-, and even longer 84-inch settees.”

STILL A CHALLENGE

At first glance, building a Windsor settee would seem to be a simple extension of a Windsor chair. Not so,

This 44-inch continuous-arm settee from Mike Benner's River Bend Chair Company replicates a popular double settee made in Philadelphia from 1790-1800. It is an unusually complex piece, and Benner's, like the original, has a single piece of wood—steam-bent in two directions—for the back rail. The seat is pine and the turnings are maple, and it is available in a variety of finishes.

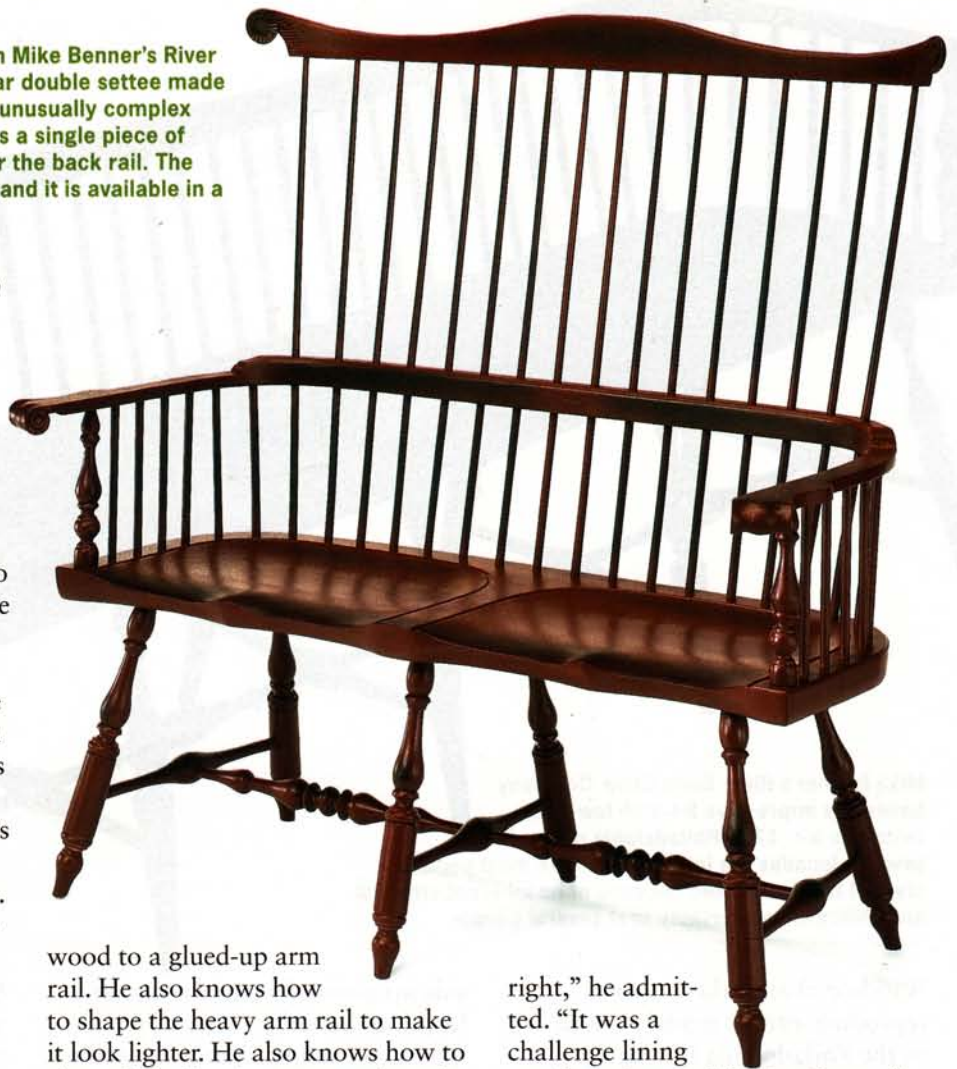
say today's makers, who are quick to list the specific challenges involved.

"Just as you can't shrink an adult Windsor chair down to a child's size proportionately, so you can't lengthen a chair into a settee without running into problems," explained Michael Dunbar, founder of The Windsor Institute, where he teaches Windsor furniture making to some 500 people a year. "Some of the problems are proportional, but others fall into the category of undesirable optical illusions that distort the way the viewer sees the piece. When I encounter some other chairmaker's work, I look most closely at his settees. If he doesn't get them right, he's not at the top of his game."

