



Chest of drawers,
100% dowel construction



Armoire for TV,
100% dowel construction



Chess table
RIGHT Side table,
80% dowel construction



deformation was something I never quite understood, and perhaps the reason I have never sold anything since.'

His current workshop is in a 250 sq ft converted garage at his home in British Columbia, but, he says, like every woodworker he needs a bigger workshop. 'After a few years, the space appeared to shrink, leading to petulant discontent. Machinery has multiplied within, so all the machinery stands I have built are fitted with castors, something I highly recommend.'

His current preferred wood is cherry, a significant step up from some of the materials he used earlier in his work. 'Many years ago, because of financial constraints, I began using yellow cedar. When milling or turning, it gives off the most pleasant odour, perhaps its only attribute! Sometimes in the middle of the night a sound like the crack of gunfire would waken us and turn out to be a board or a piece splitting in two. Following several sleepless nights, I tried alder, a species with a lovely grain, but difficult to stain evenly. I now use cherry, which has a beautiful grain and with careful preparation is relatively easy to stain. The

next upgrade was intended to be walnut, however it is double the cost, with no appreciable advantage, so for now I will stick with cherry,' Jim says.

'I like to stain most pieces and initially that was problematic as the surfaces turned out blotchy. I did have more success with cherry, but only when using a conditioner. I use a mixture of shellac and methyl hydrate, and later apply a gel stain. I prefer a spray-on finish using water-based lacquer, but do not have the proper facilities to do so, so I use a semi-gloss finish by Min-Wax, which does not have a plasticky appearance. After dry-fitting, I disassemble then treat and stain each part individually. It is twice the work but worth the effort.'

So what does the future hold? 'Our business largely depends on the financial and political climate of our great neighbour to the south,' says Jim. 'When Covid-19 struck and spread, we anticipated the worst and prepared to cut back. I get little pleasure in stating the opposite occurred, sales increased. I am concerned about the immediate future though, and so much rests with the United States. Americans we have

met are kind, caring, and intelligent people, but the direction taken by the present leadership, on many fronts, is incomprehensible and chaotic. In considering these traits, particularly with respect to the response to the virus, I am reminded of the adage: "The universal aptitude for ineptitude makes any human accomplishment an incredible miracle".'

In terms of his woodworking, Jim is constantly worried about running out of ideas. 'In our house we have items on display and more not on display, in our storage room, in closets, and my wife – who is supportive in the extreme and my inspiration – has threatened to leave me if I make one more table. Having said that, I am considering a table lamp based on my three-leg side table design.

'About a year ago I decided to do a series of simple projects for YouTube, titled *Back to Basics*: beds, end tables, hall tables, bookcases and so on. When finished we advertised them locally and gave each one away free to a single-parent family. Good for them and, even better for me.'

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