

# FORM + FUNCTION

STORY DINA MISHEV

THERE'S ONE WAY TO ENSURE A PIECE OF FURNITURE IS ABSOLUTELY PERFECT—HAVE IT CUSTOM MADE.

“Each design project has a unique style and personality, fitting to the client’s needs,” says Katherine Reedy, the founder of EKReedy Interiors + Furniture. “Often a designer will need a special piece to meet these needs. This is where design begins, creating the custom piece for an exact space.” A piece of custom furniture—whether a bed; a dining, coffee, or end table; a credenza; a dresser; or a multi-functional that there isn’t a word to describe—can be the solution to many design problems, or design dreams. The design of a custom piece of furniture doesn’t have to come from an interior designer. Rob Dearing, founder of Dearing Furniture Workshop, says that when he makes custom pieces, he’s usually working directly with homeowners and, “they usually have an idea of what they want. It’s my job to create their vision.” Here are four custom, or semi-custom—Reedy has a customize-able boutique line of furniture—pieces dreamed up, designed, and made real by area professionals.



COURTESY OF WILLOW CREEK DESIGN GROUP



COURTESY OF EKREEDY FURNITURE

▲ Interior designer Katherine Reedy, founder of EKReedy Interiors + Furniture, found the inspiration for her line’s Super-G Gate Leg Table in her own home. “In designing my home I needed a secondary dining area off the open living area,” she says. “The design of the Super-G Gate Leg Table served beautifully.” When closed, the piece serves as a sofa console; when opened, it transforms into a formal dining setting. The table gets its name from a type of alpine ski race, the super-G. To be successful in the super-G, skiers must have strength and an ability to respond to changing conditions. This table has both of those traits and is one of about 40 pieces in Reedy’s line, which she debuted at the High Point Market—the largest home-furnishings market in the country—in 2018. Although EKReedy Furniture was only launched recently, Reedy has been designing furniture for projects and her clients since she started her design firm in 1990.

◀ “Pretty much every project we work on requires at least one custom piece,” says Willow Creek Design Group’s founder Colleen McFadden-Walls. “Our clients hire us so that their homes look unique and different. Designing a custom piece of furniture that you can’t see anywhere else is part of that.” This square, rift-oak coffee table, made for a Three Creek home the owners wanted to refresh, was designed to not only be the perfect proportions for its space, but also to meet the client’s goal of updating their home’s aesthetic, which hadn’t been changed since the home was built about 15 years ago. “Rift oak has a smaller, consistent grain than regular oak,” says Renée Crawford, senior designer and principal at WCDG. “It is a more contemporary look than larger-grain oak.” To give the table character, WCDG designed the legs to be asymmetrical. A complementary darker finish on them creates contrast and further ensures that this is a coffee table you won’t see anywhere else, McFadden-Walls says.



COURTESY OF JLF ARCHITECTS

► “I knew this table was going to be a challenge,” says Rob Dearing, the founder of Dearing Furniture Workshop, about this custom glass and cherry coffee table. “Glass was a new material for me to work with, but I was excited about the client’s vision.” Dearing’s client, whom he had previously worked with to restore several antique pieces of furniture, had some cherry wood from a tree on their farm in Illinois. “They dreamed up the idea of a coffee table that was made of a thin layer of cherry over a surface of glass,” says Dearing, who enjoys crafting new custom pieces and also bringing antique pieces back to life. For this table, he tested glues and epoxies until he found one that “made it so you couldn’t see any of the seams” in the glass. He also used low-iron glass, an ultra clear glass that is less green or blue on the edges than traditional glass. The cherry is finished in a custom mix of tongue oil. “Whether new or restoration work, we’re not magicians pulling rabbits out of our hats,” says Dearing, who works with an apprentice, Luke Ryder. “We use science to create colors and finishes and textures on wood and other objects.”



COURTESY OF DEARING FURNITURE WORKSHOP

◀ Paul Bertelli, design principal, president, and partner at JLF Architects, designed this desk, which is one of a matched set, and filing cabinets for an office in a Jackson Hole residence. Both pieces echo some of the contemporary elements that were already part of the home. The ¾-inch glass top of this desk is the same glass used for the treads in a three-story glass staircase. The steel trimmed, reclaimed-oak-front desk drawers are similar to the cabinetry in the home’s kitchen. The glass-fronted filing cabinets kitty-corner from the desk are topped in steel, just like a counter elsewhere in the home. “The desks are not near the stairs or the kitchen, but they are reminders to [the homeowners] that there is continuity,” Bertelli says. “Usually there are pieces that are critical to the architecture in every project,” he says. “When we have the opportunity to design these critical pieces, especially when there are interesting materials that we’re working with in other parts of a building that we can use, they can enhance the space, to extreme levels.”