

Thos. Moser Customer In Residence (CIR) Program - FAQ

Revised: November, 2009

If your question is not answered here, please call Steve Wyman at 800-708-9041 or email Steve at freeportshowroom@thosmoser.com.

Q: What is the CIR program?

A: The CIR program is a weeklong immersion into the Thos. Moser workshop environment. It provides a unique opportunity for our most loyal customers to visit our shop and, under the direction of a seasoned cabinetmaker, make their own piece of furniture utilizing the same tools and woodworking techniques that our own craftspeople use on a daily basis.

Each person will stay at the historic Harraseeket Inn in downtown Freeport. From there, each participant will travel to our workshop daily to work side by side with a master cabinetmaker. This mentor will assist in the crafting of a hallmark Moser piece. All participants will share their workshop experiences on a daily basis, as well as take part in trips to the Grange Hall in New Gloucester (where we had our first shop) and attend a couple special Moser dinners.

Q: Why did you develop this program?

A: It all started when we had a longstanding customer ask if he could spend his vacation “interning” in our shop and learning how to make something special with his own two hands. It was an unusual request, but we said “why not” and set him up with a cabinetmaker from the shop and let them work side-by-side for about a week or so. It was such a great experience that he encouraged us to develop it into a program so we could offer the opportunity to others.

Q: Why is CIR important to Thos. Moser?

A: There are many layers to how CIR is important to our company, the first and foremost of which is creating a deeper connection between us and our customers by creating an experience that cannot be duplicated. Based on the feedback of the first groups, we seem to have achieved this goal. This program also allows us to get closer to our roots as woodworkers by sharing the nuances of a craft that could otherwise be lost if not passed along. And of course there is the “halo effect” that will come from the participants themselves after they leave our shop and share their experiences with their friends, families and colleagues.

Q: How long have you been doing the CIR program?

A: We began the program in the fall of 2007, and as far as we know it is the first of its kind for a furniture maker like Thos. Moser. The inaugural CIR program session was held September 17-21, 2007 with five participants.

Q: Are future CIR program sessions planned?

A: Yes, we have a total of eight sessions in the 2010 schedule (dates are noted on our website). More 2010 dates could be added based on demand and shop load.

Q: How are the participants selected and can the general public sign up for the CIR program?

A: In one of our catalog mailings, we included a brief overview about the CIR program in a cover letter to some of our more active customers and invited them to contact us if they were interested in participating. The response was tremendous and we quickly accumulated a list of over a hundred people who expressed a serious interest in the program. That initial list has grown to over 260 people. While there is no requirement that people have purchased our furniture to be eligible for the program, we are giving preference to people who have done so because it is thanks to them that we are able to make a living as furniture makers.

If you are interested in being a participant in a future Customer in Residence session, please send an email to the attention of Steve Wyman at freeportshowroom@thosmoser.com with your contact information and you will be added to the waiting list.

Q: With such high level of interest, do you plan to expand the CIR program?

A: We are still evaluating whether to continue the program “as is” or to expand the program in some way. As a relatively small furniture making venture that has a healthy backlog of customer projects to build, it has been no small task figuring out how to commit five of our most experienced cabinetmakers (not to mention a team of folks from various departments to support them) to this program without impacting those commitments. At the end of the day we still have a responsibility to take care of the needs of our customers who have ordered from us first. For that reason, we haven’t yet decided whether to expand the number of sessions that we will offer next year.

Q: Is there a fee to participate in the CIR program? Does the program fee vary with the piece chosen?

A: Yes, there is an all-inclusive fee for the program that includes everything that is needed to build a piece of furniture (materials, tools, on-site mentor, etc.), local transportation to and from the shop and various excursions, meals, lodging at the Harraseeket Inn, and of course the piece of furniture that will be built. The total price generally ranges from \$5,000 to \$10,000 depending on the project that is being built.

Q: Can the CIR participants build anything they want? How much flexibility does a customer have to customize their piece?

A: Each CIR participant is welcome to choose from among all of our standard furniture designs. We then work with each participant to help determine what might be most appropriate based on their individual skill and experience level in woodworking and the time allotted during the week. We are open to customization requests (alternate wood species, finish, hardware, dimension change, etc.), however the ability to accommodate such requests and whether or not a surcharge is appropriate is evaluated on a case by case basis and may vary with the piece chosen and type of customization requested.

Q: If a couple wants to participate together, is that allowed and is the fee different?

A: Yes, we have had couples participate together and the price for a couple is dependant on what they are building.

Q: What do the participants do in the evenings and are there other activities besides working in the shop?

A: The program includes two pre-planned dinners that we put on as well as several free nights so people can enjoy some of the activities and great restaurants that our area of Maine has to offer.

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