



Maker Man

A WOODWORKER TURNS AN OLD BREWERY INTO HIS NEW WORKSHOP.

Jermain Todd's right forearm bears a tattoo that reflects his creative identity—a detailed depiction of a hand plane above the word “maker.” His company, Mwanzi (3412 Lemp, 314-200-4123, mwanzi.com), located in a by-appointment space in South City, started as a bamboo-flooring distributor. Eventually, Todd expanded to building eco-friendly cabinets and custom furniture, which he describes as his true calling. He uses only local or Forest Stewardship Council-certified woods and does everything himself, from millwork to steel fabrication. He's found a niche supplying sleek furniture to homes and restaurants, including Olio, Elaia, The Libertine, Cucina Pazzo, and the downtown Pi.

Walking into his woodworking shop feels like being shot with the ray gun from *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. Part of the old Lemp Brewery complex, the 6,500-square-foot warehouse's sky-high doors, windows, and pillars seem to have been built for giants. Since he moved in a year ago, he has turned a central steel structure, once used to unload trains, into a lofted office. Boards are stacked against every wall. Tables and chairs destined for The Wheelhouse's new downtown location line the floor. If business ever slows, Todd plans to turn a concrete platform into a showroom, among other renovations. But the studio's rougher edges lend it authenticity. Work happens here. “What I do is make. I create every day,” he says. “You got to be, in my opinion, in a space that's going to encourage you to want to make something. I walk in here and I'm inspired.” —William Powell