

Making a classic contemporary

BY JONATHAN BINZEN

Curtis Buchanan had built more than 1,000 traditional Windsors, all of them painted, when his friend Velda Foxx asked him to design a contemporary version that would be clear finished.

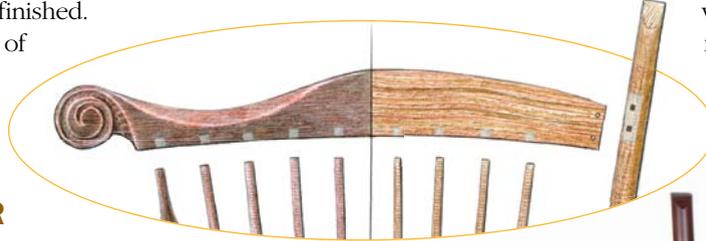
Buchanan used one of his traditional fan-back armchairs as a starting point, importing

the principle joinery and angles to his new design. Then he set about altering the shaping, turning, and other details to express a fresh spirit. He eliminated all of the fan-back's carving and voluptuous turning, choosing to

focus attention on the wood and a simpler set of lines.

TRADITIONAL FAN-BACK ARMCHAIR

UPDATED VERSION



The double-curved **crest rail** with its carved volutes is the crown of the fan-back. On the contemporary chair, Buchanan traded it for a simpler arch-topped rail, which he tucked inside the back posts.

Removing the short spindles between the fan-back's **arm support** and back post lightens the look of the new chair.

Buchanan shaped the **arm** of his new chair to reflect the chamfers and sharp edges of the seat, abandoning the curves and carving of the fan-back.

A clear oil **finish** highlights the color and contrast of walnut and hickory in the contemporary chair, while paint unifies the appearance of the traditional fan-back, with its maple turnings, pine seat, and white oak spindles and crest rail.

On the **seat** of the new chair, heavy chamfers and sharp arrises supplant the pillowy cyma curves of the fan-back's traditional shield seat.

Buchanan replaced the fan-back's baluster-turned H-stretcher with a box **stretcher**, which is better suited to slender cigar turnings. In the H-stretcher, the heavy center bulbs on each side accommodate long tenons from the medial stretcher.