

# Local Lumber Transforms into Great Furniture

... continued from page D4



*Bill Ridings checks the natural finish of a center island piece that's ready to go.*

*Photo Sophie Braccini*

Ridings explains that depending on how the wood is cut, the boards will be more or less knotty. He sometimes would re-saw a board through its thickness creating a book-match: once the cut is complete and you've opened the two pieces, like a book, the grain on each of the two cut faces will almost perfectly mirror one another. He occasionally leaves live edge on the sides of the board, or turns it around, putting the live edge in the middle. "It's quite popular for office or conference tables because you can slide the cables through the holes in the middle of the table."

At Rancho Cantina in Lafayette, owners Julie Mitchell and Erik Peterson have worked with Ridings to create a look of authenticity for all

their restaurant tables. Mitchell says that Ridings is a friend and they had seen other tables he had done for a restaurant in Walnut Creek. The tables are red bark eucalyptus, oil finished, and both rustic and sophisticated. "We get a lot of compliments about our tables," says Mitchell.

Teresa and Mike Geringer of Lafayette have also been hiring Ridings to construct furniture for their vacation cabin. There it is redwood that was milled and sanded to create a one-of-a-kind table. Mike Geringer says that what he loves about Ridings' pieces is that each is unique. "Every time you go to the warehouse to see the wood it is different," he says. "There is something magical there."

Don't lament if you don't have one of these precious trees in your yard. Ridings has trees that have been donated by people who did not need the wood but did not want to see their trees go to wood chips. The company mills 100,000 board-feet a year. (One board-foot is 12-inches by 12-inches by one-inch thick.) Ridings adds that a typical log has about 150 to 200 board-feet.

In the air of the huge warehouse in Martinez, light fragrance of trees softly drift through. The place is a compelling mix of rugged powerful machinery and the moving beauty of trees. No wonder Ridings says he just loves getting up early every morning to go to work.