



THE Q & A

# DARRYL DIECKMAN

Coastside Collective woodworker and resident artist at Palo Alto's Cubberley Community Center shares cherished pieces, tools of the trade and his ardor for lumber.

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## Do you have a favorite type of wood?

I most enjoy working with reclaimed woods that have a history and story to tell.

## Can you share a little-known fact about woodworking?

I think people are surprised at the efforts required to sustain the illusion of wood seamlessly wrapping a curve. Wood prefers to be tall, straight and strong. That's why we build buildings with it. But there are techniques and illusions that can be used to bend the will of the wood and various tricks to hide the evidence.

## What's something in your life that brings you joy?

I've been the proud pet-parent of four Rottweilers throughout my life: Onyx, Roxy, Zaxon and Xylo. Each one has been a uniquely cuddly, clumsy, dorky, stubborn and intelligent companion.

## What's your claim to fame?

My grilled cheese. I would share the secret, but what would that leave me with?

## How do you spend a typical day at your Cubberley studio?

On a good day, I can get six to eight hours in at the bench. Progress is slow, as it should be. Every project is unique, and each step is brought as close to perfection as I dare, one shaving at a time. When things go wrong, I take the dog for a walk. He gets a lot of walks. At the end of the day, I sweep my shop and clear my workbench.

## Tell us about your favorite tool.

In the hand-tool category, the Lie-Nielsen round bottom spoke-shave is exquisitely beautiful to see and to use.

## What was your first job?

I was a fundraising telemarketer selling trash bags and frozen pizzas—which was probably the worst possible job for a socially awkward, introverted 15-year-old.

## How would you describe your aesthetic sense?

I'm fascinated with iconic forms from art deco architecture, mid-century interiors and have a special fondness for atomic age appliances. I can only guess the latter comes from watching the *Jetsons* and visiting a lot of garage sales over the summers.

## What is your most cherished possession?

My series of pieces inspired by the iconic designs of early radio receivers.

## How about your biggest pet peeve?

The Oxford comma. Specifically, the absence of it.

## Are you instructing aspiring woodworkers?

I enjoy teaching, mentoring and leading workshops. My favorite workshops are the ones for children, like building a birdhouse, a wooden robot or "Frankenstuffs" where attendees give new life to donated stuffies by dissecting and reassembling new, and sometimes creepy, creations. I also enjoy teaching introductory machine tool classes and introductory hand tool classes at the Palo Alto Adult School.

## What do you collect?

Scraps of wood that are too valuable to throw away and too small to be useful. [P](#)