

Mother Nature Meets Her Match

Many furniture makers, following George Nakashima's example, build live-edge tables by placing natural slabs on stark, geometric bases that defer to the beautiful planks above. Greg Brown wasn't interested in that equation. When the New Hampshire carver and cabinetmaker decided to build a table in tribute to his older brother, Tommy, who died recently at 38, he started with a gorgeous slab of walnut burl. He loved the plank, but he wasn't in a deferential mood. "I tried to make the base just as beautiful as the top," he says. In the process,

he grafted some of the flowing botanical forms he admires in Art Nouveau furniture together with winding ivy that he carved in a style inspired by Federal-era master Samuel McIntire. In another tip of the cap to his period predecessors, Brown adopted the traditional tilt-top format (see photo, p. 90) so that when it isn't in use, the top can be raised to its vertical position and viewed like a work of art.

—Jonathan Binzen

Photo: Bill Truslow

How They Did It Turn to p. 90 for more details on how Brown shaped and carved the base of his table.

Audio Slide Show To see more of Brown's furniture and hear him describe it, go to FineWoodworking.com/extras.

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