

The Guild

Part 1

One of the most important parts, of my woodworking education, has been my membership in the Kansas City Woodworkers' Guild. I became a member back in 2005 when I was searching for help with my new habit. I even wrote about it in a short article I wrote for *Popular Woodworking Magazine*. You can read it here: <http://kcwoodworkersguild.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/The-Addict-10-2011.pdf>

Anyway, The Guild became a source of great knowledge and education for me on my journey. A vast array of talent resides within the Guild. There are woodturners, furniture makers, cabinetmakers, antique restorers, etc. as members of this organization. And the greatest things of all is their willingness to share their accumulated knowledge. You see woodworkers of all skill levels are welcome at the Guild. It's even part of the Guild's mission statement: "to promote the skill and craft of woodworking, and to provide education, information, fellowship and organization to those interested in working with wood. The Guild will sponsor community outreach programs ... and other such activities."

When I joined, back in 2005, there was, a group of about 80 to 100 woodworkers, that met in the basement of the Jacob's Well Church every month. There was always a desire, amongst the membership for something more. The problem was finding a way to finance that something more. Enter *Andre's Confiserie Suisse*.

The owner of Andre's was in the market for new tables, chairs, and benches for his restaurant, in the Country Club Plaza area of Kansas City. He was looking at ordering the Swiss Chalet type furniture from a company in Switzerland, at a huge cost for manufacture and shipping. Chris Kunzle was a member of the Guild and a member of the Swiss Society of Kansas City. He convinced Marcel Bollier, the owner of Andre's, to give the Guild a shot at building what he needed. The rest, as they say, is history.

A design team was formed of members Chris, Jim Bany, David Kraatz, and Wayne Wainwright. They came up with a design and all of the jigs necessary to make the first phase of the project, 60 chairs. Once the design was approved by Marcel, construction began at several home shops amongst the Guild's membership. Each member involved was responsible for a certain part of the chairs, seat, back legs, and bolsters. Then all the parts were brought together, in the backroom of our sponsor, the local Woodcraft store, for assembly. At this point, members, like myself, who hadn't been involved in the parts manufacture process could help with the assembly. The amazing thing was that all those pieces, built in all those shops, came together and fit with no problems, at all. It was definitely a camaraderie building experience.

After assembly, the chairs were taken to yet another member's shop, for finishing. From there it was on to delivery to Andre's. This was the beginning of a great partnership between the Guild and Andre's. The Guild went on to build tables and benches for the restaurant that provided the

seed money for the Guild's future. That partnership continues today, as the Guild recently built more tables and benches for an expansion at Andre's.

In my next post, I'll cover what that seed money built and some of the great characters that make up the Kansas City Woodworkers' Guild.

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