



THE MALLETT

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MERRY CHRISTMAS



FROM THE NATIONAL CARVERS MUSEUM

This Month:

Special Christmas Issue! Bell by Warren Bebout; Ornaments by J.F. Logue, Jr.; Redwood Shelf by Jeanette Renie; The Good Shepherd by Spike Boyd; Welsh Love Spoon Carver by Dean Otteson; Christmas Figures by Joe Henry; Camels and Zebras For Your Christmas Parade by Henry Magnin; Plus Morris Cohen, Sculptor, by Harrison Neustadt; and Much More!

Peacock in Walnut by Morris Cohen. 19" high x 15" wide.



MORRIS COHEN, SCULPTOR

By Harrison Neustadt

Where does carving end and sculpture begin? There is more than a fine line when Morris Cohen takes a maul in his right hand and a chisel in his left hand. He is a sculptor and you don't call him a carver.

He works with large pieces of exotic wood, often logs of large diameters for his lifesize figures. Morris has an uncanny talent for visualizing something he sees in the direction of the grain of the wood and its color. He appreciates the medium he works with and is sensitive, with a high regard to the form it will take. His

sculptures reveal expertise and craftsmanship so evident in the final product.

While he is no stranger to working with marble, his first love is WOOD. He is mesmerized by the texture and odor of woods. With literally thousands of wood species to choose from, he has a few favorites such as Rosewood, Zebra Wood, Amaranth and other rare and exotic species. He says, "There is a mystique about it (wood); it has lived, it had a life of its own. Rosewood has very rich graining and different coloration and ac-



Morris Cohen, Sculptor.

usually gives off the aroma of roses."

Small is not in Morris's vocabulary; he thinks big and his compositions reflect the joy of working in the round on large sculptures. He is a man very much in love with his art. His is a lifestyle which would inspire young and old, artist or not.

Morris Cohen migrated to this country from Poland at the age of 13 in 1921. Before his "retirement" from business, his occupational background was varied. He was successful in realty dealings, operated an auto repair and gas station. When his help quit and he had to man the pumps himself, a lady sculptor said she'd pump the gas so Morris could devote more time to his sculpting.

It was 1960 when Morris decided to take up sculpture and learn the art at N.Y.C.'s Art Student League and the New School for Social Research. Prior to that he had not even done any whittling. His teachers soon told him his talent and potential exceeded by far their teaching ability.

He received many prizes and awards at prestigious art shows. He judged art shows and gave illustrated lectures on techniques used in the execution of his sculptures. He has been commissioned to create pieces in both marble and wood for display in public buildings and at exhibitions and galleries. At the International Wood Collectors Society annual meeting in 1967, Morris picked up and handled planks, the size and

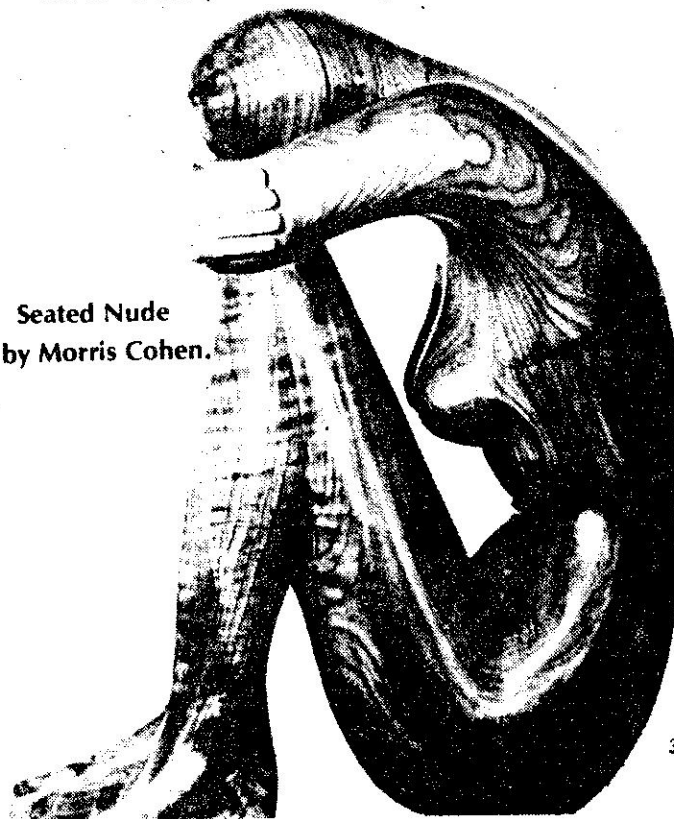
weight of which would have taxed the strength of a much younger man. When asked to tell him to take it easy his wife said, "When Morris sees wood he sweats."

Morris says, "I strive to bring out the maximum of the wood by working with the grain, allowing it to guide me and help me to bring out what I feel. There is no correlation between what you see on the flat surface and what emerges after you've cut away portions of the wood and expose the inside in its varying depth." The only power tools he uses are a radial arm saw and a portable electric drill.

