



## LEWIS WOODSHOP

Custom Fine Furniture

### **Having More Ability to Create Custom Work**

Lewis Woodshop is a one-man operation in Essex Junction that creates heirloom-quality furniture. David Lewis is the owner and craftsman and has operating his own business since 2016. David creates handmade furniture some of which include the pencil post bed, Lynn chest of drawers, Shaker hall table, the proper chair, and Warren coffee table. He is building up a set of portfolio items to offer customers. David does a great deal of custom work bringing to life ideas that customers bring to him. Lately he has been perfecting Japanese style woodwork making items such as shoji panels. David sells his work directly to consumers with most sales coming online through his website. The rest come mainly from customers approaching him for a custom project. He has been trying to get his work featured in galleries as another avenue for greater exposure. He also uses social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to promote his work and business.

David reported that his business has been “okay” through the Coronavirus pandemic so far and has not been highly affected. David is still in the process of starting his business from the ground up and was not overly busy when the Coronavirus hit in the early spring. Sales have remained the same as they were pre-pandemic, although he has seen more traffic on his website and customers taking longer looks at items on the website. David’s shop is at his home in Essex Junction, and he is his business’ sole employee. Therefore, he has not had to make any changes to the daily operations of his business to account for State mandated Coronavirus guidelines like other larger woodwork companies have had to do.

Some of the small changes that he has seen are customers wanting more office related furniture. He has had some inquiries about making desks in order to make work or school from home better. Others have asked for items that will liven their homes like end tables or family room tables since people are spending more time at home. David has also experienced some delays in shipping when it comes to getting his supplies. Lumber is still easy to get and he doesn’t order a great deal of supplies to begin with, but there is sometimes a small delay in their arrival.

Going forward David is considering adding more business-related items to his repertoire. Since working from home is becoming more prevalent, he would like to have items that would appeal to someone working from a home office. The results of the pandemic have also convinced him to focus more on creating online sales, rather than trying to get his work into galleries. He does not want to completely cut out galleries as platforms for his work, but he sees that many more people are staying home and would be more likely to see his work through his website. David wants to create more of an online presence through his website and social media.

Being a small woodworking business David feels his strength is his ability to create custom work. He and other small woodworking businesses have more flexibility to do custom work than larger woodworking businesses do. That flexibility allows for more specialization in his work based on the customers' desires. David is willing to share his specialized strengths with other members who may be seeking help in that area.

David has been a member of the VWWC for two years. He is a Journeyman member of the Guild of Vermont Furniture makers, and a colleague of his in the Guild convinced him to join the VWWC as well. While he is a newer member David has enjoyed the meet-ups that he has attended. He enjoys meeting fellow members and seeing their spaces and work.