Harter echoes Dunbar's words. "The challenge and skill in executing a beautiful-looking settee is in the proportions," he agreed. "The longer you make the settee, depending on the style, the greater the attention to the proportions and the overall design—the greater the challenge to get it so that when you stand back, it looks pleasing to the eye. There are a lot of little details that go into that, to making it look right."

From the 1700s through today, the strength of the settee's back has been a critical factor. "Depending on its length, a settee could end up with from two to eight people sitting on it," said Dunbar, who also offers classes specifically addressing the Windsor settee. "All those human bodies will create considerable force against the settee's back. Bent wood is flexible and strong; however, it has its limitations.

"This is why on longer settees, chairmakers usually make a solid wood back, glued up from several heavier pieces," Dunbar continued. "An experienced chairmaker knows when the settee becomes long enough to require the transition from bent



wood to a glued-up arm rail. He also knows how to shape the heavy arm rail to make it look lighter. He also knows how to shape the rail so it accommodates the human body, that rather than sticking the sitter in the back."

An anecdote that sums up the settee's difficulties comes from Windsor chairmaker Jock Jones, who recalled building his first triple-bow-back settee several years ago. He had previously studied the triple bow-back's beautiful yet complex form, and one day a woman brought a photograph of one to his central Utah workshop. "She asked me, 'Can you make one of these?' And that's where your ego gets in the way," Jones said, chuckling. "I told her, 'Oh sure.'"

Jones soon found himself measuring, carving, and lining up three separate half-lapped bows for the back, nearly six dozen spindles of varying sizes, and turning ten legs and a center stretcher—all demanding placement at precise angles.

"It was a real challenge lining up the spindles to get it to look

right," he admitted. "It was a challenge lining up all ten legs and having them all at the right angles and the center stretcher in a perfectly straight line. And then the really hard part is where the three half-lapped bows intersect. You have to put the bow into the arm, all the spindles in the holes, and get a half-lap in place, all at the same time. That's just almost impossible. But in the end, it certainly is an imposing piece of furniture."

MIKE BENNER

Mike Benner became skilled as a cabinetmaker in high school, and for the past twenty years has shown equal skill in growing Benner's Woodworking to be one of country's leading producers of 18th- and 19th-Century furniture styles. Today Benner's team of craftspeople produces a vast array of chests, cupboards, armoires, tables, beds, and desks.

Although his workshop in Lebanon, Ohio, has produced chairs for

years, it was Benner's purchase in 2006 of River Bend Chair Company in nearby Westchester that brought Benner into the country's front line of Windsor chair and settee creation and has provided his dealers with one of the broadest lines of Windsor chairs being made today.

"We're more of a production shop," Benner explained. That means his craftspeople use modern tools combined with traditional methods of joinery to create the furniture pieces. "We're not building one chair at a time—we build them in production runs of eight to sixteen chairs, and we typically do two to four settees in a run."

Benner said his company builds about 100 settees a year, including bow-backs, fan-backs, low-backs, continuous-arm, and high-back models in lengths ranging from 44, 46, and 48 inches for double settees

to 66 and 68 inches for triple settees up to an impressive 84-inch 1750 Philadelphia low-back. "We've also done some custom settees, some longer and some shorter than our standard line," Benner said.

Benner's prices for settees range from around \$775 upwards to \$1,800 retail. Benner's web site provides a thorough catalog of available styles, but buyers should contact dealers—he has nearly three dozen in sixteen states—for exact pricing.

LAWRENCE CROUSE

The Lawrence Crouse Workshop opened in 1972 making traditional American furniture, mostly by hand. During the late 1980s Crouse added Windsor chairs to the line and settees shortly thereafter. Today the company still has a relatively small group of craftspeople who create exceptional period-

style chests, desks, cupboards, tables, and beds—plus the Windsor line—for nearly ninety dealers coast to coast.

"We'd been making Windsor chairs for awhile and we looked at the settees at Winterthur, and they were mostly low-backs," Crouse recalled. "We started with a large settee, six-foot-six, and I was a little concerned about building them that large because of today's houses, but it's been a really good seller. Our line of settees has grown gradually over the years. We get requests for them, so we build them."

Crouse's considerable line of Windsor settees now encompasses small and large low-backs, fan-backs, sack-backs with and without combs, and an early-1800s plank-bottom model. Crouse said people interested in settees or any of his other furniture should contact a

This 74-inch bow-back settee graces the main foyer of the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, New York. Created by Chris Harter, it "displays a level of craftsmanship and style that perfectly complements our collections of 18th- and 19th-Century fine art and folk art," according to chief curator Paul d'Ambrosio. This model is among a dozen settee styles Harter offers.





