

# Maple Landmark

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Release at Will

## **Delighting in the Details**

### ***American Wood Products Manufacturer Becomes a Hub for Specialty Projects***

MIDDLEBURY, Vt. – Carrie walked into the Maple Landmark showroom early on a Monday morning with an idea. An employee at a nearby food storage company, she brought a concept from their design team to see what possibilities might be available. The concept, a simple one-piece toggle, would be used as part of their product packaging. Carrie began explaining the idea to Maple Landmark owner, Michael Rainville, when he came up with an idea of his own: why not make a prototype on the spot for her to show her team? In a matter of minutes, Rainville had mocked up a design on the computer and created a sample using a laser cutter. As she left Maple Landmark to make the short 1-mile journey to work, Carrie took with her several sample pieces for them to try.

Though unique in detail, Carrie's situation is a regular occurrence at Maple Landmark. A morning phone call to the office is often Joe from a regional urn business, inquiring if there is a gap later in the day to engrave on a new stone urn. The college across town from the factory frequently sources award and recognition plaques from Maple Landmark while many state and national organizations purchase nametags for their employees. Increasingly (in quantity, frequency, and complexity), individuals and organizations seek out the unique combination of quality and turn-around speed that the Middlebury manufacturer offers.

How did a primarily-toy business tap into this specialty market? Rainville explains, "we often say that we are collectors of capabilities and technologies. We have most of the standard woodworking equipment you would consider typical but then we add to that lasers and automated routers and digital printers. No matter the tools, there is no getting around the hands-on work that goes into making a high-quality wood product." This intersection of modern technology and old-fashioned woodworking is what makes Maple Landmark a perfect landing spot for these curious concepts.

The convergence does breed an important question – is it handmade? Especially in the wood products business, the "handmade" moniker is valuable, indicating a personal touch and higher level of quality. According to Scott Joyal, Maple Landmark's quality control designee, their products certainly qualify as handmade. "We don't have machines here punching out thousands of pieces at a time," he explains, "our technology enhances what we are able to do in terms of quality and consistency but there is always a person's handiwork behind it." Many products, Joyal says, are handled by as many as 10 people before they ship out to customers.

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Rainville has learned to expect projects to come from all sides. Seven years ago, Maple Landmark started making tap handles for the next-door cidery, a significant departure from the familiar product line. Since then, custom tap handles from the Middlebury factory have shipped across the state and around the country, including Jacksonville, Fla. and Seattle, Wash. "We love the uniqueness of each project, tap handles or otherwise, that challenges our thinking and what we are able to do. Every tool and trick that we learn is just another way that we can do the next idea better," states Rainville.

The unique breadth of projects was on full display with a recent request. Challenged by a marble solitaire board two feet in diameter (Maple Landmark's standard board is approx. 8.5 inches), Rainville's answer was, of course, yes. Sure enough, the board was completed and shipped quickly. The customer chimed back, "It arrived and it's beautiful! Definitely worth waiting for, and thanks so very much."

## **About Maple Landmark**

Maple Landmark is a wooden products manufacturer located in Middlebury, Vermont. Since 1979, the 40 woodworkers at Maple Landmark have been crafting a wide array of award-winning toys, games, and gifts from local and sustainable wood. Maple Landmark uses a variety of manufacturing systems, innovative product design, and modern technology integrated with classic woodworking to remain competitive in a crowded industry that faces significant international trade pressures. Distributing products across the United States and sometimes internationally, Maple Landmark is recognized as a standard for quality wooden products in an increasingly tech-driven world.

For more information on Maple Landmark, please visit the website at [www.maplelandmark.com](http://www.maplelandmark.com).

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