

COURSES

About the teacher

I've been teaching, designing and making furniture for over 30 years after qualifying with a Bachelors degree in Education from King Alfred's College Winchester specialising in Craft Design and Technology. The first 8 years were spent at Nower Hill High School in North London and the last 2 years I was head of Design and Communication. This, however was the preparation I needed to start my own design and make furniture business.

In 1987 we moved to Devon and I worked from the on site barn, rapidly converting it to warm studio. During the following 10 years the business grew and recognition with it. I was asked to teach at Bridgwater College part time on their City and Guilds Furniture making programme, and then in 1997 David Savage asked me to join his studio full time. Over 100 people applied and I got the job. It was an opportunity not to be missed. Not only did I make all his designs, many of which still feature on his website including the chair on the front cover of BESPOKE, but also taught all the students on short and long courses. After a brief spell in the USA at a private woodworking school there, I went to Spain, where the weather suits my clothes.

The courses I run then, are the product of many years practice as teacher and craftsman. Teaching is not something I do to fill in time between commissions, for me its always been a vocation; I enjoy seeing you progress. I have taught absolute beginners from scratch, trained teachers and craftsmen of 20 years experience.

Only 3 students at a time

I only accept 3 students at a time. That way you can get more of my personal attention and there's still enough time for me to design and make. This is good for you as you learn in a commercial environment and not in the vacuum of a college classroom, distanced from the real world of furnituremaking.

So what do you get exactly?

The short courses-

On the short courses, 5 days, 20 days 60 days, the emphasis is making it with hand tools: developing handskills, plenty of planing, sawing and chiselling, and learning new techniques with the end result of a finished product. I have designed products specifically to expose you to a variety of skills that cover the three furniture groups and the joints specific to each.

I've always maintained that if you can cut to a line you can make anything.

If you wish to spend the year here, 44 weeks, your intention is to learn to make and you will make at least seven products that cover the three furniture groups most commonly requested. These are "springboard" projects, which, once completed can be adapted and developed to exhibit your personal design direction. One can spend an entire year making one type of product or even the rest of your life, developing variations on a theme.

The professional one year course

If your intention is to be an excellent maker, then the one year course is intended to start you off on this path. Hand skills are the foundation stones of your future and you will spend a lot of time learning to plane flat, square and true; sawing to the line, and paring to the line. It's an intensive year of 44 weeks and grounded in techniques, information, objectives you need to complete to prepare you for the next stage of your career. There are common furniture types that you will repeatedly encounter, tables and chairs, bedside cabinets, desks, and you ought to be prepared for that first time. You will build up a substantial booklet of information that I provide and that you write. Between us you will compose a document of your time here that will be a resource book to aid your future.

If your intention is to **design and make**, then we will adapt the course to this end, with classes on design and business to augment your making skills. This means that you will receive classroom instruction in:

- technical drawing to produce working drawings
- presentation drawing on paper and using a drawing programme on the computer
- preparation of cutting lists
- visits to sawmills to buy timber and what to look out for
- Designing furniture- a "how-to" guide and we'll cover many methods.
- Timber technology- the nature of the material with we work.
- Construction of furniture with regard to the three main furniture groups
- Business practice
- Meeting with clients
- How to prepare for exhibitions - trade and public
- Presenting your work to a gallery
- Marketing and promotion
- Costing I –how to calculate your hourly rate
- Costing II - how to estimate the cost price of a piece of furniture.
- Competitions
- The wider furnituremaking community – associations, clubs, courses, further development

Throughout the year in the studio you will learn-

- Selection and preparation of hand tools, their uses and function
- how to select solid timber and veneers for various situations.
- jig making: bench hook, shooting board, veneer planing jig, winding sticks.
- safe use of power hand tools like the router,
- safe use of the primary wood preparation machinery: bandsaw, table saw, surface planer, thicknessing planer.
- use of the wood turning lathe
- use of veneers
- laminating curved forms.

If your intention is to make a living from all this, however, then one year is not enough. I don't want to pretend that you can start a business after only one year with no prior experience, that would be as foolhardy as it is deceiving and something they don't mention on other courses. The longer courses are to enhance and develop skills acquired on the short courses or from your own experience. Thereafter get experience in other workshops - the Journeyman stage of your career.

We will have to meet to discuss what is you want to achieve so I can devise a suitable course especially for you around that.

Note well, please...

There is no quick way to become sufficiently expert in one year starting from scratch. It all depends on what you bring to the party; your skills, abilities, experiences. If you work with your hands say, as a mechanic, a potter, a photographer, this is a transferable skill and you will have a natural understanding of the physical aspect as well as a sound spatial awareness. If you practice a sport to any level than that too will be an asset. **The ability to draw is essential.**

It is generally held that one needs to work 10,000 hours -that's 250 weeks at 40 hours a week or 5 years ["The Craftsman" by Richard Sennett] to be sufficiently proficient at making to be able to survive in the luxury goods market. I believe I'm qualified to judge after completing 30 years doing this.

What you won't get

A course in windsor chairmaking
Marquetry
Antique restoration
Making wooden toys
How to build kitchens.

Accommodation

I can find you accommodation here in Seville or you can look on various websites:

www.sevilla5.com

http://www.yaencontre.com/vivienda/results.php/flats-rent-sevilla-_ENG

<http://www.welcomesevilla.com/>

<http://www.sevillapartamentos.com/>