

Bio Sketch for William Atwood, violinmaker

Atwood was inspired to take up violin making after hearing a lecture by a fellow physicist in 1978. Atwood had recently completed his Ph.D. in experimental high-energy particle physics and was working at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center. The lecture by Jack Fry on the physics of the violin inspired Atwood to bring together several lifelong passions: he had played the violin since the age of 8; he had acquired fine wood working skills from his father, a cabinet maker specializing French Provincial furniture; and now, as a full-fledged physicist, he was well equipped to understand the underlying physics of string instruments. In 1983, upon returning from a post-doc in Europe with a trove of aged wood appropriate for instrument making, Atwood made his first violin. Through the 1980's and into the 1990's nearly a dozen more instruments followed. In 1996 Atwood apprenticed with Tom Croen: Tom would teach Bill making in the classical style while Bill would share insights into the physics behind violin acoustics. Atwood retired from Stanford in 1999 and took up violin making full time for several years. However, the lure of physics eventually brought him back to teaching and research at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Atwood retired from this position in 2016 and is again making instruments. To date Atwood has made close to 70 violins and violas combined. Recently Atwood started making 5-strings based on a small viola pattern with the first two now in the hands of professional musicians. Atwood's client base is comprised of amateurs and professionals, classical musicians as well as heavy metal band players, advanced students and devoted chamber music players.

Atwood's Violins is located in the Santa Cruz Mountains just north of the UCSC. His much-prized wood stash from Europe and the US includes Bavarian split spruce, Swiss spruce, Baltic maple, and Pacific Northwest quilted maple. The wood is now well over thirty years old since cutting and much of it is close to 100 years old. Atwood's instruments are completely handmade from purfling to varnish. Website: AtwoodsViolins.com; Instagram: [atwoods_violins](https://www.instagram.com/atwoods_violins).