

## Morgan Highlights—Jim Maas

by Erik Lessing

Meet Jim Maas, his wife Billie, and Golden Retriever, Maggie. They live up Toad Pond Road, far from the madding crowd on Seymour. Jim is a retired Orthopedic Surgeon and now a master carver of birds in wood. He's been doing this since 1998, tracing a path through many other artistic endeavors and ending up in his true love of carving true-to-life birds as they look in their natural environment.

A project will start either by a commission from someone for a specific bird or by Jim's own desire to fashion a bird and pose he finds intriguing. Once a subject is etched in his mind he follows many steps to the finished product.

First, he bandsaws a block of wood, usually Tupolo for its softness and ease of forming. Second, he starts the process of power carving using an electric powered tool, similar to a Dremel tool or drills used by dentists. He employs a multitude of bits to achieve the basic form of the bird.

Power sanding follows, and then he uses a wood burner (again with many different bits) to achieve the detail so important for the bird's realism. These final tasks require very fine lines to match the bird's quills and feathers.

Last, Jim is onto his favorite part, painting. As he says, "he carves to paint." He may use oils or acrylic and both air and traditional brushes. He is also a fan of "free form" creation, where a particular fascinating piece of a wood's grain leads him where it will.

You can see many of Jim's creations on his extensive website, [birdsinsinwood.com](http://birdsinsinwood.com) and may contact him at [jim@birdsinsinwood.com](mailto:jim@birdsinsinwood.com). You may find just the bird for you. □



Jim's Great Horned Owl