Chris Harter of Madison, New York, uses only traditional woodworking techniques to make this bow-back arm settee. At 43 inches long, it closely resembles a c. 1785 Connecticut piece with a similar crest. This example is finished in an aged mustard color, but he offers several finishes. Settee prices average about \$2,500.

Jock Jones of Spring City, Utah, is among the small group of Windsor chairmakers who start with logs and then split, carve, shape, and turn all parts to achieve the finished product, such as this reproduction c. 1750 Philadelphia low-back settee. With its cylinder-and-ball legs it is a substantial piece. Available in a variety of finishes, it costs about \$1,500.



dealer because prices vary somewhat depending on shipping distances. The highest suggested price for a Crouse settee is about \$1,400 for his popular large low-back settee.

“One reason people buy from people like me is because of our furniture being handmade by craftsmen instead of being knocked out on some sort of assembly line in a factory,” Crouse stressed. “I use a little bit of modern woodworking technology and combine that with Old World skills so you’re getting a lot of hands-on, making sure everything’s the way it should be.”

CHRIS HARTER

Chris Harter, owner of The Country Furniture Shop, epitomizes the single craftsman using traditional methods to create stunning versions of early American period furniture. He specializes in Windsor chairs, with several models of settees and stools, and regularly produces highboys, chests, cupboards, beds, numerous styles of tables, and a line of beautiful tallcase clocks, all assembled with a level of craftsmanship that has made him one of the longest-standing artisans listed in the Directory of Traditional American Crafts.

Over the years Harter has built 2,500 Windsor chairs and about 150 settees. Most of the settees have been custom requests, enabling him to expand his line over the years to include several bow-back models in various sizes and finishes, comb-backs, and continuous-arm settees. Harter is perhaps the only Windsor craftsman who re-creates some of the rare late-period settees from the 1840s, such as his arrow-back settee and a Sheraton-style rod-back.

Harter had been building Windsor chairs for a few years when he turned his attention to the settee. “I went from the armchair to the side chair and then I knew the settee was just a matter of time,” he recalled. “Making a settee was just burning in my heart because of the beauty of it.”

His settees generally cost from \$1,700 to \$3,600, averaging about \$2,500, depending on style, size, and options. People can view



Jock Jones considers this 7-foot reproduction triple-bow-back settee to be the top of his line. A replica of a rare c. 1790 style, his settee is completely handmade, available in a number of finishes, and priced at \$5,200.

Harter's offerings on his web site then should call or e-mail him to discuss a purchase's specifications and lead time.

JOCK JONES

Jonathan "Jock" Jones has earned distinction as a creator of Windsor chairs, especially as one of the few chairmakers practicing in the American West. "I've been a lifelong woodworker with a lifelong interest in Windsor chairs, but everything I read said I probably wouldn't be able to make a living with them out West because we don't have the right wood."

Undaunted, the lifelong Utah resident headed east shortly after an early retirement to study Windsor chairmaking with Dunbar in New Hampshire and with renowned Windsor chairmaker Curtis Buchanan of Jonesborough, Tennessee. "I absolutely fell in love with making Windsors," Jones said. "So I decided all I needed to do to make them for

a living was to drive back East for the logs"—which he and his wife, Bonnie, have been doing ever since.

Located in Spring City in the center of Utah, Jones produces an array of popular Windsor chair styles. About nine years ago he began making settees, and his standard line includes a sack-back, early Philadelphia low-back, and 84-inch triple bow-back. Prices range from \$1,500 to \$5,200, depending on model and type of wood.

"Traditional settees were Eastern white pine for the seat, maple for the legs, and oak for the spindles and the bendings on the bows," he explained. "The early chairmakers painted the chairs to coalesce the different types of woods together. A lot of the beauty of the Windsor chair is in the shape, the lines and the flow of the chair, not in the natural beauty of the wood.

"But I've found that out West, a lot of people aren't as interested

in the traditionally painted Windsors. They like the natural finish over prettier woods, so I started making them—all of the seats and the turnings—out of cherry wood," Jones said. "It's a beautiful wood, but it's a lot more unforgiving."

Jones sells directly from his Utah workshop and through his web site, and most of his customers are in the Western states. "I do get calls from people back East, but I direct the inquiries to Eastern chairmakers who can do a fine job and maybe save the customer some money in shipping," he said. "But there are some people who still say, 'No, I want your work' and are willing to pay the higher shipping charges. So, that's fine with me." ★

Gregory LeFever is a contributing editor to *Early American Life*.