



## Steam-Bent Rocker

White oak

### Progressive Rock.

As a milestone birthday present to herself, our client requested a distinctly American rocking chair that combined two of her favorite styles—the sturdy oak frame of a Gustav Stickley design and the broad, slatted back and wide, flat arms of classic Adirondack furniture. In addition, she wanted the chair to be of substance, yet custom-fit to cradle her small frame. We presented three options — a square-back, a slat-back, and the steam-bent back. Needless to say, she decided on the more demanding alternative and we bent over backwards to craft this one-of-a-kind piece.

To be true to the Stickley fashion, we decided to build the rocker in white oak. However in order to bend the lumber to meet the design specifications, we needed to use "green wood" with a very particular moisture content. Once we had the wood milled, we built our own steam chambers to accommodate various lengths. Next, we carefully constructed precisely measured forms around which to bend the wood and achieve the desired shape. The process of bending the wood was very demanding, but also had to be done very quickly. We had only minutes to take the piping hot wood from the steam chambers to the bending frames and create each very specific form. When all the pieces were correctly cast, we assembled them using a traditional style of woodworking joint. Finally, we applied a special Dutch varnish called Slijtvaste Vernis and a neutral fabric upholstery so as not to overpower the woodwork.

By combining two very classic styles we were able to produce a piece with an extraordinarily unique look. And by designing it to perfectly accommodate the client's petite body-type, we created a rocking chair that is the very epitome of custom furniture in both form and function.

