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The Taunton Press

Matt Paldy lives in a small place. His studio apartment on Manhattan's upper west side measures 14' by 19'. Within those 266 square feet, though, he's managed to make room for his hobby.

Last week, Matt sent these photos of his 5' x 5' bathroom woodshop, where he makes boxes, serving trays and other small items. As soon as I saw them I knew I had to post them here. Here's what he says about his set-up:

"I move individual tools, such as the band saw, drill press, Dewalt DW745 tablesaw, and router table in and out of the bathroom as I need them. I made a workbench that straddles the tub. I store the tools against a wall when I'm not using them, and make a sad attempt to cover them with a sheet to make them less of an eyesore."

He describes the process as "arduous," but says the extra effort is worth it.

"Woodworking, even in the constraints of the bathroom, gives me an escape from the stress of living in Manhattan. Manhattan is a city that favors disposable items and it's easy to become disconnected from nature, the earth, wood, and the pleasure and appreciation of making something by hand."

For a closer look at Matt's work, check out his website [here](#). He told me he also plans to try selling some of his pieces outside the Museum of Natural History on weekends. If you're in the city, you might stop by for a look.



When not in use, Matt's tools liven up the front room.

Photo: Matt Paldy

### **Reader Emails:**

Your work is absolutely gorgeous. Do you actually do this out of your bathroom; including making and repairing furniture? I am retired and am teaching myself how to do some woodworking and I have a two car garage. Every time I go to the "shop", I find there is an idiot waiting for my arrival. However, I love my time there as I try desperately and with only modicum success to outwit the idiot.

All this aside, I would like to know if these items are for sale and, if so, do you have a price list? I am so impressed with the beauty of your work that I would like to buy at least one piece to support (however pitifully) your work.

Please reply to garry bobbett at [garrybobbett3@hotmail.com](mailto:garrybobbett3@hotmail.com).

Thank you very much.

By the way! Would it be impertinent to ask how old you are and how long you have been doing woodworking? I'm 68 and am just starting in my retirement. Also, are you self taught or formally taught. Don't need to answer if you don't want to. I am just curious about the facts of such quality workmanship.

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I really enjoyed the article about you and your shop--such wonderful creativity.  
Ken Benedik

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Matt,  
I read the article that Woodworking did on your work space and loved it. I literally am the opposite of you in that I live in the woods and have a considerable amount of space around me to work in, the great outdoors that is, but no "work shop" per say, or so I thought until seeing pictures of your shop.

After seeing your work and considering the space you have to create it in I once again am reminded that if I truly want to do it there is a way! I'm thinking of changing my back bedroom into a small shop, which by the way is still bigger than the apartment you are managing to work in. Thanks for the reminder that creativity should never be stifled by the circumstances surrounding the desire to create. Aaron.

*Aaron J ohn Ventures*  
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Very nice work - very nice web site too! What program / utility did you use for your images gallery ?  
Thanks.  
Robert -  
[www.belwoodny.com](http://www.belwoodny.com)

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I live in Wichita Kansas----and 'need' a bigger shop---my current one is a 10 X 20 building outside...and a 12 X 20 in the basement. My brother, a retired architect sent the Fine Woodworking article to me with the pictures of your "bathroom shop"----and I clicked over to your website----you do amazingly beautiful work. Next time I'm in my shop thinking "if I had a bigger shop, I'd make better stuff"....I will think of you, and move something over and get back to work. Thank you for doing what you are doing----you are a good example to others.

Sincerely,  
Charlie Moon

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Matt,  
Nice bathroom setup!  
I was looking at your work on your website.  
How did you get that sheen on the Walnut and Bubinga tray?  
I am making some picture frames and would really like them to gleam.

Thanks.  
Mike

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I checked out your web site using the link from Fine Woodworking. The work you do is incredibly impressive even without knowing your shop is 5 feet by 5 feet. I will think of your shop every time I complain about not having enough room. My shop is in my basement and is 16 X 22 narrowing to 11 X 12. Unfortunately I have filled it with every piece of equipment known to man. I literally have to snake my way around the machines and constantly move things around (thanks to mobile bases on everything) to have room to work. Anyway, good luck with your boxes. By the way my work is mostly guitar bodies, and I use many of the woods you mention on your site. I have attached a picture of my shop, although I am ashamed to look at the mess I have created. But whenever I start to clean it up and rearrange things I seem to get an idea and start another project.

Best of luck to you,  
Lloyd  
[www.kasaguitar.com](http://www.kasaguitar.com)

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Loved the galley of your fine work with wood.  
What are costs on the heirloom boxes. The series from B001 to 5.  
Always on the hunt for a gift for my wife.  
Thank you, Marc

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**3pinner writes:** Now THAT's being resourceful!

I can tell you're not married either :- ) Posted: 6:36 pm on February 25th



**arfurm writes:** I'll never complain about my shop space again. I have just one suggestion, Matt. Just be sure you don't have your sandpaper supply close to the TP roller. Ouch -- not fun!! Posted: 12:43 pm on February 25th



**MakevilleStudio writes:** Love the bathroom shop!

I'll second the recommendation for Rosenzweig Lumber in the Bronx. And I've had several folks building projects in my shop with lumber from ML Condon--they were very happy with what they found up there. By the way, if you are a woodworking enthusiast in NYC, short on space (who isn't?), and are looking for a place to learn and build stuff, check out Makeville Studio in Brooklyn ([www.makeville.com](http://www.makeville.com)). Posted: 9:09 am on February 25th



[fshanno](#) writes: I feel ashamed. I'll never complain about working in a two car garage again. Posted: 8:59 am on February 25th



[Lincolnman](#) writes: Matt's shop is a riot. Only a true lover of woodworking (like me) would understand why anyone would do that. But then I looked at the picture of the boxes! Envious work! I hope you'll be able to progress onto a bigger bathroom soon! Posted: 6:24 am on February 25th



[view10](#) writes: Matt: I can relate. I lived for years in a Manhattan apartment and had an very understanding wife who put up with the noise and the dust. I did, however, develop good hand tool skills because they didn't bother my neighbors. Now I live in a house (Bronx) and have a "real" shop in the basement. My challenge is that is long but very narrow -- barely 10' wide. Sort of like the guy whose shop is in the RV! :-)  
Posted: 11:39 am on February 24th



[view10](#) writes: Two places that I know. M.L. Condon in White Plains, where I shop and Rosensweig in the Bronx. I'm in Riverdale, which is more convenient to White Plains, believe it or not. I have not been to the latter, but am told it is great. Both charge for delivery unless you have a way to go get it. Happy hunting.  
Posted: 11:35 am on February 24th



[zchris](#) writes: I'm new to the city and I'm trying to find a location for good quality hardwood. I'm looking to build some large furniture pieces. Any suggestions?  
Posted: 8:27 pm on January 19th