

From Italian Design to a Fort Knox Delivery



The completed table in the Generals' conference room at Fort Knox.

When Superstorm Sandy tore through Long Island, New York in 2012, Joe Ferrara saw something most people overlooked. As crews removed fallen trees from neighborhoods and historic estates across the North Shore, Ferrara became fascinated by the journey of wood; from forest to workshop, from raw material to something useful and lasting. Years later, that curiosity would help launch a wood-working business whose latest commission would find a home at one of America's most iconic military installations.

Today, Ferrara is the founder of Sound Designs, a custom woodworking studio located at Pratt Oval in Glen Cove, New York. Although the company officially opened in 2018, its roots stretch back further. Beginning in 2017, Ferrara salvaged oak, pine, maple and cedar from Long Island properties, transforming them into furniture and custom pieces that reflected the character of the region from which they came.

Recently, Sound Designs completed its most ambitious project to date, a handcrafted 30-foot conference table destined for the Generals' conference room at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The opportunity arrived unexpectedly when a contractor searching for custom furniture makers discovered the company online and reached out about the project. Only later did Ferrara learn the destination

would be Fort Knox.

For a company known for working with locally sourced materials, the commission required a different approach. The table would be constructed from Khaya mahogany, an African hardwood selected for its beauty and durability. Ferrara personally traveled to a lumber distributor in upstate New York to select boards and veneers that met the project's exact specifications.

The massive table would comfortably seat two dozen people and require a combination of craftsmanship, engineering and careful planning. Working alongside master cabinetmaker Joel Landstein and creative specialist Carlos Rivas, Ferrara oversaw a project that moved from design to delivery in approximately 40 days. Hidden beneath the polished mahogany surface is an intricate system designed to accommodate the technology needs of military leadership. The finished table was constructed in three sections so it could be transported from Long Island to Kentucky and reassembled on site.

The journey proved nearly as challenging as the construction itself. With the table loaded into a van, Ferrara and Rivas embarked on the 14-hour drive to Kentucky, encountering torrential rain, strong winds and thick mountain fog along the way.

"It looked like winter," Ferrara recalled. "The trees

were bare, the temperature dropped considerably and a thick mist enveloped the mountains. We proceeded cautiously and persevered."

Once at Fort Knox, assembly required nearly 12 hours as the craftsmen carefully aligned and connected the three sections while ensuring the technology infrastructure functioned exactly as designed. When the final pieces were assembled, Ferrara reflected on the journey.



After the adventurous drive from New York to Fort Kox and the hours spent assembling the table, Joe Ferrara, right and Carlos are exhilarated with the table exceeding all expectations.

"Definitely emotional," he said. "It's a long journey from sketch to seeing the full thirty feet of the table in front of you." He also viewed the project as a milestone for the company. "It felt like Sound Designs, which started small and local, had really grown into a new place. Now we are serving a nationwide audience."

There was also pride in the destination. "Of course, it's an honor to do a project for the U.S. Army, especially since this is such an iconic location," Ferrara

said. Perhaps most meaningful was the client's reaction. "The team at Fort Knox said we exceeded expectations."

For Ferrara, Landstein and Rivas, the project represented more than the completion of a conference table. It demonstrated how a company born from a fascination with wood, craftsmanship and local history had grown into a nationally recognized studio capable of serving one of America's most prestigious military institutions.

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