



## Irwin's Furniture Restoration

Don Irwin also knows how much people want to preserve important possessions. As the owner of Irwin's Furniture Restoration in west Phoenix, he has spent decades fixing furniture and loves to hear the stories about those pieces.

"Almost every customer who brings something in to us, they have a memory attached to it. It's not just about the intrinsic value of the item," he said.

Irwin himself learned to refinish and repair furniture while working for his uncle, who owned an antiques business. When he opened his own shop in 1989, Irwin was joined by his wife, Min, who is a skilled upholsterer and has learned to reweave cane furniture. Their business now employs 11 people, each of whom has certain specialties.

"Between all of us," said Irwin, "there's not much we can't do."

Most of the projects they tackle are fairly straightforward: reglueing loose joints, recovering cushions, refinishing stained table tops and undoing the damage puppy teeth have wrought on all manner of furniture. But they've also repaired flood-damaged heirlooms and kitchen cabinets burned in stove fires. And more than one customer has arrived with a pile of battered sticks — minus a few missing pieces.

"They leave it with us," Irwin said, "and we turn it back into a rocking chair."

Of course, that transformation takes time. After the immediate repairs are complete, most pieces have to be finished, which requires drying time between each coat of stain and lacquer.

"It's hard for people to understand in this era when Amazon can deliver things in 12 hours," Irwin acknowledged. "But it's worth the wait! You're going to get back a beautiful, functional product that will serve you for many more years."

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