

How To Get EXACTLY the Table
You Want, In 3 Easy Steps

Perfect Table



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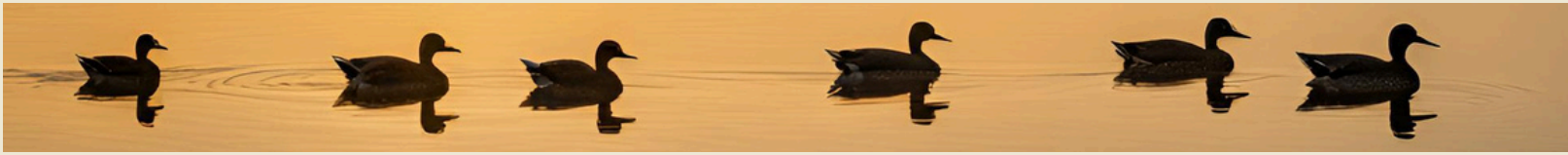
I'M JOHN PARKER



WELCOME

I'll be your woodworker today... and hopefully for years to come 😊

Creating a custom dining table is a deeply rewarding experience, transforming your dining space into a reflection of your personal style and needs. It's a true collaboration. You bring invaluable insights about your lifestyle, spatial constraints, and aesthetic preferences, while the woodworker translates your vision into a tangible, handcrafted centerpiece that enhances every gathering. **This guide helps you to communicate effectively with the woodworker**, ensuring that your vision is made clear, expectations are set correctly, and nothing is left to chance.



Let's get our ducks in a row!

The key decisions that you need to make all have an impact on the design, and ultimately on your enjoyment of the finished dining table. The questions fall into three categories:

- 1 What **size and shape** table do you want?
- 2 What kind of **material** and **finish** do you want on your table?
- 3 What **table design** do you want?



If you have thought about these questions beforehand, the process becomes easy, AND you get your table sooner. In the following pages we'll dive into these three questions, and offer some input to guide you.

If you have questions or you're not sure, we're just a phone call, email or text message away!

Size & Shape



How many people do you want to seat comfortably on a regular basis?

For rectangular tables, to seat 4 people you'll need a table at least 48" long and 38" wide, to seat 6, figure 50" x 38" minimum, for 8 people 72" x 40", and to seat 10 you should have at least 96" x 40". These are *minimums*, not our recommended sizes. At these sizes seating will be tight.

If you have the space, our seating recommendations would be:

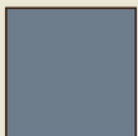
	Rectangle	Round (diameter)
4 people	54"L X 38"W	54" (range 48-60)
6 people	72"L X 40"W	60" (range 48-66)
8 people	90"L X 40"W	66" (range 60-72)
10 people	114"L X 42"W	72" (tight)

Pro Tip: Comfortable seating is subjective, but this has been our experience. If you have higher-weight, larger-bodied family and friends, mention that to your woodworker, both for planning the seating around the table and for safety in the chair design! A high school linebacker sliding in hot after football practice every day can stress your furniture.

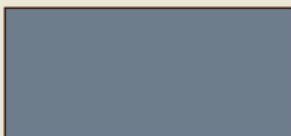
Note: If you need to comply with ADA requirements, or simply want to accommodate scooters or wheelchairs, contact us for more detailed information.

Size & Shape

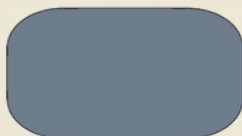
What are the dimensions of your dining area?	We want to make sure your table fits in your space, so we need to know if there are constraints. Measure the intended location of your dining table. Make allowances for a credenza, sideboard, or other furniture that you plan to have in that space. If space might be tight, note doors and passageways for possible extra clearance (an open passageway to the kitchen on one side, for example, might allow you an extra 1-2 feet of table length in that direction). Subtract five feet from the room length and width to approximate the <i>maximum</i> table dimension. This will give 30 inches of clearance behind each chair, enough room to move comfortably around the table. For example, a dining area that is 16 ft X 10 ft, with no other furniture in the room, can comfortably accommodate a table up to 11 ft long and 5 ft wide (but we probably wouldn't recommend that!).
What shape is best for the room and for facilitating conversation?	Consider rectangular, round, square, oval, squoval, racetrack or unique shapes such as incorporating a live edge. A rectangular table anchors the space and fits most rooms. Round tables promote easy conversation and are best for round spaces, compact spaces, or open concept larger rooms. Oval, squoval and racetrack tables are all shapes in between the rectangle and the round.
Do you need to accommodate more for special occasions?	Do you frequently host large family get-togethers, or simply love to entertain and enjoy meals with your friends? Table leafs and extensions are an option when you regularly need more room. Bench seating on one or both sides is a less formal option that provides more seating.



