Handcrafted by students

WINNERS of the 2007 Fresh Wood national student woodworking competition were announced last week in Las Vegas, where 210 handcrafted entries ranged from period reproductions to wholeheartedly futuristic visions.

The competition, open to high school and college students, awarded its best in show award to Chris Hedges, 31, of the University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College in Ohio. His entry was a Penn secretary reproduction crafted of curly cherry wood; Hedges spent two months on research and design for the project and seven months on construction. Fine finials, intricate rosettes and other detailing helped his entry to stand out, he said.

In the case-goods category, first place went to Christian Lazcano, 21, a woodworking manufacturing technology major at Cerritos College in Norwalk. Lazcano crafted his elegant storage system in wenge, zebra and alder woods.

First place in the tables category went to Cortney Schiappa, 21, an interior design major at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Her angular, low-slung design called for planes of African mahogany to wrap around glass.

ANGULAR: Cortney Schiappa's low table.

GRAINS: Christian Lazcano's storage unit, right, and Chris Hedges' Penn secretary.

Winners were announced at the biennial convention of the Assn. of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers, which started the competition in 1999 to encourage careers in the furniture industry. The association awarded prizes ranging from $1,000 to $2,500, but the biggest payoff may be to come. Hedges is selling his secretary. Asking price: $23,000.

— BETTJANE LEVINE