

GREG ADAMS



“Willow is a very integral part of nature here in Indiana, which has a long tradition of excellent craftsmanship, especially in rustic furniture.”

A slow day of fishing turned into something very rewarding for Greg Adams.

When the fish weren't biting that day in 1983, the Madison County artisan spotted willow growing on the banks and decided to try to weave a basket like the Indians had done centuries earlier. He liked what he formed, as did others as

Greg took his willow egg baskets to local art shows.

Then one day at a show in Metamora, the Noblesville resident found an artisan making furniture from willow. Greg was hooked. He refocused his work on bending willow into functional and attractive chairs, tables, mirrors, stools and trellises that have become his signature work.

“The furniture I produce is exclusively by me, using my own hands and simple tools, from designs that have evolved from 20 years of experience,” he said. “I have no standard models and all of the designs are my own. These designs have been refined over time, and their tested engineering renders them both very sturdy and aesthetically pleasing.”

His tools may be simple and his designs may look uncomplicated, but the process of making rustic furniture is demanding and time-consuming.

“The first step is to find and cut the raw material, the willow saplings,” which grow in thickets in wet areas and can be cut year-round, he explained. Greg hand-carries the saplings, sometimes hundreds of yards, and takes them to his workshop to trim and sort.

“The frames are made first from larger pieces and trimmed with selected long straight pieces,” he continued. “Stainless steel and coated ringshank nails that grip the wood and hold the elements in place are used. Nailing from different angles provides even more strength and ensures sturdiness.”

Greg has exhibited his work in more than 500 craft and fine art fairs in the eastern United States, including the American Craft Exposition. In 1994, he was invited to make an ornament for the White House Christmas tree, which celebrated the Year of American Crafts. He created a star that has become a pattern popular among his customers.

One of his highest honors, he said, was winning the Best of Show award at the inaugural Indiana Artisan Marketplace in 2011.

“I am very proud to have my work selected into Indiana Artisan,” said the social worker and semi-professional fisherman. “This selection has validated my hard work and perseverance.”

