



MADE IN WV

Art in Industry

Custom furniture makers find beauty in the raw.

FEW BUSINESSES HAVE NAMES THAT CAPTURE the essence of their product so well as Morgantown's Artfully Industrial Furniture. Only one year after the company's inception, its modern, custom pieces are beginning to make appearances in tastefully decorated businesses and homes throughout the area.

Josh Perry is co-owner of Artfully Industrial and does all of the fabrication and welding himself in the basement of his home, which he considers a workshop-in-progress. The space contains tools that can be found in many sheds and workshops, like a table saw and drill press. But other materials, like yard-length sections of an iron girder and an entire sheet of zinc, sit piled in the corner, hinting that something a little more unusual happens here.

"We lean more to keeping materials raw," Perry says. "We like raw materials, slightly finished. I don't like the word 'rustic,' because that's a little more unfinished than what we do. But a lot of our stuff never gets painted. People in our business will usually make ugly welds and grind them off, but I like to leave

nice-looking steel welds that appeal to the eye."

The furniture Perry crafts certainly appeals to a popular flavor of modern decor that eschews typical materials and designs in favor of the stripped-down elegance that can be found in industrial materials—the rosy gold color of silicon bronze, for instance, or the layering of wood stains and the metallic discoloration of weld lines.

Artfully Industrial's custom designs are a big part of the company's burgeoning success. For each individual piece, Perry and co-owner Damian Ferek sit down with clients and hand-sketch possibilities around specific dimensions. They also present the customer with different wood and metal materials before construction.

Perry worked for years as a traveling cross-country pipeline welder. It was this subcontracting work that brought him to Morgantown, along with his wife and first daughter, more than eight years ago. It paid well, but he didn't have benefits and the hours kept him from spending much time with his family.

When they found out another daughter was on the way, he began looking for a full-time position in Morgantown with a more regular schedule.

It was time to put down roots. "We love the mountains. I grew up in Northern California so, minus the ocean, this is a lot like where I'm from. We found some really good friends here, and we were like, 'Why not?'"

During the day, Perry still works in the energy sector as the vice president of an industrial fabrication company. In the early evening, he is a father to his active daughters, who play sports and ride dirt bikes. In the late evening, he heads down to the basement to build the next custom piece for Artfully Industrial furniture. Look for it in a stylish space near you. "I never really thought I would get into furniture, but this trendy metal and wood is different," Perry says.

artfullyindustrial.com

written by J. KENDALL PERKINSON

