



PEOPLE ARE BAD FOR BUSINESS. That's basically what Jim Brown, founder of Windsor Chairmakers in Lincolnville, Maine, was told when he purchased his workshop, a converted 19th-century barn a stone's throw from the shoreline.

"Never, never, never open the barn doors. People will come in and bother you," the previous owner cautioned.

Fortunately, Jim chose to ignore this suggestion and established a friendly, open workshop where customers can interact with craftsmen as they work. His company celebrates its 24th anniversary in November and has made about 15,000 chairs since its debut.

"That became one of the hallmarks of our business!" laughs Nance Brown, Jim's wife and busi-

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home and continues to work many days from there. And after working with several excellent craftsmen for many years, he has been able to trust them to continue creating the quality products he insists on delivering to his customers.

"Jim has a fantastic eye," says senior chairmaker Mike Timchak. "If something is off by an eighth of an inch, he'll spot it. But he can depend on us to do a good job — we all have a lot of pride in what we do." The crew cumulatively boasts more than 100 years of fine woodworking experience.

Although the company's name suggests a limited selection, Windsor Chairmakers also creates dining tables, benches, stools, beds, chests, desks, buffets and more. Most of these pieces are inspired by the Windsor and Shaker styles popular in 18th-century

Traditional Furniture

A master furniture maker crafts his business around an open workshop where customers can get in on the action.



New England. The clean lines, aesthetic purity and practical functionality of these designs have made them popular among homeowners for more than 200 years.

Under Jim's watchful eye, the craftsmen customize every piece to each customer's needs. Many customers choose to come in to watch their pieces being created and chat with the craftsmen as they work.

Although Jim isn't as involved in the actual construction of each piece of furniture as he once was, the art and heritage he has devoted his life to live on through his designs, which leaves him more than satisfied.

"If everybody in their vocation could be as happy as I am, it would be a wonderful thing," says Jim. "A man who enjoys what he does every day doesn't have to go to work a day in his life. If someone told me I had to retire, this is what I'd want to do."

— Danielle Taylor