

CRAFTSMANSHIP WITH PRIDE

In July 2014



Craftsmanship with Pride, Inc. is a quality woodworking company specializing in high-end finish work and the design, fabrication and installation of custom traditional New England and historic reproduction front entrances from the "Old School" era all the way up to the present.



See it All Day

Like an artist pouring his heart and soul onto a canvas, RJ Kirby leans over his desk and gets lost in the design. It's a hot summer afternoon and beads of sweat gleam on his brow but his focus never waivers.

Instead of a paintbrush, RJ does his magic with the sweep of a computer mouse. He brings up a split-level house facade on the screen, changes the entryway and then changes it again. He adds columns, takes out columns, makes columns wider and thinner, adds a base and takes it out, changes the lights on either side of the door. He works away until he's happy and satisfied that the house has been transformed so that it has maximum curb appeal. He explains that an entryway must be appealing and fit the style of the house since that's what first meets your eye when you approach a house. "It's like the nose on your face. It's the first thing people see."

"If you look at the entryways and front doors of classic New England homes, RJ says, there's never any question about which way you enter the home. The entryway is distinctive and classically simple. But that's not always the case with some more modern architectural designs."

"RJ is a natural at this," his Dad, Roy Kirby says proudly, about his son's computer and design prowess. Roy himself is a long-time South Shore carpenter/ builder and high-end finish woodworker so he appreciates the time and effort involved in each of his son's renderings. When RJ was born in 1985, "I dragged him with me everywhere I went." You might say the lad cut his baby teeth on a carpenter's awl or that the sawdust that swirled around him throughout his childhood inspired his admiration for wood, the integrity of classical design and the beauty of fine, high-end finish work. Today, he and his Dad design and plan jobs together and work side by side.

Roy learned much about his trade working for others but then decided, during the Blizzard of 1978, to go out on his own. He formed a company, Craftsmanship with Pride, Inc. because, he says, "It was just time to move on."

Roy credits the late Ralph Tedeschi, patriarch of the Tedeschi grocery store chain and two of his sons with giving him his start in doing high-end carpentry many years ago.

Over the years, to further enhance his knowledge and skills, Roy enrolled with one of his employees in an intensive course at the North Bennet Street School in Boston and spent eight hours there every Saturday for ten weeks. "It's the finest woodworking school in the country," he says, and adds that several of his current employees have been trained there too.

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Its "American Pride Revival™" networking service uses today's technology with "Illustration by Application™". This is a service using a photograph of your existing home and its entrance. It can then utilize creative digital enhancement to provide the selections for the front door entrance exactly as they will look on the home. This provides home owners and realtors with an enhanced perspective of their property for renovation or selling purposes. "When they see the different types of doorways that are possible and how much the style changes the look of the house," Roy said, "they'll see that changes make the house look even more appealing to a prospective buyer without hanging a nail." The importance of a front entryway is obvious, when you see how many times an entryway or front door is used in ads for realty firms, architects, designers and other businesses related to the home. A nicely designed entry is also the canvas a homeowner or business owner uses to decorate for the changing seasons with wreaths and other décor, said Roy.

Craftsmanship with Pride, Inc. also builds and installs these beautiful front entrances to meet the client's complete expectations. They can provide the finest materials available, such as antique glass, brass ball-bearing hinges, high-end brass entrance handlesets, doorknockers, custom brass weather stripping, and other quality enhancements. They will work with the client to provide the look and design the client wants.

The transformations are amazing as architects, designers, builders, realtors, and homeowners are attesting. The results bring increased value and timeless appeal, which translates into a much quicker sale if and when it comes time to sell.

"Sometimes you have to think outside the box," Roy said. "This is something I've always wanted to do. I've always wanted to focus on just front entryways and now I want to gear the business toward that. When you enter a house, it is what you see first and what your hand touches first. It is the most important visual element of your home's exterior."

Back in the 1980's Roy first visited "The Street" at Historic Deerfield Village and saw all the fine and handsome front entrances on their home fronts. He was truly inspired by the spirit of the craftsmanship and work of these homes by the Connecticut River Valley's carpenters.

Doorways on older homes in Marshfield where Roy resides, Hingham, Hanover, Duxbury, and other South Shore towns, have also inspired him. People often don't appreciate the mechanics or proportions of doors, how the wood expands and contracts and how they should be designed. After you read this article take a wonderfully pleasant and slow drive through Main Street, Kingston and enjoy all of the very special antique front entrances along the way. These are some of Roy's favorites. They represent an important part of this country's past and honor it with their exquisite and pleasing design.

