

# Passion fuels wood designs

## FAVORITE THINGS

By Denise I. O'Neal

**W**ood artist Kyle Kinser believes in a hands-on approach from start to finish, often planking his own wood.

Kinser's most popular items are cabinets and tables, which have been displayed at the Illinois State Art Museum and local galleries.

A minimalist with an interest in Asian design, Kinser's works are a combination borrowing from the approach of Shaker-style furniture and Japanese designs.

A graduate of the Woodworking School at the College of Redwood in Northern California, Kinser became interested in Japanese design after visiting California antique shops that specialized in Asian artifacts. Kinser also studied with Swedish wood artist James Krenov, and has adopted the wood master's holistic approach to his craft, believing that wood work isn't a living, it's a way of life.

Inspired by his surroundings, Kinser's workshop is close to the Shawnee Natural Forest. The downstate Illinois resident's one-of-a-kind pieces are created from local timber, with cherry and walnut most often employed. Keeping an organic element to his furniture, Kinser's tables include detailing such as natural log edgings.

"I'm a very intuitive worker,



**This cabinet is typical of the handcrafted work of Kyle Kinser, who likes to work without drawings or blueprints.**

and I do a lot of designs by the seat of my pants," Kinser said.

He seldom, if ever, does commissioned pieces, allowing the feel of the wood to dictate to him as he creates his one-of-a-kind pieces. The artist's crafting techniques include using sequenced boards from the same tree to give a uniformed look to each item.

The artist's big board constructions (tables built from one or two logs) are very popular and sell in the range of \$4,000-\$6,000.

*Kinser's works can be viewed and/or purchased at Tobai International (Westin Hotel, 320 N. Dearborn, 312-661-0394), Andrew Bae Gallery (300 W. Superior 312-335-8601) and Sawbridge Studios (153 W. Ohio, 312-828-0055; 1015 Tower Ct., Winnetka, 847-441-2441).*