

VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

LIVING

240

PAGES OF
ROMANTIC &
SOPHISTICATED
INTERIORS

the art of tea

ELEGANCE IS
BACK IN STYLE

SUMPTUOUS
SLEEPOVERS
BEAUTIFUL
BEDDING AND
RAVISHING RUGS

DECORATING
LEGENDS
FABERGE
FORNASETTI
CASTAING
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LATIN LOVER~BUENOS AIRES LA CONFIDENCE

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seat of learning

Anything but wooden in personality, Robert Chapman's award-winning dining chairs boast the ingrained character of Tasmanian Blackwood. Inspired by the organic designs of Antoni Gaudi, with a knowing wink to Mies van der Rohe, these are the other (lesser known) Barcelona chairs.

PROFILE



OCCASIONALLY A CHAIR hovers magically somewhere midway between functional and fine art. Wollongong-based furniture maker Robert Chapman has refined a piece that may well be reflected upon as one of the finest examples of Australian craftsmanship for many years to come. Chapman's 'Barcelona' chairs (which helped earn him the Furniture Industries Association of Australia (FIAA) award for Excellence in Dining Furniture) and his accompanying oval dining table, will be the centrepiece of the newly refurbished Australian Consulate in Sapporo, Japan.

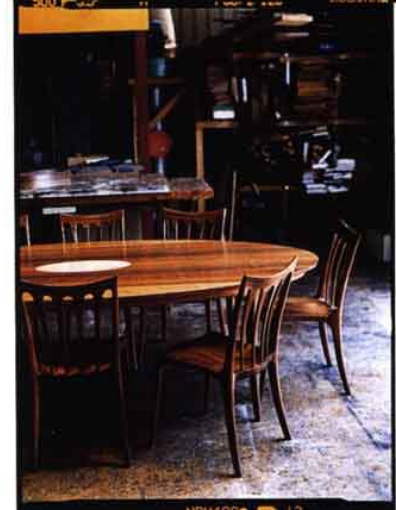
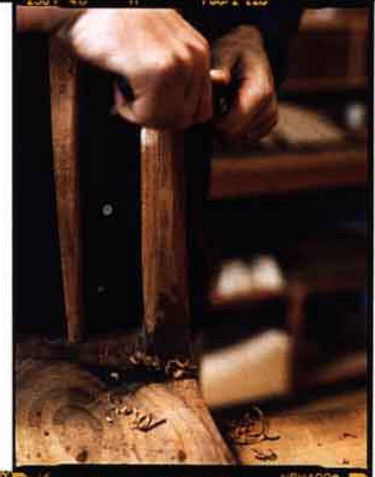
Chapman has been handcrafting furniture for a mere five years. Leaving behind a marketing career, he realised he was "more interested in creating beautiful things". While developing his designs he travelled to Barcelona where his ideas distilled, and, three prototypes down the creative path, he's arrived at the chair he makes today. At his Woollongong workshop in NSW, Chapman hand-carves his chairs from Tasmanian Blackwood.

He meticulously works the timber from a heavy, crude piece into a desirable object of graceful form, considered detailing, rich lustre and smooth texture.

The shape of the chair is sympathetic to the grain of the timber which silently assists in creating its organic character.

Sydney decorator Leslie Walford believes Chapman's chair has a certain longevity: "It's a fine example of its time and could well become an antique of the future."

The nature of timber as a material is the grounding passion for Chapman as he carves his Gaudi-inspired pieces. Gauging the timber's moisture content, the way it has been sawn, and its density, Chapman explains that, "At the end of the day it's intuitive, and there is always that element of unpredictability". Here, fluid form is sculpted through an understanding of the personality of his timber and the science behind its behaviour. DANIKA JONES



Fine form. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** 'Barcelona' chairs. **THIS PAGE, ABOVE LEFT,** Chapman applies a final coat of oil. **TOP TO BOTTOM:** Tasmanian blackwood air-drying in preparation; a rack of rasps and chisels; a spoke-shave is used on the side of the chair; the completed suite.