

# atomic

MIDCENTURY MARVELS

# ranch

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Engaged Media Inc.

Early in my exposure to Midcentury Modern accessories and accent pieces, I stumbled upon

an artist who created incredible wooden birds sculpted from unique wood species. The artist behind these little birds, Emil Milan, crafted silhouettes showcasing refined, smooth, flowing, and clean lines—perfect compliments to midcentury architecture. Long after realizing my desire to one day own some of these masterfully crafted, life-like wooden birds, they finally became a reality for our home.

## Birds

### Without Feathers Flock Together

A surprise twist brings a collection of Emil Milan creations home for a song.

Written and photographed by Chad Baker





## Knowing my purchase **saved a collection as a whole unit** for the future is most rewarding and satisfying.

Eight years ago while studying photos from an estate auction in Pennsylvania, I was elated to discover a large collection of these wonderful wooden birds by Emil Milan. Every piece was described over the phone by the auction house as in perfect condition, signed, and identifying the unique species of wood such as Palo Rosa, Bissilon, Imbuia, Wenge, Cucumber Magnolia, and Walnut. The quantity of birds, their shapes,


sizes and species of wood, made this a rare, amazing find that I simply couldn't miss.

Having purchased from this auction house previously was a definite benefit. I inquired how the birds would be sold and was told "by the lot"; meaning that the entire collection would remain together. I trusted the information they had provided about the condition and they trusted me with my very generous bid. Now all I could do was wait anxiously for the phone call, which I received the following day.

To my great surprise, I was awarded the lot of wooden birds for a mere \$20—this was truly a great find and my dream to own some of these amazing, handcrafted creations came true.

However, the auction house seemed to be intrigued by the decision behind the perceived large bid.

Consequently, their research revealed artist Emil Milan as a close friend of their father (whose estate was being auctioned). Occasionally on Emil's visits, he would present their father with a newly sculptured wooden bird, which would find a resting place on their father's shelf. Knowing my purchase saved a collection as a whole unit for the future is most rewarding and satisfying.

You never know where the next amazing find will appear, but the element of surprise and excitement of discovering a treasure will remain a fond memory—and hopefully become a collection all its own. 



Chad Baker is a knowledgeable midcentury enthusiast who has been digging for mid mod treasure for more than 10 years. As a result, he has a plethora of stories about rescuing, restoring and scoring great finds. Along with his wife Tina, Chad lives in a stunning North Carolina home that the couple has lovingly preserved. For more on Chad, visit [facebook.com/simplychad](https://facebook.com/simplychad).