

## Minnesota Made *Realizing a Pipe Dream*

By Kevin Frazzini & Paul Walsh  
Staff Writers, Minneapolis StarTribune  
Published: August 19, 2002  
Edition: METRO  
Section: NEWS  
Page#: 1B  
Fee paid for use

You can learn just about any career by taking classes. But pipemaking isn't one of them. "There are no schools for pipemakers," said Rich Lewis, who owns [Lewis Pipe](#) and Tobacco in downtown Minneapolis. After attempting his first handmade pipe in 1975, Lewis decided to learn from the masters. He toured English and Italian factories and watched the world's best pipemakers work on precision lathes. He also learned about Italian briar, a wood prized for its deep grain.



Lewis now makes 40 to 60 pipes a year in the workshop below his Nicollet Avenue store. He always has a couple for sale in the shop. Some customers choose pipes by their appearance, others by their heft. It feels good holding the right pipe the way it "feels good holding a baseball," Lewis said.

- MN Made is a weekly look at things made, born, built or created in Minnesota.
- Rich Lewis is also a member of the Great Northern Pipe Club.

Courtesy StarTribune fee paid for use  
The Great Northern Pipe Club