

WORKBOOK

CURRENT EDITION CONTACT PORTFOLIO GRACIOUS ROOMS

BOOK TOUR

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A Novel Idea

Story by Jeanne Lyons Davis

“Furniture should tell a story.”

That’s the philosophy of Anne and Will Massie, founders of McKinnon and Harris. The siblings’ exquisite estate, garden, and yacht furniture company flipped their first page in 1991, and has since grown into a storybook enterprise of beautifully crafted heirlooms (designed for the outdoors!) without compromising their artful attention to every. single. detail.

But this isn’t your run-of-the-mill, telltale patio furniture. Unlike big-box retailers’ outdoor collections, which by summer’s end appear to have narrowly survived a category five hurricane with ruined seat cushions, faded paint, and rusty façades, McKinnon and Harris’s museum-quality furniture has the resilience of Josephine March from *Little Women* with the grace of Jane Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice*. How? The brother-sister team and their staff of 30

local artisans in Richmond, Virginia leave no page unturned when crafting their functional works of art that truly stand the test of time. (They're not kidding—every piece has a lifetime guarantee.)



When walking into the McKinnon and Harris building in Richmond's industrial Scott's Addition neighborhood, a deep wave of reverence for their work becomes apparent after you take one step through the door. From the gracious office staff to the hardworking

craftsmen, a visitor immediately recognizes that this is more than a furniture factory. It's a functional art studio that's in the business of making masterpieces.

The main character in their tale is the fastidiously designed furniture. Locally sourced, NASA-grade aluminum is delivered to the factory, where it's then cut, bent, welded, and painted by local craftsmen on site.

“We wanted to create furniture with permanence, like a family heirloom,” said Anne.

It takes an average of 50 hours to create one piece, making it no surprise that prices range around four digits. From club chairs, chaises, benches, tables (and more!), these pieces won't become disheveled due to unexpected plot twists—they can withstand decades outside. So much so that passing down these beautiful and durable keepsakes will cause some inevitable tiffs between grandchildren after you're gone. Talk about a conversation piece!



Blame it all on their roots, but Anne and Will's appreciation for timeless furniture is deeply engrained in the landscape of Virginia. The tale of the two siblings began in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Lynchburg, where they spent their childhood amidst handsome surroundings, especially in the garden when visiting their grandparents.

Their grandmothers, Ella Wyatt

McKinnon Massie and Annie Scott Harris Robertson, were great sources of inspiration for the company, as well as the origin of the firm's name. As ardent gardeners, both families spent ample time entertaining and enjoying their outdoor havens, instilling profound esteem for gardens and the mentality that outdoor spaces should have the same respect as interior rooms.

This pastoral pastime continued with Anne and Will's parents, Dr. William McKinnon Massie, Sr. and famed watercolorist



ANNE AND WILL MASSIE, A SISTER BROTHER DUO, GROWING UP IN LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA.

Anne Adams Robertson Massie, who appreciated the beguiling bounty from their garden and also the thrill of the hunt when collecting antiques, art, and books. Whether indoors or out, their surroundings always exuded effortless elegance, just like McKinnon and Harris furniture.

“We have fond memories of watching our parents collect fine antiques and were fascinated by how each piece told a story,” said Will. “It’s no wonder we wanted to start a story of our own.”

“We were always surrounded with fine furnishings, literature, and works of art inside our home growing up,” Anne continued, “so it just made sense for the garden to share that same attention to detail.”



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says Anne.

The touch of their late mother Anne, an American Watercolor Society gold medal winner, whose work includes garden landscapes, is also ingrained in the DNA of McKinnon and Harris. Their logo of the Greek god Dionysus that adorns every piece of furniture was her own rendering. And the ethereal watercolors of their furniture collections that line the walls of their office—which look like

they belong in an art gallery rather than in a conference room—are from her brush, completing the familial warmth of McKinnon and Harris’s products. Even their catalogue features her elegant watercolor on the front. (We’ll judge that book by its cover!)

After more than 20 years in business, the brother-sister duo continues to channel family inspiration to meticulously master the manufacturing of functional art for many generations to enjoy. While doing so, they also manage to be the most gracious and considerate self-proclaimed “control freaks”—a title they admit with pride since they approve everything from paint colors to chair arches. And thanks to intentionally shunning mass production practices and supporting local artisans, their novel idea continues to be a page-turner bound for the history books.



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