

## MEET THE PROFESSIONALS – DWAYNE ‘DUSTY’ TAYLOR

BY JOHN DUBAY

Professional member Duane Taylor, also known as “Dusty,” thrives on excelling in niche areas of expertise. In woodworking his specialty is intarsia, shaping small pieces of various kinds of solid wood to create wooden mosaics. Unlike marquetry made from thin veneers, all pieces in Duane’s projects start out three quarter inches thick, but to create 3-D depth in the final assembly, some pieces will be made thicker or thinner. And since he uses only solid wood, the individual pieces can be, and usually are, shaped to enhance the 3-D effect.



You’ve probably seen Duane cutting out the pieces on his scroll saw at the Guild’s booth at the Salem Art Fair, the Oregon State Fair, the Oregon Tool Show or the Best of Northwest Show.

He often uses those occasions to cut out the pieces for several projects. At show’s end, he puts all the pieces in a plastic bag to take back to



the shop, sort them and reassemble them into the separate picture projects. To me, that’s like dumping four or five crossword puzzles into a pile before putting them together! Duane says he has no trouble because after all the cutting he’s so very familiar with the species and shapes and how they fit together.

He sometimes makes his own patterns based on pictures, like pet photos, but unless a customer requests a custom picture, he most often uses purchased patterns. He buys them only from those artists and dealers he has learned to trust. The patterns, printed on large folded sheets of almost translucent



paper, are more delicate and detailed than I expected, markedly different from the coarser versions found in do-it-yourself intarsia instruction books. Of course the delicacy of the parts is related to the

size of the finished piece. Some projects require hundreds of pieces. Duane’s largest project was four and a half by five

and a half feet. The finished pieces not only hang on walls like pictures but are set into furniture as decorative panels.

Born in Michigan, raised in Indiana, Duane lived in Portland from 1964 to 1971, and during that time he finished college



before starting a first career in the insurance business. About 20 years ago he started his own niche insurance business to provide dental health insurance coverage as part of employee benefit plans. He continues to own and manage two such plans to this day.

Although Duane started woodworking in high school it became a part of his life after a serious infection eleven years ago largely curtailed his outside income employment (other than the dental plans). The precipitating event was getting a catalogue of plans for toy trucks. After building more of them than he can count, he added cribbage boards to his repertoire of hand-made wooden gifts. All that changed after reading the book

“Intarsia Made Easy.” He quickly found, however, the book’s procedures did not work for him.

“Nothing fit,” he says today. He thought the process through and came up with a procedure that does work for him and has enabled him to complete over 500 pieces of decorative intarsia, marketed so far by reputation and word-of-mouth.



Duane’s 720 square foot shop, adjacent to his home in Aloha, has the following tools:

- Two 20” DeWalt scroll saws
- 10” Table saw
- 10” Makita chop saw
- 13” Thickness planer
- Oscillating spindle sander
- 5 Hp bench drill press
- 4” bench mounted belt sander
- Power Crafter hand held engraving tool
- Two dust collectors

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