



DOUG MOULDER MODELS ALMOST EVERY PROJECT IN 3D

When *Pins & Tales* caught up with Doug Moulder, he was packing for a trip to Dayton, Ohio. The Ohio River Valley Chapter was holding its fall meeting and Moulder was going to show the Seymour Tambour Traveling Desk that he'd made.

It's a small but challenging piece, with intricate moving parts. Exactly the kind of project he prefers.

"I liked it because of the challenge of the mechanics of the moving parts that you had to work out. You always make mistakes, but I try to be a perfectionist, to make them very precise."

Moulder, who lives in Elyria, Ohio, calls himself a "hybrid" woodworker. He builds 18th-century furniture with hand tools, power tools, and 21st-century 3D solid-modeling computer software.

"Almost every project I do, I model it in 3D. I like to say that's my prototype, where I don't have to

wear a dust mask or ear-plugs or worry about cutting myself. When you model something in 3D, you make every

single part just as in the real world... then you make sub-assemblies that you put together, then you put those all in a final assembly. And from that software you can get full-size drawings and sections and cross sections and print them out."

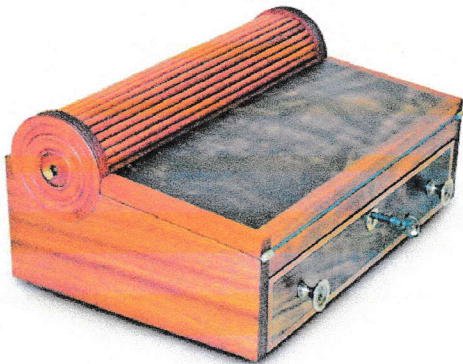
His skill with 3D modeling comes from his career in product design. As he explains it, "The product designer comes up with the concept and visual look

of any mass-produced item." He worked on everything from snowmobiles to fast-food restaurant components. This ranged from concept sketches to full-size clay models.

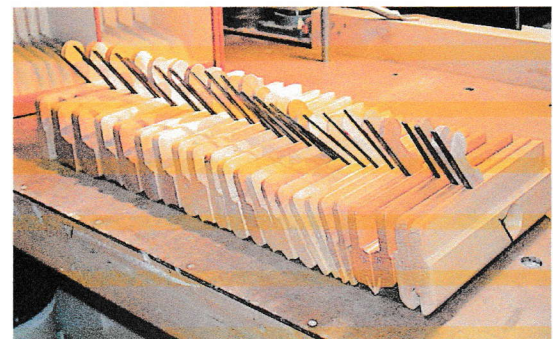
Moulder's interest in woodworking started well before that. His grandfather had a small shop. "I always made stuff. I could go out to my grandfather's shop and use it whenever I wanted to." Then when he got married, he bought an old dilapidated home and spent about 20 years rebuilding it. However, he didn't build any furniture until the late 1970s.

"I needed a cabinet to set the TV on, so I built [one] out of real cherry boards. It looked great and came out nice, but I hadn't learned the lessons of furniture making, to be aware of how hardwood expands and contracts, the allowances you do when you build pieces of furniture. I still have it in my family room; I use it every day, but all winter long down both sides of it there's this giant crack that opens up."

The big change came about six years ago after he retired. He attended a big hand-tool show sponsored by *Popular Woodworking* magazine. He won



Doug's Seymour tambour lap desk (reproduction)



Doug's half-set of hollows and rounds—handmade, English-style



Chronicles (continued-2)

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a pair of hollow and round English planes, made by Matt Bickford. He also bought one of Bickford's books on using planes to make period-correct furniture. He was hooked.

"I went ahead and made a whole half-set of molding planes. It kept me busy for a summer." He also recently completed a skew-blade panel plane.

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Not surprisingly, he tries to integrate moldings into most projects.

Moulder also met SAPFM member David Boeff at the event. Boeff lives only about half an hour away. They started sharing ideas about making planes and "have been great wood-working buddies ever since." (See Winter 2013 *Pins & Tales* for our story on David Boeff.)

Moulder is basically self-taught. "I haven't been to any school or taken any lessons at all. I did almost all my projects from articles in *Fine Woodworking* or *Popular Woodworking* magazine. And now, in the last couple of years, the SAPFM yearly publication.

"The thing I find so great about doing period

furniture pieces is that the designs are out there. I don't have to kill myself coming up with the design...I just find the ones that catch my eye. I accept the challenge of just trying to reproduce that, the whole time thinking 'How in the world did somebody do that in 1750 with just hand tools?' It blows me away."

The tambour traveling desk was inspired by a presentation by SAPFM's latest Cartouche winner, Bob Stevenson. It involved another piece with tambour, and Moulder says he wasn't sure he had the skills to build it. Then he read about the smaller traveling (lap) desk and decided to try making it.

"I built one from a couple of photographs, but I never could get any dimensions...or drawings (other than the basic length/width/height). That's where my 3D modeling and designer

skill came in. I tried different things until I got the proportions. That was the fun challenge for me, figuring out the proportions and numbers to make that (the

mechanics) all happen. By convincing myself that I had it close I was able to go ahead, create it, and get it to work." (See "Members' Gallery" in Fall 2018 *P&T* for more on Moulder's traveling desk.)

He cites another piece that really got him into period furniture making. The book *Furniture in the Southern Style* had a small piece called a pinwheel cabinet on the cover. "That was very challenging, because you have curved stuff

and really intricate small molding and woodwork on it."

In the last couple of years, Moulder has turned his attention to Federal furniture. "Federal furniture...is straight line, and I'm doing the intricate inlay and paterae and veneering and refining my skills to do that." He credits books, DVDs, and SAPFM Midyear presentations by Steve Latta for helping him learn those skills.

His shop takes up the entire basement of his house, but it's "chopped up" and has low ceilings—another reason he leans toward smaller pieces. After years of building furniture, he's run out of room in the house, so now he has some pieces on consignment at a gallery. One thing he's firm on: he's not interested in doing work for customers. "It wouldn't be fun for me; it would become work again. I haven't done it, and I don't intend to."

When *Pins & Tales* spoke with Moulder, he had just finished building a Federal cellarette, so we asked: What's next?

"Right now, I'm in that phase where I'm sharpening all my planes and chisels, and cleaning the shop, and getting ready for my next project. I'm not sure what it's going to be."

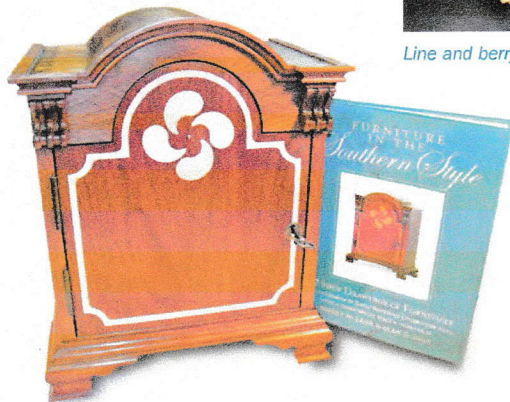
Or where he'll find room for it! Here's a link to a video showing Moulder demonstrating a plane. —JB <http://davidboefffurnituremaker.blogspot.com/2013/12/doug-moulders-skew-blade-panel-plane.html>



Doug's Federal cellarette—figured cherry-holly stringing and sand-shaded paterae oval inlays



Line and berry chest



Pinwheel cabinet—from *Furniture in the Southern Style*, Lang & Huey, PWW Books, 2011

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