

A love and respect for timber

Phoebe Everill's tool cabinet tells the story of a third generation wood worker with a true love and respect for the timber that is made the hero of her custom furniture.

The furniture designer and woodworker come teacher has established herself in Drummond in a workshop with breathtaking views across the Macedon Ranges sure to feed creativity. Everill was brought up in a family where craft was highly valued: her mother worked with textiles and her father was a woodworker. From a young age, Everill says she always had a desire to create and work with her hands.

"I always worked to make things and I was really fortunate that my dad saw that and ran with it," she says.

Training with her father in carpentry and joinery for about six years, it wasn't until later that Everill ventured out to work exclusively on old houses and renovations in the Macedon Ranges. She typically worked with an all-male crew whom she said were always extremely loyal. "I always said it was a good day when no-one noticed I was a female and recognised the quality of my work rather than my gender.

"You're work should shine and you should be passionate about what you do."

While Everill loved the life and idea of recycling materials to restore homes, her true passion was in creating furniture.

She moved interstate to study at Sturt School for Wood in 2009 and has been developing her style ever since.

Her philosophy towards furniture making revolves around paying respect to the tree by utilising its wood wisely and respectfully. The result is work that celebrates the unique character of timbers in contemporary and thoughtfully functional designs.

"I'm very proud of the fact that I can now say the furniture is dried, milled and made on site," she says.

"My work is as green as I can possibly make it. It fits the providence that I want."

Everill uses mostly storm-fallen blackwood

timber which lends itself to her Scandinavian-meets-Japanese style. Many new blackwood trees have been planted along the creek on her property. She also uses some American exotics and Nigerian timber.

Everill's elegant but comfortable Winton reading chair is one of her classics that truly showcases her skill and style.

"I believe that the timber should speak. All I can do is be respectful and careful with the way I cut and design.

"The furniture we are working on are the antiques of the future. Our pieces should last for 100s of years because they are well made."

Respect for the timber she uses and eye for detail mean Everill often has to build her own tools for each unique project. This is something she describes as "a necessity but an absolute pleasure".

"The most important thing you can do is to 'make' well.

"Take risks and make things happen. You can only fall flat on your face and that's alright."

Everill is an accredited member of Studio Woodworkers Australia and has since become an accomplished and popular teacher, sharing her passion with new and experienced students in classes at her property in Drummond. Every student has an individual program and Everill helps to develop their ideas and creativity.

"With adult learners you have to be flexible. Everyone comes with a different life history," Everill says.

"One of the best things is that everyone has their own images built up in their heads about how something should look. I'm constantly surprised by my students. It keeps my work fresh too."

Over the next two years Everill aims to teach in New Zealand and America where she hopes to work with a range of new timbers and to further develop her style.

"I just spend my life playing and encouraging other people to do the same," she says.

"I'm living my own dream. I'm doing what I love with amazing people around me."



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