

Viva Cuba holding Chair-i-table Auction on May 9

Contributed by Jane Reed
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Reserve Saturday, May 9 for Viva Cuba's annual Chair-i-table Auction. From a duo of pink and white girly children's rockers to "Salute," a patriotic chair, Viva Cuba's annual Chair-i-table Auction offers a wide array of artist-designed furniture.

This year's event, which begins at 9 a.m. at Java.net the Saturday before Mother's Day on May 9, shows off this special furniture. Java.net will feature Marcia Wilson's Mother's Day chocolate sweet treats, including chocolate covered strawberries.

This year's format includes a live auction of certain pieces at noon and a silent auction that ends at 12:30. Whether you are looking for a special gift for someone or a decorating accent for your own home, visit the annual event to see what this year's artists have created. Proceeds from the auction benefit the mural project and other beautification projects.

A sneak peek of this year's furniture shows that there is something for everyone from the rugged to the regal.

Dennis Meiser, the BBQ maestro from Missouri Hickory BBQ, used his talent for building rustic, red cedar furniture to craft a log chair titled "Homestead." This solid sitter will last a lifetime and make a great June Father's Day present for your favorite dad or granddad.

Bobbie Smith, a military veteran, used her chair titled "Salute" to show pride of country and to pay a tribute to our country's veterans. Smith wants the chair's vintage look to provoke thoughts of our forefathers who founded our country, our freedoms, and our God who created it. "If I can have people stop, think, reminisce, pull at their heart strings, then I have accomplished something wonderful," she said. From the local scenes incorporated on the chair to Smith's own patriotism, this chair brings a sense of history to its purchaser.

Colin Shaw, a native Cuban, who now lives and paints in St. Louis, joins Viva Cuba's event for the second year. His small table is a painted jewel with metallic bronze and gold paints and features what he says are Matisse-inspired birds and hearts in flight. These birds debuted in a series of paintings that can be viewed on his website at www.shawart.com. He said a poem originally inspired the birds with the lines, "The two birds did rise up to fly/And where the two birds were flying/ I swear I saw you and I."

Banker Kim Baldwin painted two children's rockers white with "girly pink" seats. Her "Rocker Chicks" would make two little "chicks" happy to have them. As an added bonus, Baldwin promises to paint the names of the little chicks on the rockers.

Two of Cuba's premier mural artists Julie Balogh Brand and Shelly Smith Steiger joined forces for a trio of "Metamorphosis" Adirondack chairs. Brand, a studio potter (www.juliebaloghart.com) and Steiger, a high school art teacher, have worked together before on The River, the Amelia, and the Millworks murals. When they unite to design furniture, something special happens. The three unpainted chairs were donated by Friends of the Handicapped as part of their outdoor line of furniture. The smallest chair now features a caterpillar, which metamorphoses into a cocoon on the mid-sized chair, and then into a butterfly taking flight on the oversized third chair. This outstanding set is destined for someone's porch or sunroom.

Viva Cuba member Marge Fleming is a whirlwind of creativity that produces multiple chairs for the annual event. Her child's Cardinal-inspired "Fredbird" rocker is a match for any little sportster and is generating lots of interest. The antique "Beary Cute" youth chair is a "keeper" for generations. A freehand needlepoint cushion that accompanies the youth chair raises the "cuteness" factor. Parents, grandmothers, and fond aunts will be vying for these.

Fleming created some more traditionally inspired pieces with a lot of style. A zebra adorns the back of a black, gold trimmed occasional chair "African Veld." A cushion of animal print is a bonus with this one. The "Pheasant Winter" antique chair has a needlework pheasant in a winter scene.

Viva Cuba member Joyce Stewart sewed an indoor/outdoor floral cushion for a rattan chair that was donated to Viva Cuba. Call this one "Sunny Days." The bright cushion contrasts well with the dark rattan.

Cuba's multit talented taxidermist sculpted the 1873 train replica in the Viva Cuba Garden and the elk above the sign at his shop Trophies Unlimited. For this challenge he painted a historical train on a Windsor-styled "Heritage" chair with Cuba's Sesquicentennial Medal embedded in the chair's crosspiece.

Dennis Meiser, of MO Hick BBQ helped prepare the chair by adding the 150th medal to the chair that Marge Fleming refinished. Tutterrow felt that the train relates to the history of Cuba and is a good match for this chair. To see more of Tutterrow's work visit www.wildlifeunlimited.net.

When retired train worker Bob Stubblefield saw the "Heritage" chair, he remarked, "Conductors used to sit in chairs just like that in the train caboose." Bob definitely has his eye on this chair.

Rita Miller, a past contributor to the auction, presents a beautiful floral pattern on a wooden chair. Titled "Simply Spring," this one blooms with promise for a Mother's Day gift.

A new contributor this year is Danielle Fleming Payne, the granddaughter of Marge Fleming and daughter of her son Bill. Payne's chair "Exercise in Chairing" is a vortex of color. Its vibrancy suits a modern décor. A teen would call it "awesome."

Arline Currie of AC Designs painted a blue garden bench Dancing Daisies that showcases her "one stroke" method of painting, which she is certified to teach. This technique consists of loading a brush with paint and painting a flower or image with one stroke. Currie offers individual or small group instruction. Call her at 573-885-2545 or at 310-729-8922.

Chairs will be in select locations around town. The week prior to the auction, the chairs return to the Hwy. 19 Peoples Bank for display.

Come to Java.net Saturday, May 9 to enjoy what this year's artists have done with their furniture, select a sweet Mother's Day treat, and watch the bidding begin. The live auction begins at noon, and the silent auction ends at 12:30.