

STREET FASHION • FICTION BY JIMMY IBBOTSON • REMEMBERING ED BRADLEY

MID WINTER 2007

# Aspen sojourner

## BOMBS AWAY!

On the Trail of  
Aspen's Avalanches



America's Most Expensive House  
Comedy Fest: World-class Laughs



# Wooden Soldier

Andrea Lewin Wendel crafts handmade furniture from raw tree trunks

BY ESTELLE BINNOCH

ANDREA LEWIN WENDEL, dressed in her customary daytime uniform of overalls and safety goggles, is in her truck bed, straddling a 1,000-pound tree trunk. She revs a chain saw as sawdust flies everywhere.

Manhandling hunks of wood is hardly the first image that comes to mind when you meet Wendel. Tall yet thin, the Carbondale-based furniture maker and sculptor seems delicate, even bird-like. But spend a few minutes watching her take a chain saw to wood, and there's no question she's in her element when wearing a tool belt. She talks to the wood, chides it, shakes her head at it, saws through it, adjusts its position, saws some more, and—thud!—a hefty chunk falls from the pickup to the pavement.

“Ha! Success!” she laughs.

This is just the beginning of a long process. For the next three months, one of Wendel's primary projects will be chain-sawing, chiseling, sanding and molding these two 36-foot logs into four handcrafted barstools for a client in Kansas City.

“I love the physicality of what I do,” she says with a girlish smile. “You're all over every piece; by the time you're done, you've loved it from every side.”

Although the stools will be customized to match the client's décor, they will also be instant Wendel classics: miniature totem poles with graphic patterns encircling each. In between perfecting these stools, she's also plugging away at three mantles, a wall hanging, a desk, three cocktail tables and her own line of furniture. In other words, she keeps herself busy.

A perusal of Wendel's portfolio reveals her deep affinity for traditional artworks from around the globe. (The barstools, in fact, are inspired by the crowns she created on a series of African queen sculptures.) Each



ZACH ORNITZ



AQUA BOWLS BY ALEX MARSHALL STUDIOS

THE NATURE OF INDULGENCE

*Fraiche*

BODY. SOUL. HOME  
products for an organic-inspired lifestyle

a boutique at Riverwalk in downtown Basalt  
No. 16A . 227 MIDLAND AVENUE . 970 927 3858  
interior design services available

piece is different, yet Wendel's touch is unmistakable: earth tones, totemic references, sculptural power and painstakingly etched patterns that walk a line between the present and the past, all with a uniquely Western flair.

"I really love the traditional carvings of Africa and the textures and shapes of the Southwest and Native American antiquities," she says. "But a contemporary edge is so fun, and it brings it all together."

The daughter of an interior designer and a builder, Wendel's artistic inclinations are embedded in her genes. After graduating with a degree in illustration, she moved to Florida and began painting murals in private homes. She came to Aspen 13 years ago, however, and is here to stay. She took some classes in woodworking at Anderson Ranch, and the medium captured her imagination. Welding classes she'd taken in Florida further expanded the possibilities she saw for herself as a sculptor. Thus, wood and metal became her tactile inspirations.

After honing her craft through sculpture and making a name for herself by exhibiting her work in art galleries, she began making and designing furniture for clients five years ago, rediscovering an appreciation for collaboration that she'd had in Florida.

"To make the perfect piece for your client is really fun," says Wendel. "I like the input of other people to create something functional."

A few weeks after chain-sawing tree trunks out of her truck, the logs have morphed from hunks of wood into bonafide stools. The colder weather has forced Wendel into the confines of her woodworking shop. Her various projects fill the space, but the stools-in-progress are front and center. The bark has been shaved off, the edges have been smoothed, the measurements have been made; it's clear where the leather seat belongs, and where the footrests will be installed. She has etched patterns on two of the stools, but says that there's still at least two full days' worth of work yet to do on each stool's pattern. She'll have them completely finished in time for Christmas.

She's also giddy this afternoon because plans are moving forward on her furniture line, A-Line Designs. She has just come up with a logo that she proudly displays, and has worked out designs for four coffee and side tables. Eventually, she will have designs for everything from tables and chairs to mantles. With Wendel's chutzpah, keep your eyes out for the A-Line sooner rather than later.

## Service as Exceptional as the Scenery.



From the minute your aircraft lands to the point where you are cleared for departure, our staff is at hand, providing world-class customer service.

From deluxe heated hangars to state-of-the-art deicing facilities, you can count on our highly trained, experienced personnel to handle your aircraft with care. Rocky Mountain AOG Maintenance, Duncan Aviation Avionics, and some of the best charter companies in the industry are on hand to meet and exceed your needs.

Our staff is always at your beck and call. Our Flight Desk and Concierge are here to make sure all the pieces fall into place for you, seamlessly.

No one wants to leave the beauty of the Valley, but we try to make leaving as painless as possible. Our in-house caterer, JetStream Seasonings, loads your plane with the best cuisine in aviation. Our staff stands by to handle your bags. Complimentary cookies, popcorn, and only the finest coffee are at your fingertips...

Be our guest, we know you will long to return to where the service is as exceptional as the scenery.



0871 Cooley Mesa Road, Eagle, Colorado 81637 • 970-524-7700

[www.VailValleyJetCenter.com](http://www.VailValleyJetCenter.com)