

MASTER CRAFTSMAN



OLIVER PETERSON

MASTER CRAFTSMAN DEREYK PATTERSON, DP KNIVES, FINE CUTLERY

No matter how successful one might be with a given craft or trade, the siren song of exciting new endeavors is often impossible to resist. So it was with East Hampton custom cabinetry and furniture maker Dereyk Patterson, who recently followed his passion to begin creating fine knives at his East Hampton studio.

“DP Knives is carving a unique niche in the world of cutlery. Each is an exquisitely functional work of art that stands out among the humdrum knives that might be found in an East End kitchen.”



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With visually striking, razor-sharp blades and handles built from a wide array of exotic materials, his handcrafted selection of DP Knives is carving a unique niche in the world of high-end cutlery. Each is an exquisitely functional work of art that stands out among the comparatively humdrum Henckels, Globals and Wusthofs one might find in a typically well-appointed East End kitchen.

“I actually started making the knives because I was bored and I needed a hobby, and it couldn’t be woodworking,” Patterson says, explaining how he went from building tables and chairs for 25 years to the cutting utensils now commanding attention from thousands of admirers locally and abroad.

Despite falling in love with the Hamptons after moving here with his wife, Paige St. John, from Western Massachusetts about a decade ago, and building a very lucrative business, Patterson says he’s grown increasingly disillusioned with the oversaturated furniture and custom cabinetry market. Meanwhile, making knives is a steadfastly joyful enterprise.

“Custom furniture is a tough gig,” he admits, pointing out how the internet changed his business, making so much available—even if the quality is inferior—with the click of a mouse. “There are so many makers out there.”

Inspiration struck back in the summer of 2017 after Patterson “went down a rabbit hole” exploring custom knives on Instagram and decided he’d put his skills to the test. He completed his first knife that August and found he not only he had a talent for it, but fortunately others were also applauding the fruits of his labor.

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INNOVATION

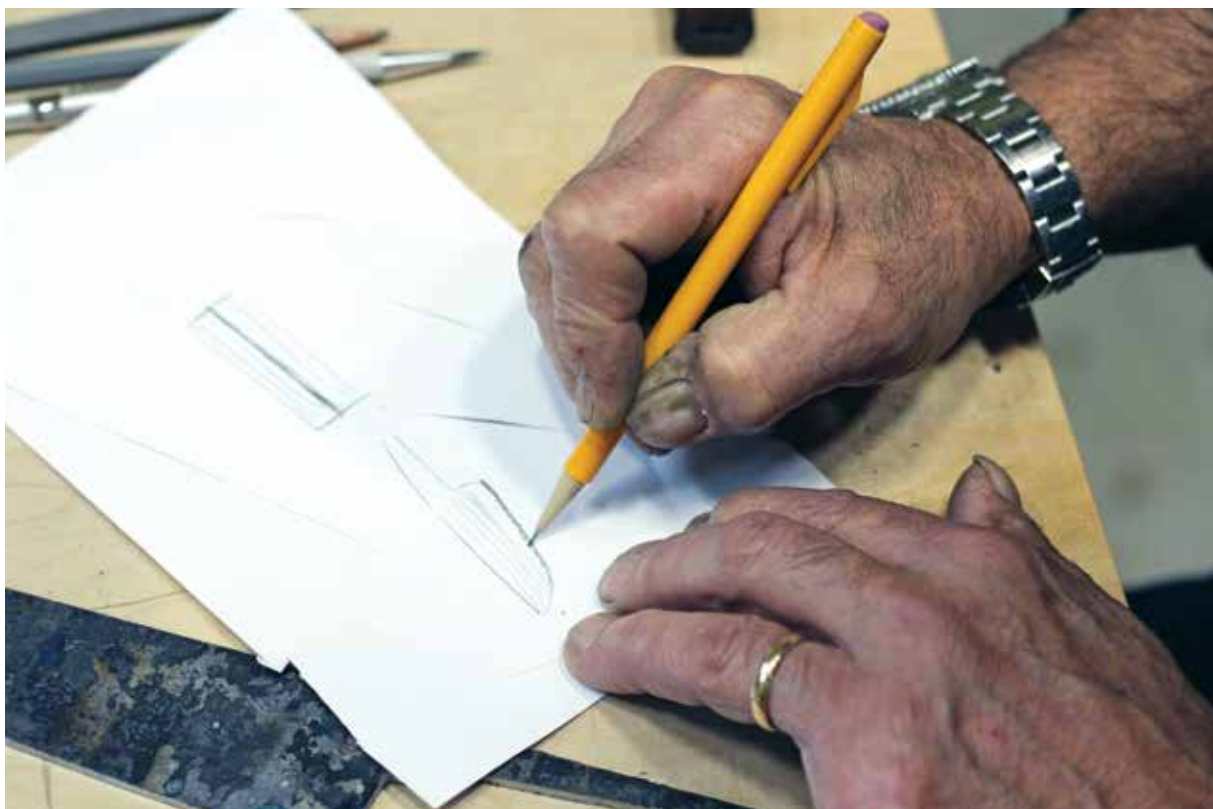
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MASTER CRAFTSMAN



OLIVER PETERSON

What it takes to craft one-of-a-kind knives

"I'm excited to go to work again," he says, describing a feeling of being "renergized" by this new challenge. "It's really cool."

Since presenting his knives to the world on Instagram, Patterson's @dpknives account has gained more than 5,000 followers—all waiting to see what he produces next.

While Patterson has a small forge and the knowhow to use it, he chooses to skip that step and turn to more adept makers for expertly made stainless steel Damascus bars, usually comprising up to 400 layers of three different alloys. He then spends hours shaping, polishing and chemically treating the metal to reveal the layers in a seemingly endless multitude of delicate patterns.

"I could forge my own Damascus but it would be carbon," Patterson says. "I don't want carbon—stainless Damascus is a whole thing," he continues, explaining how his suppliers fuse an SG2 core with alternating layers of stainless steel and nickel as dictated by his specifications. "They're just sorcerers."

Patterson applies his own magic to the process by revealing the patterned layers of metal, first grinding the mostly Japanese-style blades, and then through acid etching. "Each layer reacts differently [to the acid]," he says. "One may go dark, one may go light gray."

These patterns take on many forms, featuring everything from wavy, psychedelic designs to thousands of interconnected cell shapes, to complex, op-art-like lines—some of them rigid, and others organic and curved. Patterson uses

the layers and patterns to define his signature style, many times juxtaposing the busy motifs with plain fields of dark or light steel as negative space.

The results are as confounding as they are sublime. Adding shaped handles made from rare and sometimes ancient materials doubles the impact.

Never heavy, the handles balance Patterson's blades with exotic components such as Tasmanian blackwood, ironwood from New Mexico and Arizona, maple burl, birdseye maple, local cherry burl from Springs, horn, faux ivory, vintage micarta, carbon fiber and black bog-oak reclaimed from European swamps where it remained preserved beneath permafrost over four millennia. He even has a 10,000-year-old woolly mammoth tooth awaiting just the right piece. All of them are stabilized, usually sealed and finished with resin or lacquer for a perfect grip.

Now Patterson's knives are in high demand from chefs, collectors, and even celebrity clientele. He mostly markets them via Instagram, and is currently working through backorders to meet demand. "I'm kind of at the point now where I could do this full time," he says, though cabinetry remains his bread and butter.

Patterson explains that his knives are available in several styles, including chef/utility knives, paring knives, slicers and santokus. But, he adds, "Each one is one of a kind."

— Oliver Peterson