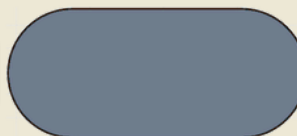
Square



Rectangular



Squoval



Racetrack



Oval



Round

Material / Finish

Which wood species resonates with your style and complements your existing furniture?	<p>The materials and finishes you select will dictate the table's durability, maintenance, and overall aesthetic. You might want a metal base for your table, a beautiful and stylish way to cut down the weight of a large table.</p> <p>If you don't know about wood species, that's OK, we can help. We build most of our tables with, in order, red oak (smooth), white oak (smooth), walnut, maple, ash, rough sawn red or white oak, cherry, or mahogany. We'll also tell you about how we select the cut of the lumber we use, because plain-sawn, rift-sawn and rift sawn boards behave differently and have very different grain patterns showing.</p> <p>Some woods don't take stain well, or require extra sanding and preconditioning to stain. Factors such as natural variations in color, tightness of the grain and the uniformity of grain patterns and directions are important. These woods can still be stained, but it involved extra work. Birch, maple, poplar and cherry incur a small additional charge for the additional time involved.</p>
What finish color aligns with your dining room's palette and desired ambiance (consider darker for formal, lighter for casual)?	<p>Most people who want a custom wood table want the natural beauty of the wood to shine through. But sometimes people want their table to match other furniture already in place. Stains can be oil- or water-based, and there are 1,000 different finishes available. Every choice of finish involves tradeoffs between durability, water-resistance, ease of repair, safety (volatile organic chemicals or VOCs) and required regular maintenance. In addition, most finishes come in different reflectivities such as matte, satin or gloss.</p> <p>This means your specific use case requirements should inform the selection of the finish. Your woodworker should be able to discuss the pros and cons of lacquers, varnishes, oils and even nano coatings, and make a recommendation.</p>

Material / Finish

What level of maintenance are you willing to undertake to preserve the table's beauty?	<p>Most people who want a custom wood table want the natural beauty of the wood to shine through. But sometimes people want their table to match other furniture already in place. Stains can be oil- or water-based, and there are 1,000 different finishes available. Every choice of finish involves tradeoffs between durability, water-resistance, ease of repair, safety (volatile organic chemicals or VOCs) and required regular maintenance. In addition, most finishes come in different reflectivities such as matte, satin or gloss.</p> <p>This means your specific use case requirements should inform the selection of the finish. Your woodworker should be able to discuss the pros and cons of lacquers, varnishes, oils and even nano coatings, and make a recommendation.</p>
Do you want the table to have a sustainability or eco-conscious aspect?	<p>At McKinnon, we have suppliers including sawmills that source their logs from sustainable tree farms, and urban wood rescue operations that source lumber from fallen or removed trees that would otherwise have gone to landfill.</p> <p>It's also important to use low-VOC sealers, stains and finishes because even once the piece is "cured" (completely dry after the finish is applied), it can continue to offgas. You don't want that in your house. Some of the chemicals are bioaccumulative, so it's important to get good advice on the finish.</p>

Style and Design

Which overall style embodies your vision for the dining space?	Consider your overall design aesthetic and the existing look and feel of your home. Being aware of themes like organic modern, mid-century modern, farmhouse, industrial, minimalist or rustic design informs design decisions large and small. If you aren't familiar with design trends, find photos of tables that you like and share them with your woodworker, along with your comments about what you like about each one. These choices will infuse your table with personality, ensuring it becomes a focal point that reflects your unique taste.
What table base style do you prefer and how does it affect legroom and seating?	Four-leg, single-pedestal, or double-pedestal bases are most common, but there are other creative and functional base options to consider. These include - to name a few - trestle base, X-base, cross-leg base, U- or H-shaped base, spider or starburst base (angled legs radiating from a central point), slab or plinth base, geometric or cantilevered base.
What edge and corner profile do you envision?	Beyond the rounded corners intrinsic to round, oval, squoval and racetrack table shapes, there's also the edge of the table top to consider. Edges are rarely left perfectly square, because that corner can be sharp! That's especially important if you have kids or grandkids that may have a collision. For a "square" edge, we typically use a 1/8" roundover which still appears square to the eye, but feels nice on your hands. Edges can be more softly rounded, all the way to a fully round edge. They can also be chamfered, or cut back at an angle for a sleek modern look.
Will the table serve multiple purposes (dining, home office, hobbies)?	Let your woodworker know if there are special considerations, for example lots of craft projects that could be better served by a more durable finish, or access to electrical power (which can be hidden, but can be very convenient when the table doubles as a work desk).

When you call to discuss your table, one of the first things you'll learn is the **current lead time**. This varies depending on the jobs already in the work queue. It's always a range, e.g. 6-12 weeks (our standard at McKinnon). It's a range because we - the woodworkers - don't know how much time it will take to locate exactly the right wood. For us, that can involve trips to San Francisco, San Jose, Berkeley or Sacramento, or all of the above if the wood proves really hard to find. The second reason it's a range is we don't yet know what finish you prefer. Some oil-based finishes can take up to 30 days to fully cure, while there are UV finishes that cure in minutes.

One of the outcomes of your call will be a **quote**. Custom tables are expensive but one huge advantage is that the table comes directly from our shop to your home, so there's no middleman markup. Plus, if the quoted price is too high, your woodworker should suggest options to keep costs down. This could include - for example - using a less expensive (but still beautiful!) wood or table base, or substituting less expensive chairs.

The Woodworker's Expertise

The decisions of the woodworker involve specialized knowledge. Beyond construction, woodworkers can help address design or functionality challenges. They understand how various elements – legs, wood, edge, shape, and extensions – interact, preventing potential issues and offering tailored solutions. Their expertise ensures that every custom table is a harmonious blend of aesthetics and practicality, perfectly suited to the client's needs.

At McKinnon, our favorite thing is bringing our customers' vision to fruition. Our second favorite thing is talking to customers about creating the table of their dreams.

Congratulations!

You're ready for your PERFECT TABLE. With the answers to these questions in hand, you're well equipped to discuss specifics with your woodworker. Thanks for downloading our eBook, and please reach out if you would like us to build your table for you.

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