

Cherry and Steel Chair

Black cherry, welded steel; ripped, sawn and hand scraped

*Robert Troup
Pleasantville, OH*

The artist's words:

I have been building furniture and useful items for over 20 years from wood. I recently learned to weld and have begun to incorporate that welded steel into my work.

This wood and steel chair, with the square as its motif, stands 33" high and is 17" wide and 21" deep. It has a slender black steel frame that contrasts with its thick wood seat and backrest. The warm red-toned wooden seat, a 17" square of wood that is almost 2" thick, seems to hover over the slender flat black steel legs of the chair. The legs are made from square steel bars that are 1" thick. The tops of the legs, which are visible below the seat, are solid and flattened. The two front legs are connected a few inches short of their tops by a stretcher or horizontal bar of the same thickness, like an H with a very high cross bar or a football goal post. The back legs are of the same construction.

When seen from the front, the seat appears to rest on two thin vertical lines which are in reality the front edges of two flanged strips of metal that run from the front of the seat to the back. The strips are shaped like two upside down L's. The extended horizontal bottom of the L is attached to the underneath of the seat. The tops of the L's are resting on the front and back stretchers or crossbars. There is a space of about an inch between the two lines of the seat support, centered beneath the slab of the seat. Above the seat, a thin square beam of the same thickness as the legs and stretchers rises, continuing the line of the negative space created by the support below. A narrow 2" thick slab of the same cherry wood as the seat intersects the upper portion of this black bar, forming a 3" high backrest that floats a foot above the seat.

Both the back and the seat have straight edges along their sides and backs. The front of the backrest and top of the seat are carved in with shallow curves to gently cup the back and bottom of the sitter.

Looking at the top of the seat, the grain of the wood forms a rhythmic wavy -- almost musical -- pattern due to the way the planks of wood making up the slab have been matched. The grain of the backrest forms very thin horizontal stripes or lines. The natural grain patterns of the wood are the only ornamentation on this very austere chair.

As we go around to the back of the chair, we can see the construction of the seat support as it extends a couple of inches beyond the slab seat. We can see the bar that supports the backrest is held in place between the two L-shaped flanges. The support for the backrest angles slightly away from the seat. Two golden brass screws secure the narrow horizontal backrest to the vertical bar.