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# Risky Business

🕒 November 11, 2010 (<https://today.cofc.edu/2010/11/11/risky-business/>) ❤️ Like

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Ironically enough, in the world of designer furniture, it might just be a guy named Risk who's the surest bet.

**Timothy-Charles Richard "T.R." Risk '92** began crafting one-of-a-kind furniture during his early years at the College as a way of paying the rent. Today, he could probably rent the entire apartment complex with what he fetches for his work, though he'll be quick to tell you being an artist is a feast-or-famine lifestyle. Still, he says, "right now things are pretty good."

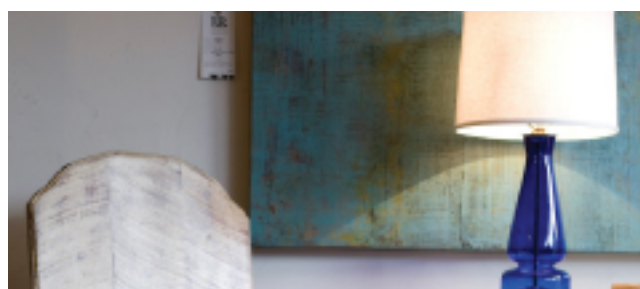
Over the past 15 years, the Pennsylvania native and resident has earned a national reputation for salvaging old lumber from historic barns and ranches and turning it into amazingly detailed and stylish pieces of furniture that are built to stand the test of time.

And when Risk looks at a stack of lumber, he sees pieces of furniture: "I look at it, and I just know what to do with it."

When it comes to dealing with clients, who are located in Montana, California, the Dakotas and all around the Northeast, Risk sometimes thinks of himself as a boxer in a ring. "Although I'm not fighting anyone," he says very matter-of-factly, "each client is a challenge."

Risk started out designing pieces in his house and then driving them around in the back of his truck until he sold them all; these days upper-crust society flies him first class across the country to size up a space and then design pieces specifically for them.

"I'll come in and say, 'we need to rip apart your kitchen,'" he explains. "And then I'll write all my ideas on a napkin and my clients are like, 'You've got to be kidding me.' But this business is about trust,



and I'm happy to say I'm finally at a point in my career where I've earned it."

Once back in Westchester, Pa., he goes to work in his 3,500-square-foot studio, listening to classic rock while he saws, sands and frames. "I'm friends with the entire neighborhood, so they're totally cool with hearing me jamming my music all day," he says with a smile.



Though beautiful places still provide him with some of his creative ideas, it's his family that serves as his main inspiration. Six-year-old son Jagger (Risk is a huge Rolling Stones fan) and wife, Marcie, are clearly the center of his universe, as the designer can't go five minutes without mentioning one of them.

"I never thought I'd be married and have a kid, but here I am, and I can't imagine life without them," he says.

It's that love of family that fuels his passion to create unique pieces of furniture. As for his particular style of work, well, that's probably the only thing the man is unsure about.

"If you can give it a name, I'd love to hear it," he admits. "Every time I build something, it's different. People just say, 'I want a T.R. piece,' and so that's what I give them."

*– Bryce Donovan '98*

*Check out Risk's work at [www.trrisk.com](http://www.trrisk.com) (<http://www.trrisk.com>).*

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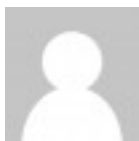
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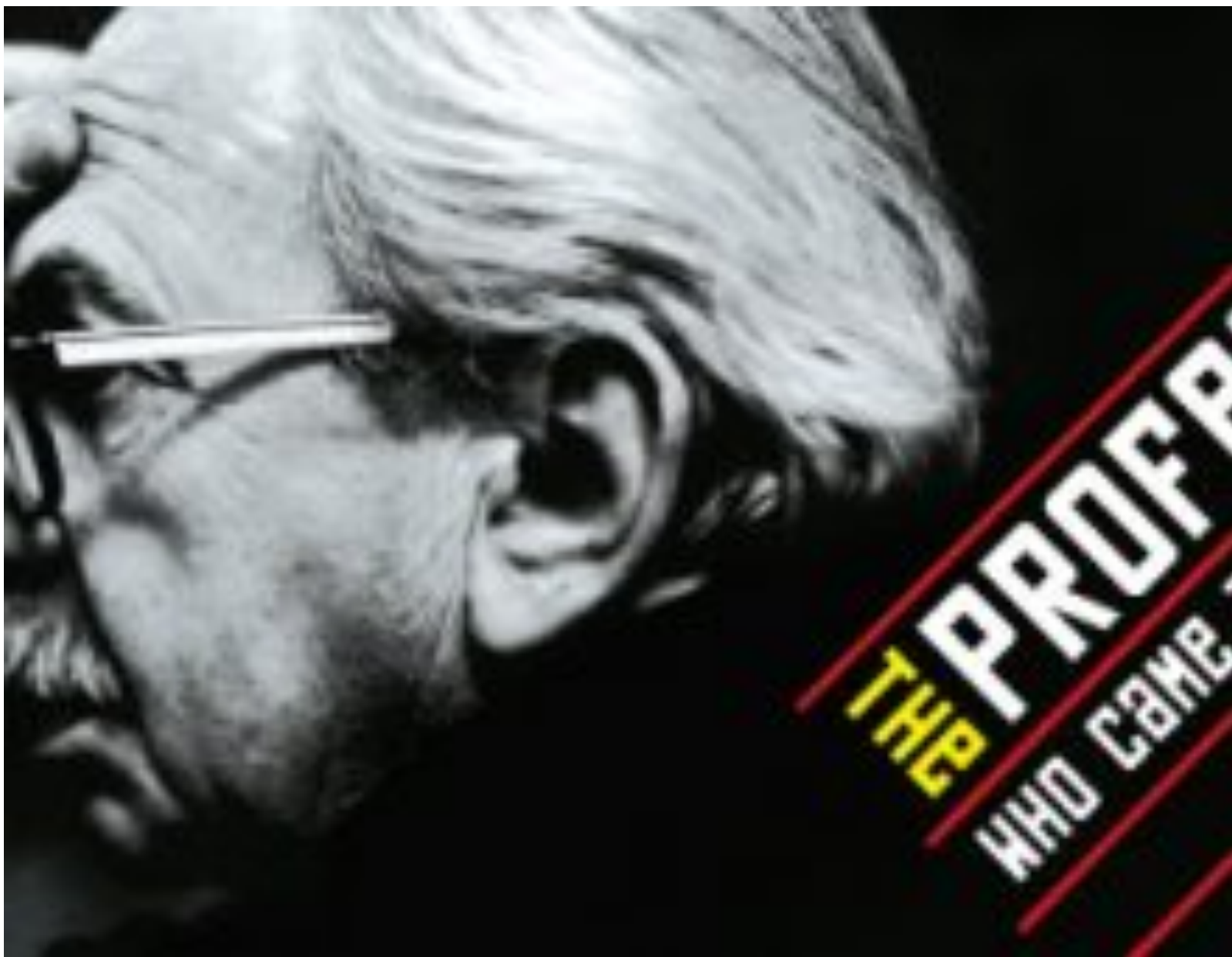
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