

# Eric Mertens

'Hinta' may not have won the visitors' votes, but the chair made by Dutchman Eric Mertens impressed the judges at CCD

Forty-five year-old Eric Mertens has been working as a cabinetmaker in Amsterdam for 23 years. He was trained at the Amsterdam cabinetmaking school, having previously studied in occupational therapy. Though he once employed other craftsmen, for the last seven years he's been working alone, developing his own work, skills and designs.

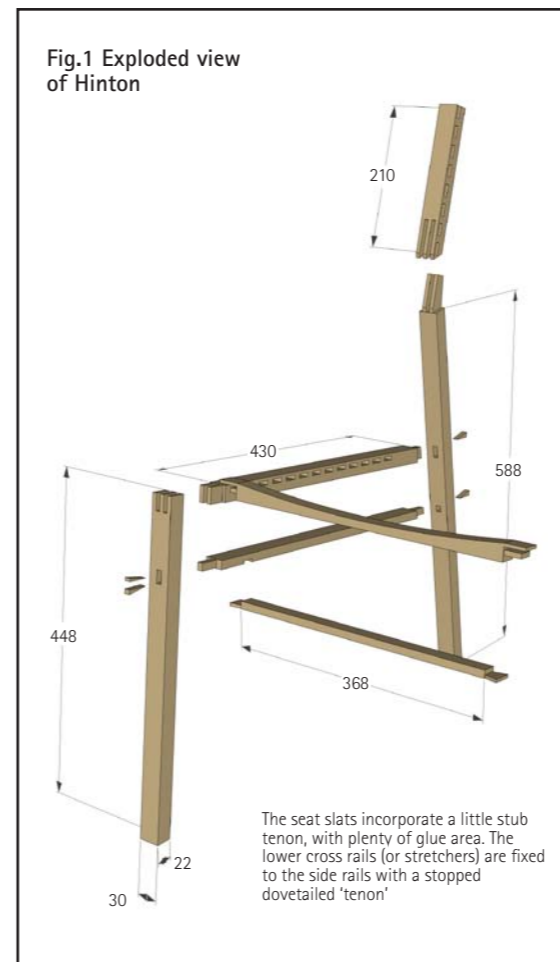
The front leg of his chair, 'Hinta', is joined to the seat rail with a finger joint, cut on a tablesaw, as is the finger joint on the back leg. The front leg has a tapered mortise for the wedged through tenon on the seat rail. "I don't split the tenon; I glue the wedges above and below the tenon. I made this chair as a one-off for a Celebration of Craftsmanship & Design (CCD), so cut the mortises by hand. The seat rail has a number of stopped mortises for the tenons on the seat slats (though I don't like the word slat). The mortises are formed with a hollow chisel drill, and the tenons are cut on the tablesaw. The slats run over the top of the rail, and are glued there to, so each joint has three cheeks, providing 30% extra glue surface. I like to optimise the joint/glue area so that I can cut back on material and get a lighter, more elegant result."

To assemble the chair Eric starts by gluing the front legs to the seat rails and then joins the two parts of the back leg. Once they've set he joins the two front leg/seat rail assemblies with the seat slats, doing the same for the back with the back slats. Then he joins the back frame to the front leg/seat combination with the seat rail and the lower rail, wedging the joints immediately. Finally he adds the two cross stretchers from below, and finishes with matt Osmo oil.

*Details Eric Mertens trades as Meubelmakerij Mertens (meubelmakerijmertens.nl; emertens4@gmail.com).*



*Hinta* Eric Merten's chair is named after his girlfriend, and was admired by John Makepeace and his fellow judges at the Celebration of Craftsmanship & Design (CCD) this year, gaining a Highly Commended in the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers' new award. Next issue we'll look at the chair competition at CCD, voted for by visitors and sponsored by the Peter Sefton Furniture School



## Worshipful Award for the Best

John Makepeace introduces a new competition at CCD



*Suede Paul Jaques' micro-tables*

The Master of the Furniture Makers' Company has initiated a new prize to give national recognition to the extraordinary quality of design achieved by individual furniture designers and makers. My fellow judges included Geoffrey Harcourt RDI, Frank Peters, Director of the Chartered Society of Designers, with Andrew Varah chairing the panel on behalf of the Company. Over 60 exhibitors showed up to four items each. These ranged from humidors to the storage and display of a collection of historic maps, from Urushi (Japanese lacquer) tables to a rocking motorcycle seat.

The Furniture Makers Company Design Prize went to a magnificent sideboard in black oak and pearwood by Waywood. This studio has pioneered the use of digital controlled production of subtly innovative forms. The black oak exterior opens up to reveal a fitted pearwood interior. The judges also chose two other items for special commendation. The chair *Hinta* by Dutch designer, Eric Mertens, was chosen for its extraordinary elegance, comfort and detailing, while Paul Jaques, primarily a sculptor, was showing a cluster of micro-tables with suede straps as handles, both functional and humorous.



*Pear Waywood's prize-winning cabinet*