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HD **Labour of love**
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Jack Bolton's passion for giving old furniture a new life is becoming more than a hobby, writes JENNA MEADE

THE back shed is Jack Bolton's happy place. You'll find him there most nights after he knocks off from work as a grounds maintenance manager, whiling away his time sanding back timber and applying fresh licks of paint.

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It's his passion for giving abandoned furniture a new life that has seen him launch his new furniture restoration **business**, Jack of Trades.

The love has always been there – with Jack admitting he's "always liked to tinker around with something" – but it wasn't until he and his wife Stephanie moved into their new Armstrong Creek home that the venture was born.

"We needed to decorate our house and I was seeing all this furniture at vintage markets and garage sales and thought 'I could do that up'," the 29-year-old says.

"Everyone started encouraging me to sell my designs so my sister Hayley organised a Facebook and Instagram page and it's just grown from there." Most nights, Jack can be found working from his parents' shed at their property in Mount Duneed, where they have a shop importing **Chinese** antiques and furniture.

He quickly laughs off the suggestion that it was his adoring family who passed the handy restoration skills down to him.

"As Dad puts it, he couldn't drive a nail into melted **butter**," Jack says, smiling.

When gt speaks to Jack about his handiwork, it quickly becomes clear that this hobby is an art form and a way of expressing his inner creativity.

"I **m** in my own little world when I **m** out in the shed," he says. "I love the process, and I love learning more about it as I go along. It's my little slice of quiet time." The process is simple. Jack stumbles across furniture – be it from garage sales or free from the side of the road – and gets to work.

"If I like the finish of it, I put it up for **sale**," he says, adding that his favourite handmade pieces throughout his home include a former telephone table, an outdoor setting and an old sideboard dresser used as a television cabinet in its new life.

From a hardwood bed to pallet shelves and a remodelled desk, Jack's talents are far-reaching.

But he's determined for the hobby-turned-**business** venture to remain a way of giving furniture a new life, not building new designs.

"I'm not into custom designs at the moment – I like being able to make things out of materials that I come across and restoring existing designs to give them a second shot," he says.

"I keep finding bits of wood that I can use – from discarded pallets to fence palings from my grandparents' house. People will also call and tell me where they've seen free furniture on the side of the road." His favourite revival so far is an old ice chest he refurbished when a customer contacted him after seeing his work on Instagram.

"I loved hearing about its history – I found out it was built in 1946, and it was fascinating to see how it was made back then," he says.

Jack offers simple advice for those wanting to show a little love to their own furniture: don't follow the rules.

"You can make or restore things however you want," he says.

"Timber can be cut or put up in any way. All you need are some nails and a hammer.

"Definitely have a go – it's enjoyable." As well as ongoing support and encouragement from his tight-knit family, Jack credits Stephanie for inspiring him with ideas.

"Steph's always sending me ideas and emailing me things that she wants done for the house," he says.

While he is content with Jack of Trades being a side project for now, Jack hopes he can turn the labour of love into a full-time **business** he can nurture and grow.

"I'd like to get it to a stage where I can have my own shed and workplace in one," he says.

"Ideally I'd just like to keep tinkering around." For inquiries, contact Jack at jackbolts@hotmail.com

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