

South Shore artist creates whimsical wood creations

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Art is where you find it and an abundance of artistic talent can be found on the South Shore.

Yves Bérubé (marine), Douglas Bamford (ceramics), Tim Freeman (metal), and Laurie Swim (fabrics) are among this region's many exceptional artists, some of them hiding in plain sight.

At his Tides Turning home studio in Riverport, overlooking the convergence of the LaHave River and Atlantic Ocean, master artisan Don Moore creates wonderfully whimsical wood-art creations.

His unique one-of-a-kind designs, most of them turned and carved out of single pieces of wood carefully selected by Moore, end up displayed in prominent galleries and purchased for private collections in Europe, Japan, New Zealand, United States and throughout Canada.

Businessman and philanthropist Stephen Bronfman owns four wood-art pieces crafted by Moore.

Born and raised in Montreal, Moore moved to Nova Scotia in 1979. He eventually purchased a farm, which included a 400-acre woodlot, an ideal setting for a budding artist whose passion was wood.

In 2001, Moore was presented with the Nova Scotia Woodlot Owner of the Year Award for the sustainable management of his own woodlot and for responsible stewardship of the land.

Moore's introduction to woodturning happened by chance while attending a major wood show with his son. While his son was busy viewing the displays, Moore looked into a conference room where a seminar was about to start. An empty chair looked like a good place to sit



Master artisan Don Moore creates wonderfully whimsical, one-of-a-kind, wood-art creations in his home studio in Riverport. His work is coveted by galleries and private collectors in Europe, Japan, New Zealand, the United States and throughout Canada. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**



Entitled Birds of a Feather, this exquisite piece of wood art was created from one piece of pasture spruce. The heads of these birds are the area where six branches formed. Nature provided the different colouring.

to rest his weary feet.

"The speaker was a New Brunswick woodturner. After he finished speaking and started to work on his lathe, all the people left. I never used a lathe before, so I stayed to watch him," said Moore.

"He seemed to really enjoy working quietly by himself. Just him, his lathe and a piece



The Nova Woodturners Guild responded to a need from the IWK Children's Hospital for containers, enabling young patients to store their Bravery Beads, given to them for enduring operations and treatments. This container was fashioned by Don Moore.

of wood. I said to myself, 'What a wonderful activity'. That's how I got started with woodturning," he said.

It was 1994 when Moore began studying and perfecting the art of fine woodturning. He even designed and produced a range of specialized tools and accessories.

Moore now offers private

instruction and training at his home workshop, delivers technical seminars and workshops at retailers such as Lee Valley Tools, as well as at various trade shows.

Committed to expanding and perfecting his technique, Moore travelled to France in 2013 to take courses at the Ecole Escoulen Tournage sur Bois in the town of Aiguines, a region that considers the art of woodturning to be deeply embedded in its cultural heritage.

Following graduation, Moore took further wood-art instruction from internationally renowned woodturning artisan Alain Mailland at his Chamborigaud studio.

"When I started creating wood art, people would ask me how I would see the finished item in the wood before I started turning. I guess I visualize what the wood will end up being," said Moore.

"A friend once told me he might be able to copy what I do, but he can't see what I see," he said.

Moore contends he seldom injects much forethought into his creative process.

"Sometimes I have an idea

and will sketch it, then create it. Other times I will start without a plan. Once I start thinking about what I'm doing, I stop doing it and go on to something else. I usually have up to 10 different pieces on the go," he said, adding each creation takes two weeks to complete.

Preferring the solitude of night, Moore heads to his studio at 9:30 p.m., then works until 4:30 a.m.

Helen Ferguson owns three of Moore's wood-art pieces.

"Don's work is extremely unique, artistry at its finest. It really speaks to me," said Ferguson.

The Prospect resident purchased Birds of a Feather, an extraordinary piece fashioned from spruce.

"Don's keen eye noticed a lone spruce in a corner of a pasture. Because it hadn't been growing in the woods surrounded by trees, the spruce wasn't cramped and grew unusually," said Ferguson.

"Instead of growing four branches each season, it grew six. Don saw the potential of creating out of one piece of wood six birds sitting in a circle, facing each other as if they were talking," she said.

Ferguson said Moore, when he sells a piece of his wood art, tells the story of the wood to the new owners. She said the detailed story about Birds of a Feather endeared the piece to her.

"Hearing the story helped me understand the mind of the artist and made the art all the more special. It enriched my enjoyment of the piece because I understood it better," she said.

Moore said he enjoys sharing his knowledge and techniques with people who are interested in getting started in woodturning.

"It's my way of passing on the skills to the next generation of woodturners," he said.

For details, visit www.tideturning.ca or <https://www.facebook.com/Don-MooreTidesTurning>.