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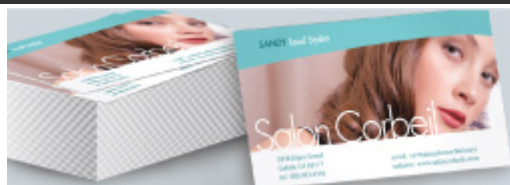
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Stillwater music and arts festival is evolving

Article by: NANCY CROTTI , Special to the Star Tribune

Updated: September 28, 2012 - 6:38 PM

The Fall Colors Fine Arts & Music Festival will feature more of a variety of music this year than the old fine arts and jazz festival.

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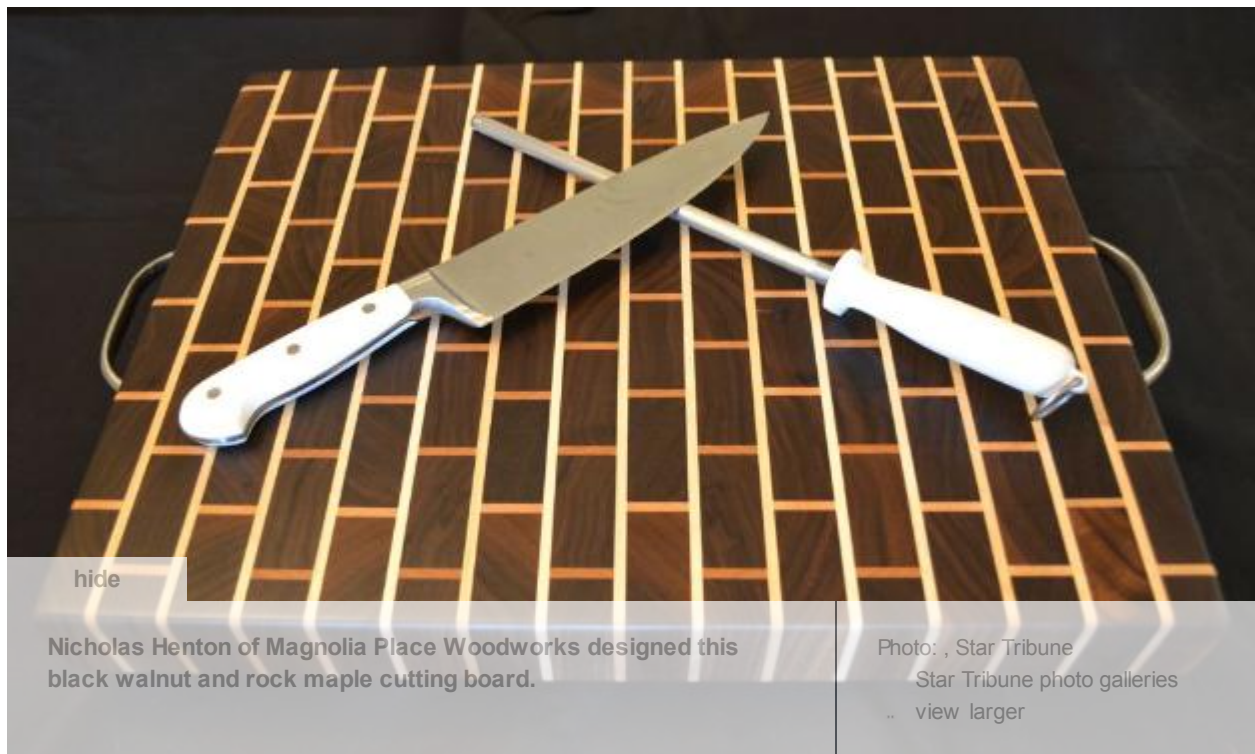
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Nicholas Henton of Magnolia Place Woodworks designed this black walnut and rock maple cutting board.

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Regular attendees at the Fall Colors Fine Arts & Music Festival in [Stillwater](#) will find some changes this year -- some purposeful and others serendipitous.

