



The Bain Brothers: Alacrán Woodworks

By Anne Pizey

Twenty-eight miles from Telluride in the mountain town of Rico two brothers are settling into their life dream. In the small shop on Rico's main street that once served as the town's firehouse, Brandon and Justin Bain are busy, but they are not in a hurry.

In their spare time the brothers, still in their early 30s, are building heirloom quality, freestanding custom furniture. Their work belongs in some of Telluride and Mountain Village's finest homes; is on display at Telluride's public library; and, is in demand by some of Telluride's top interior designers. Yet the Bain brothers would rather wait to meet success on their terms than compromise the integrity of their work. Each piece created at Alacrán, the name the brothers have chosen for their business, is individually handcrafted with old-fashioned tools, old-fashioned joints and hand-rubbed finishes.

Mixing dimensional style with organic shapes, the work produced at Alacrán Woodworks is expressly unique. Influences in the Bain brothers work include Japanese design, the early 1900's Arts and Crafts movement, and the ever-present mountain mining theme. One very distinguished piece by Alacrán Woodworks is on display at the Wilkinson Public Library in the Telluride Room. A private donor commissioned Brandon to design and construct the large conference table in the library.

Like many young settlers in the area, the Bains moved to Telluride in the 1990s to ski and enjoy the mountains. Both found jobs in the town's service industry and construction

trades. They drove taxis, tuned skis, pounded nails, washed windows, swept chimneys; the list goes on. Then younger brother Brandon found work as an apprentice to a master woodworker Andy Ward in the nearby mountain hamlet of Ophir where he discovered his passion. In 2001, Brandon was awarded the prestigious title of "Up and Coming Artist" in a juried furniture show by the Ah Haa School for the Arts. He went on to attend several furniture design classes at Anderson Ranch in Snowmass in 2002 and 2003.



The Bain brothers grew up on ranches in Texas. They named their business after the Bain family brand that originally came from their grandfather's ranch in northern Mexico in the Sonoran Desert. Ironically, the brothers lived on that ranch until Brandon suffered a near fatal bite from an alacrán (the Spanish word for scorpion) and his family returned to Texas to raise their boys. Side by side they helped tend the family's cattle ranch after school and on weekends until they attended college at Texas Tech University. Justin studied agricultural communications and Brandon received a degree in environmental studies.

A wood stove crackles from the corner of their small, roughly 900-square-foot shop, and a dog sleeps on a mat nearby. Justin and Brandon lean over a drawing to make yet another revision in their latest design. Before long, both brothers hope to make their woodworking business a full-time venture and fulfill what they both share as their life dream: "to live simply and work with our hands." To see more of their work stop by Alacrán's blue stucco building on main street in Rico, or view their work at www.alacranwoodworks.com.

Photo by: Judy Vander Brander (below)/MAAG; Photo courtesy of Alacrán Woodworks®