

WOODCRAFT FOR THE AFTERLIFE

A sharp turn in the road takes you to Spring Valley Woodcraft, a small Amish operated business that seems like many others dotting the rural roads of Northern Indiana Amish Country. The cheery demeanor of owner, LaVern Miller, might be unexpected given the nature of his business-- making coffins for the Amish and caskets for "English" (non-Amish) clients. He's been in this "custom" woodworking business for more than 30 years.

Unlike caskets, Amish coffins are six sided with two pieces on hinges that fold down and open on both sides to allow for easier viewing. Paper rather than fiberfill is used to pad the coffin which is then lined with plain cloth. LaVern uses local woods, mostly Poplar, to make his coffins, and it takes approximately 11 hours from start to finish.

LaVern says that currently 80% of his business is making Amish coffins, although he's getting more and more casket business from non-Amish customers. He attributes that to word-of-mouth. It seems hand-crafted counts, even in the afterlife.

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[AmishCountry.org/group-travel/motorcoach-guides-and-receptive-tour-operators#brownbagtour](https://www.AmishCountry.org/group-travel/motorcoach-guides-and-receptive-tour-operators#brownbagtour)