



Three of the men of Woodshop (from left): Jeff Canham, Luke Bartels (with Banjo the dog), and Danny Hess.

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN** four surfer-artisans open a business two blocks from the beach? No one really wants to man the shop. So the creative wave behind **Woodshop**—Luke Bartels, Jeff Canham, Josh Duthie, and Danny Hess—came up with a solution. They hoisted a flag in front of their workspace and showroom in San Francisco's Outer Sunset. "If the flag is up," says Luke, "we're open!"

In this airy former gym, you won't find cookie-cutter cabinetry and perfectly square kitchen sets. But there's plenty of wood. The air is thick with the smell of it, and the pieces, brilliant pieces, are scattered about the shop. A 5-foot slab of Monterey cypress masquerading as a dining table. A coatrack dangling with hand planes sculpted from poplar. Even Lola, one of three resident pups, gnaws a splintered piece of lumber—her chew toy. Then you listen to these four guys discuss wood the way most men talk about cars. (Or women.) The freckles. The figuring. The waves in the

# Chairmen of the board

Surfer-artists carve out a name for themselves in San Francisco

BY RACHEL LEVIN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY



A painted found chair, with a claro walnut seat by Josh Duthie.

wood, which, you realize, are as spiritual for them as the ones rolling in at Ocean Beach.

**Luke Bartels's** skinny-legged cocktail tables and jagged-edged dining tables can be found in homes around the Bay Area. Each is unique and honors the natural imperfections in the wood. His walnut pencil holders double as works of art, and his delicate "branchlers" are a twiggy play on taxidermy.

For more than 10 years, **Danny Hess** has been making high-performance surfboards out of reclaimed redwood, poplar, and Douglas fir. The beauties are waxed and ready to ride, though they could just as easily take over your living room wall.

**Josh Duthie** collects rickety cast-off chairs, which hang in a kind of orderly chaos high above the studio—waiting to be sanded, painted, reinvented, and sold in sets or as singles. Which is exactly what he does with them.



As soon as you see one of **Jeff Canham's** hand-painted-yet-typographic signs (like the one above), you'll spot his breezy style everywhere, like at the Santa Cruz farmers' market. His bright color palette pops in signs, surf-inspired block art, and bird-houses painted with witty idioms. Our fave: VULTURES LAW FIRM.

**INFO** Open by appointment—or whenever the flag is raised; 3725 Noriega St., San Francisco; [woodshopsf.com](http://woodshopsf.com)



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Danny Hess, shaping the skeleton of a wooden surfboard.

## WANT TO BE A WOODWORKER?

» **TechShop** is a DIY workspace with 3 weekly woodshop classes and 3 Bay Area locations: Menlo Park, San Jose, and SoMa. From \$45; [techshop.ws](http://techshop.ws)

» **City College of San Francisco's** Skilled Trades department has been teaching entry-level classes in woodworking and furniture

making since the 1960s. *Free but first come, first served (so expect a wait list); next session begins in late Aug; [ccsf.edu](http://ccsf.edu)*

» **Grew-Sheridan Studio** in San Francisco offers a small, 8-person-max class fit for everyone, beginners to experienced. From \$188/month; [www.grew-sheridan.com](http://www.grew-sheridan.com)

» San Francisco's kid-friendly **Randall Museum** has a small list of adult courses, including a series of weekly classes (Woodworking Joinery Fundamentals, Zen & Sawdust, and Fine Woodworking). From \$180 for 9 classes; [randallmuseum.org](http://randallmuseum.org) ■

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