



# Handcrafted with passion



SIMON RAIKES FROM CRAFTBUILT HAS LOVED WORKING WITH WOOD SINCE CHILDHOOD WHEN HE BUILT A BEDROOM IN THE ATTIC OF HIS FAMILY HOME. HIS FIRST JOB AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL (SOME 27 YEARS AGO) WAS WITH CRAFTBUILT, AND HE'S BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMPANY EVER SINCE.

**T**wo years ago, when the opportunity came up to buy into the business, Simon did just that. "The company was close to my heart," he says, "so I grabbed it with both hands."

The core work of Craftbuilt is a specialty in recreating authentic replicas of unique fitments or wooden features for character homes. Simon's passion, though, is for handcrafted curved staircases and bespoke pieces.

Busy managing a team who have the patience and attention to detail to offer a full custom manufacturing service, Simon

proudly uses traditional handcrafting methods, and his staff have decades of experience. "One of the guys recently celebrated his 70th birthday and I'd be sad to see him retire," says Simon.

When he took over the business, Simon also purchased local furniture brand Paul Drummond and added that range to his stable of designs. Among the Paul Drummond patterns, Simon found designs for an old 1970s retro Scandinavian-style armchair.

He decided to make one of the chairs using the original machinery and a few of

his own tweaks. Simon's first Scandi-style chairs were made early in 2020 and sold through a design store in Wānaka. Since then, he's taken on more orders for the chairs and is keen to continue with projects for boutique interior design stores.

The 1970s retro-Scandinavian armchair embodies classic mid-century style and comfort. The extra-wide seat has springs built into the frame. Simon describes it as, "the ideal armchair in both design and comfort."

In recent years, Craftbuilt has become a distributor for Portuguese furniture brand Wewood. The European company's dedication to strong design and craftsmanship appealed to Simon.

Simon has a saying that when it comes to timber furniture, "If you can dream it, then we can make it." He uses the recent example of a client in Arrowtown who showed him an image of a headboard on Instagram that he sketched into a design and replicated.

"What we initially thought was going to be a small family business has grown into a team with seven full-time staff and months of work booked ahead of us," says Simon.



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