



Letter of Authenticity

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS DINING TABLE

June 7, 2024

Peek through the exquisite glass tabletop and behold the breathtaking beauty of our natural handcrafted wood table. Witness the intricate details of its grain, growth circles, branch markings, and the rich tapestry of history etched by droughts, rainy seasons, and the passage of time. Each knot, line, and imperfection tells a story of resilience and endurance, as this magnificent tree stood tall for 150 years on the historic Donaldson-Bannister farmland. With every glance, immerse yourself in the legacy of nature's artistry and the captivating journey of this cherished tree.

Throughout the renovation of the esteemed Donaldson-Bannister house, the towering Red Oak tree stood as a silent sentinel, overseeing the meticulous restoration efforts that would transform it into the cherished "heart of Dunwoody" event center and park it is today. However, as the administrative staff of the Dunwoody Preservation Trust observed the tree's declining health, concern rippled through the community. Seeking guidance, they turned to the expertise of an arborist whose diagnosis revealed the grim reality: the tree was in the throes of irreversible decline.

With heavy hearts, the decision was made to salvage what could be saved of the tree. The first step in this poignant process was to delicately sever the tree's crown; a solemn act that marked the beginning of a transformative journey. Embracing the spirit of innovation and reverence for local history, the DPT embarked on a remarkable endeavor. The goal was to immortalize the essence of the Red Oak tree in a towering monument of artistry. Standing proudly at 20 feet tall, this creation would serve as a testament to the enduring legacy of the area, meticulously carved to narrate the rich tapestry of its storied past.

After further review, it was noted that the tree would not stand, and could not be preserved to withstand the weather, wind, etc., that it had endured for 150 years. Therefore, the tree was cut down, then cut into slabs and delivered to a huge kiln to be dried and preserved. The kiln was large enough to accommodate the slabs, remove the moisture, and allow a master wood carver to hand carve the wood, and thus preserve it for all to enjoy.

The quest to find an artist adept at carving the narrative etched within the wood led to a meticulous two-year search. With careful deliberation on design and historical context, a renowned national artist, well known for exquisite wood, stone, and diverse

medium design, emerged; Mr. Tom Williams, situated near Dunwoody in Chamblee, GA. Upon witnessing his portfolio and studio firsthand, the committee discovered Mr. Williams' unique ability to discern and convey the inherent tale of natural beauty encapsulated within the wood.

Upon delivery of the slabs to his studio, Tom carefully handpicked the largest ones. Opting to utilize two of these slabs, he committed to illustrating the rich history of Dunwoody. These striking installations, destined to stand beside the barn, serve as enduring educational landmarks, offering enlightenment and enjoyment for the entire community.

The smaller, yet equally mesmerizing slabs were designated to become a unique, hand-crafted table. This artwork will chronicle the tree's journey, elucidating its 150-year narrative marred by the trials of nature. Within the intricate grain patterns lie the chronicles of growth, weather-induced variations, and scars inflicted by external forces over time. The softer grain, nestled between the rings, acts as a reservoir, nourishing the tree with water, while the resilient rings provide structural fortitude. Yellow hues signify dry rot, knots symbolize erstwhile branches, and ominous black cavities denote the intrusion of insect adversaries. Each detail etched into the wood reveals nature's relentless passage and the tree's resilient response.

Crafted with meticulous care, the table's centerpiece is a kiln-dried slab, meticulously treated to expel moisture and sealed with a protective finish, rendering it suitable for interior adornment. The table's unique charm lies in its unadulterated form: the ends, hewn from a single slab, are artfully split to preserve the tree's natural curvature. Eschewing the intervention of saws, these pieces celebrate the innate contours of the tree, showcasing nature's unrivaled beauty in every graceful slope and organic curve.

The trestle forms seamlessly meld with each end of the table boasting natural edges, underscoring the organic essence of the design. Leveraging the inherent shapes of the slabs, the table emerges as a masterpiece sculpted by nature's hand, with each piece thoughtfully positioned to evoke a sense of fluidity and grace.

Recognizing the wood's unsuitability for a conventional smooth surface, a glass top was judiciously chosen to preserve the wood's character while safeguarding its longevity. This transformative addition not only protects and enhances the table but also imbues it with functionality. Thus, the "Looking Glass" tabletop seamlessly marries artistry with utility in a stunning fusion of form and function.