



A Chair Maker's Workshop

It's 7:30 in the morning and Curtis Buchanan is already in his backyard shop, where he builds Windsors, and only Windsors. When he set up shop 18 years ago in Jonesborough, Tenn., being a chair maker simplified things. For Buchanan, the question wasn't whether to buy a tablesaw or bandsaw first—it was whether to wire his shop for electricity. "Using all hand tools," Buchanan said, "it wasn't really necessary. With practice I could become proficient on a pole lathe."

Though Buchanan did break down and wire his shop, his power tools are limited to a lathe and a bandsaw. He works quietly and steadily, with the sounds of songbirds and crickets as constant as the crack of an ax or the shaving of a drawknife.

It is so peaceful, in fact, that on most days you'll notice a wren perched in the corner of the workshop, looking on as Buchanan shaves spindles or carves a seat.

Buchanan is diligent about starting work early, but he's just as diligent about knocking off by 12:30. "It's important to me that I'm done working by the time my daughters get home from school," he said. "I figured out what I need to do to make a living, which is sell about one chair a week. I don't need more than that, so that's what I make."