Asked by a student at one of his lectures, "How do you determine the price of a work of yours?" he replied, "If I utilize the wood effectively to bring out the form I want, then the price is high; if I'm not totally satisfied and I see a certain weakness in the piece, the price is lower." He has had sales in four figures and the pieces are owned by private collectors.

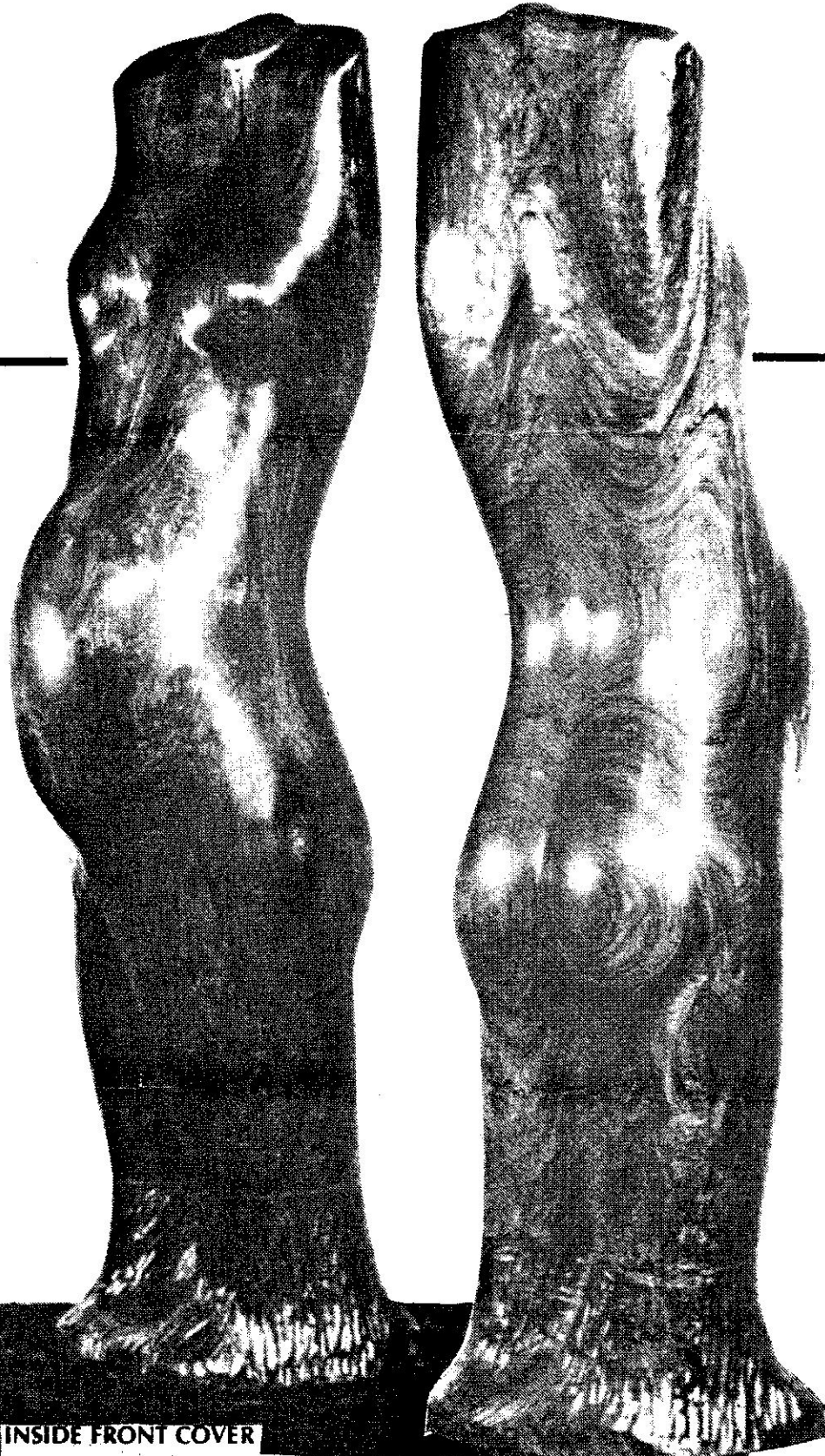
The sculptor uses a modern approach and starts directly with the wood without making a scale model of the subject. With reference to a nude woman's torso, made of fruitwood, he explained he had studied the bodies of Greek belly dancers. "I was fascinated at how flexible the human body is and how it works as no machine could possibly duplicate." Cohen decries the technological advances which have automated so many things to the point of losing the self-fulfillment our forefathers found in working with their hands creating goods from raw materials. Giving some fatherly advice to young students he said, "It is amazing how many of us have so many talents laying dormant — So, I say to you, let it all come out!"

The Cohens, earlier this year, left the Bronx for the sunshine of Florida and now reside in a beautiful home full of his sculptures in Delray Beach.



**Seated Nude
by Morris Cohen.**

the
MALLET



INSIDE FRONT COVER

Female Torso by Morris Cohen, Delray Beach, Florida. Morris Cohen was featured in *The Mallet* in December, 1982.