"The present day spirit of revival is the rebirth of this country's patriotism," Roy said. "For the past twelve years on Flag Day, the fourth of July, and Labor Day, a 20' x 30' American flag is draped over the roof of my Cape home. It represents the gratitude to the veterans from colonial times to our present troops. Our forefathers and early architects took the theme of ancient democracy and sculpted it into the government and landscape. The entryway roots go back to these timeless principals. We all feel indebted to all of those mentioned above for letting us perform and contribute our honorable craft in a small way every day." Donna Lynn Hudgins, field office supervisor, added, "It's not just about the wood. It's about the force and the spirit, the feeling and story behind it all, and how it manifests itself in the front entrance."

To enhance his knowledge and inspire him, Roy flew to Greece a few weeks after September 11th to study the ancient Greek orders and proportions first-hand of their buildings and temples. "The entryway makes a statement with many of these elements. We are always learning," Roy said. Christopher DeOrsay, Senior Project Manager for Campbell Smith architects in Duxbury appreciates the skill and integrity that Roy and his crew bring to a job. He said, "Campbell Smith Architects have benefited from our relationship with Roy Kirby for many years. The expertise and passion he brings to a project has always made our work look good and the client happy. Roy and I are members of The Institute of Classical Architecture and Classical America and have traveled to New York City to attend classes on proportion and the classical orders. The desire to learn and apply design theory in the field is a rare commodity in the trade today. We rely on his experience and craftsmanship to execute architecturally correct details and high quality construction throughout."

"We're just carpenters; we're not architects and we don't claim to be," Roy said, "But we have been honored to work with some of the finest architects. Our craftsmen bring 'old world' dedication and skill to their work." "We are strong on pride and work ethic and give our all to create something of significance." Roy adds that when he was struck with arthritis some years ago, he had to hire carpenters to do the work he was once able to do and have them be the extension of his hands. "I envy them as they perform their craft," he said. "I let these guys go and watch the magic."

Much of the home building carpentry is done off-site at various building locations, but all the detailed, exquisite woodworking is done in Roy's workshop on Furnace Street in Marshfield by Gary Greene, Steve Holland, Chris Pierce, and Greg Lund. "We make 90 percent of our own moldings," Roy said, "And we hand flute all the columns. You can order a manufactured doorway but we add the excitement of research and authenticity."

"There are some times in a project when you're thinking about how to solve a unique puzzle. You try to figure it out and how to work it." When that happens, Roy often turns to his neighbor, Dave Avery, whom he describes as their "mentor" and adds, "He's the most incredible bench carpenter, tool and machine maker/inventor there is. Dave retrieves all his parts from what he calls the "Emporium" (the dump). If we run into a situation where I need to see the solution in a different way, he's always been there for us to call."

Looking down the street, then coming down the driveway with this wooden wagon he built filled with his tools, all the guys remark, "Its time for show and tell." A client from West Newton said when she first met him in his ten-year old J.C. Penny overalls, it made for a perfect Norman Rockwell painting.

An entryway on display at the Marshfield site contains, more than 100 individual, hand-crafted pieces of wood. Chris Pierce adds that it takes him and others about two weeks to make an entryway. The handmade fluted columns are actually very slightly curved. When seen from a distance, they look completely straight.

Roy said that owning a business like his can have many pluses. One of those pluses was working on a project in Duxbury designed by Architect Robert A.M. Stern of New York. "One of the benefits was having a client who wanted to have this kind of high-end woodworking done. It was an incredible opportunity for everyone in the trades. It was a challenge. It was like going to college there and getting paid for it. I got an education and my guys did, too. I would like to say thank you to that client."

Another example was on a couple's Campbell Smith designed home on Trouant's Island, where Roy had done the custom-finish work. The couple recently emailed Roy and asked if he would do the interior finish woodworking of their 67 x 34-foot multi-hull yacht which is presently under construction in Key West. "It was designed by Captains Ryan and Walter Shurtenburger, a world renowned catamaran builder and designer," he said. "It's very advanced and powered by solar." It was such an honor that they asked me."

Craftsmanship with Pride, Inc. located at 125 Furnace Street, Marshfield, is a licensed contractor in the state and builds throughout Massachusetts.

The "American Pride Revival"SM service is provided across the country.

For more information, call (781) 834-9647, cell at (781) 760-5749 or fax to (781) 837-6598 or visit the website at www.craftsmanshipwithpride.com



This set of before and after images
was created digitally through
"Illustration and Application"

BEFORE



AFTER



This set of before and after images
was created by traditional methods

BEFORE



AFTER

