

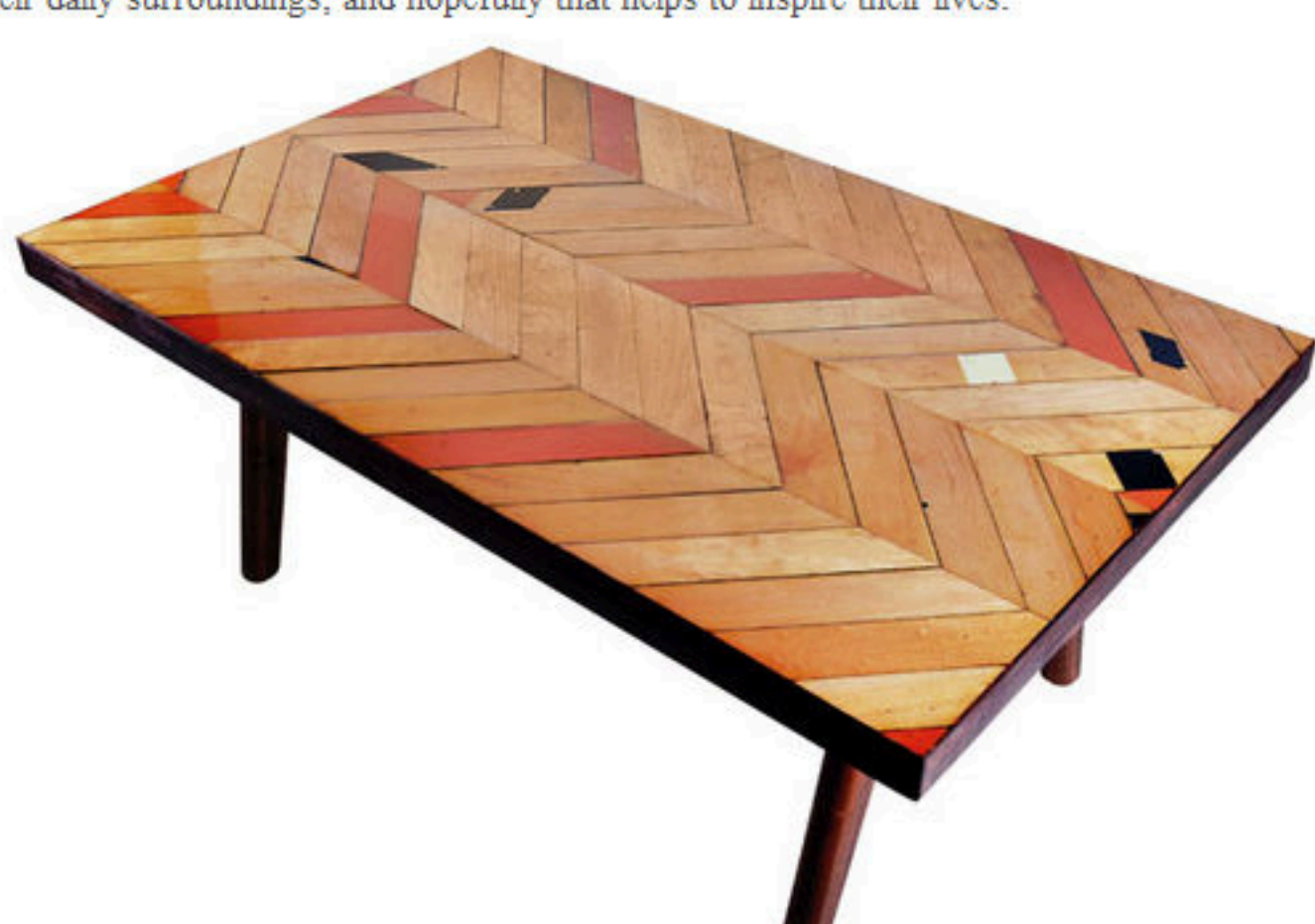
## highly influential: steven brooks

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"I think people underestimate their interiors," says Steven Brooks, a self-taught furniture maker and owner of **The Wooden House** in Dallas. "Our spaces often influence us, and I believe it's a bigger influence than we think." Inspired by the rebirth of Americana and the excess of existing, usable goods, Brooks, a Malibu, California, transplant and former financial analyst, launched his shop in 2009. His mantra: to reuse and repurpose pieces of our history with a modern, purist twist. Popular items include vintage patio chairs and farm tables, a tripod lamp fashioned out of an antique surveyor stand and a table made from pieces of an old gym floor. While imports make up the majority of his sales, Brooks also accepts custom commissions, which he designs and manufactures himself. "It's gratifying to work in the physical world," he says. "At the end of the day, this all goes into someone's home as part of their daily surroundings, and hopefully that helps to inspire their lives."



**LX:** How did you become interested in furniture design?

**SB:** I got into furniture while finishing college at the University of Southern California. I was trying to make some money for a trip to Europe and that rolled into a job offer for a financial analyst position with a wholesale furniture company.

**LX:** Tell us how you got started.

**SB:** I started off as a wholesaler dealing with imports. I found the world of furniture imports and design exciting, so when some opportunities arose I took a chance. Furniture has since been my focus.

**LX:** How would you describe your work and your approach to it?

**SB:** Using recycled woods, building custom pieces, importing one-of-a-kind finds, and traveling far and wide. This separates our brand and allows us to be nimble enough to change course quickly.



**LX:** What turns you on about what you do for a living?

**SB:** I like the freedom of my work. I like that I can touch the product, bring it into someone's house and influence their world.

**LX:** Favorite decorating sources and shops?

**SB:** Overseas markets, southern flea markets, factories and lumber yards.

**LX:** What project are you currently finishing and what are you about to start?

**SB:** I just finished a custom-designed, eight-foot dining room table for a local restaurant owner and I'm about to start putting together a spring collection sourced from central Indonesia.

**LX:** What person, trend, product, color have you recently taken notice of, are most excited by, and think might be an industry up-and-comer? Why?

**SB:** I'm seeing lots of neon and color in fashion right now. We're introducing new upholstery to our shop, which includes a play on traditional fabrics and colors with splashes of neon stitching.



**LX:** My secret work tip(s) is...

**SB:** Every artist should be authentic. Inauthenticity is palpable and it's so easy to lose originality when we're all so connected. It's a balance of being influenced by other styles, travel, study and then mixing it up with my own thoughts.

**LX:** My work is:

**SB:** Eclectic. It's a mix of British India, Moroccan bazaars and traditional Americana.

**LX:** Design muse:

**SB:** I recently went to a John Paul Gaultier exhibit here in Dallas and while most of the exhibit was out of my depth, I was struck by his originality, specifically the risks he took in following his instincts.



**LX:** Personal style:

**SB:** Simple and relaxed; I'm still a California boy at heart.

**LX:** Describe your home:

**SB:** Bohemian chic, with an emphasis on comfort, livability and functionality. My favorite space is the living room, with its fun mix of color, linen couches, large windows and my favorite rug—a vintage Turkish patchwork that I found while traveling years ago.

**LX:** I love what I do because...

**SB:** I can touch the product, bring it into someone's home and influence his or her world.