

A raven's tale in African mahogany



Myths of the Northwest. The Raven Door gets its detailing from an American Indian story about the origin of light in the world: a cunning raven stole it from a chief who didn't want to share.

The glint of green is veriscite. One of three types of stone used in the door, veriscite makes a fitting eye for the raven.



Mark King & Friends, a woodworking shop in Whitefish, Mont., based the design of this African mahogany entry door on the cosmology of American Indians of the Northwest (see the photo above left). Mark King and Tom Radziewicz collaborated on the 98-in. by 42-in. *Raven Door*, which uses mother-of-pearl, abalone, malachite, veriscite and rhodochrosite (see the photo above right). Radziewicz, who spent 150 hours on the carving alone, recounted this American Indian story in explaining the door's intricate detailing:

In the beginning of the world, the sun, the moon and the stars were held captive by a greedy chief. The rest of the world was in darkness. A raven, looking for a way to liberate the hostage light, noticed that the chief's daughter frequented a particular stream to collect water. The raven transformed itself into a hemlock needle, floated into the water and was later consumed by the chief's daughter along with a sip of water. She became pregnant and gave birth to the raven, now in the form of a son. The raven grew quickly and was

soon bugging his grandfather, the greedy chief, to see where the sun, moon and stars were stashed.

Once the secret was revealed, the raven resumed its natural form, grabbed the loot and flew off. For the raven's efforts, the world was blessed with light.

Barry Hood of Helena etched the sun into the central window panel, and the moon is carved into the transom over the door. The door is on display at Tom O'Keefe & Co. in Whitefish, the gallery that provided the stone used in the detailing. —S.G.

Notes and Comment

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