First is a name change. The 28-year-old gathering, scheduled for next weekend in Lowell Park along the St. Croix River, used to be billed as a fine arts and jazz festival. This year's musical offerings will be more varied.

"We've had really great luck with the jazz music in the past," said Dolly Parker, event coordinator for the festival's producer, the Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce. "This just opens up more opportunities for us to tap into our local musical artists."

The mix of 85 artists exhibiting at the juried show will also vary. More photographers applied for inclusion and this year will outnumber the

IF YOU GO

What: Fall Colors Fine Arts & Music Festival

When: Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: Lowell Park, Stillwater

Admission: free

Information: Visit www.stillwaterfallartfair.com for artist listing, artwork photo gallery sampling, music performance schedule and public parking information

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formerly dominant jewelry artists, Parker said.

Other artists making their first appearances will be Nicholas Henton of Hudson and Nick Ringelstetter of Atomic7 Studio in Spring Green, Wis. Ringelstetter paints cartoon-like works populated by colorful bug-eyed monsters.

"He does crazy, fun, random and mysterious stuff," Parker said. "He does something in the form of a stop sign and does a futuristic alien city painted around it with flying saucers. It's really interesting, very fun."

Inspired by Dr. Seuss and Tim Burton, Ringelstetter strives to leave no empty spaces on his canvases.

"I was definitely the kid who drew on everything," he said. "The teachers liked my work, but they didn't like the fact that I drew on their books."

His paintings and prints went over so well at the Stone Arch Bridge Festival in [Minneapolis](#) in June that the Madison-area resident decided to enter more Twin Cities area shows. He will sell prints for \$20 and original works for up to \$700. The former avid skateboarder also plans to sell skateboards that he has distressed and painted for wall display, no wheels attached.

Henton's art is functional. He makes wooden cutting boards in contrasting patterns of food-grade woods such as maple, black walnut and American cherry. The Stillwater festival will be Henton's third juried art fair.

"I'm a full-time real estate agent," said Henton, who calls his side business Magnolia Place Woodworks. "The wood thing is a hobby for me."

Henton's work starts at \$25 for a small cheese board, but most cost about \$250. Henton wants his customers to use his cutting boards, not just display them. "I hear that probably a hundred times a day, 'These are too pretty to cut on,' " he said. "My cutting boards are made to last generations."

The festival's musical genres will veer toward blues, R&B and pop, with some jazz mixed in, said festival music coordinator Nick Hall. The festival was more art- than music-dominated in the past, he said.

"We didn't want to compete with the artists, but now they've opened it

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up more," he said. "It's laid out differently, so the music stage is separate from the artists' booths. We want it to be a music festival as well."

A White Bear Lake resident, Hall plays in two of the groups, the 617 Band and Les Izmoore. He described 617 as a funky, jazz-R&B fusion group that has played together for about two years, mostly in the Twin Cities. Les Izmoore returns from last year's festival. Hall described it as "a pop variety group with strong vocals and nice takes on a lot of classic songs and obscure things, too."

The musical trio RAMM (short for Real American-Made Music), featuring Paul Mayasich, is a "roots/blues-based band, pretty much with an Americana sense," Hall said. "Paul is a really great guitar player -- plays exceptional slide guitar. They have a strong following."

Thirty-year music veteran Mick Sterling will head Mick Sterling & His Band, an acoustic quintet that will perform original tunes and covers of Van Morrison, Otis Redding, Johnny Cash, Patty Griffin, Amy Winehouse and Duffy. Sterling's long-standing 10-piece R&B band disbanded in 2005, and he's been performing with different musicians ever since.

"I've been doing a lot of different styles since then," Sterling said. "I enjoy all different kinds of music, so it's fun."

Festival coordinators predict less traffic than in years past, because of the closure of the historic Stillwater Lift Bridge. Balmy weather drew about 12,000 visitors last year, up from the usual 5,000, Parker said.

Nancy Crotti is a Twin Cities freelance writer.

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