

Dining Room Tray

Not sure you can drive a nail? This project is a great confidence builder for the beginning basher.

Like the Enfield Shaker Cabinet, this project is adapted from Ejner Handberg's "Shop Drawings for Shaker Furniture & Woodenware Vol. 1" (Berkshire House). And like the Enfield Cabinet, we are left to connect some of the dots as to how it was assembled. I connected the dots with nails.

After building a few of these trays, here's the easiest way to make them with minimum fuss. Cut the sides and ends to size; plane them or sand them so they're ready for finishing. With glue and two bar clamps, glue the ends between the sides using yellow glue. Give the glue an hour to cure, then get set to reinforce each corner with 1½"-long (4d) cut headless brads.

First, lightly scribe a line across the end of each side piece that's ¼" from the end. This is the line for your nails. Now drill a deep ¼" pilot hole that's ⅜" in from each long edge. Drive a cut headless brad into each pilot hole. Angle the nails a bit to wedge the side piece against the ends. Countersink the nails below the surface of the wood with a nail set and a couple hammer raps.

Cut the handle to length to fit between the ends. You want this joint to be tight so I'd cut it close with your table saw and trim the end grain a bit to fit using a low-angle block plane. Lay out the curves and handle hole on the workpiece. Cut the curves on the handle using a band saw or bow saw. Clean up the saw marks first with a fine half-round rasp and then a file (or a spokeshave). If you have a spindle sander, that also will do the

"The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak."

— Hans Hofmann (1880-1966)
artist



PHOTO BY AL PARRISH

Silverware trays are great, even if you don't live communally. They're a nice way to carry silver to the dining table or to even offer utensils to your guests during a buffet meal.

job. Then spokeshave a ¼" x ¼" chamfer on the long edges of the handle.

Bore out as much of the waste in the handle hole as you can with an auger bit or Forstner bit. (Tip: The curved ends of the hole are formed by a ¾"-diameter bit). After trying a couple different methods, I found the fastest way to remove most of the remaining waste was by light chopping with a chisel. Then a few strokes with a half-round rasp made the hole ready for sandpaper.

Glue and nail the handle centered between the ends. Two headless brads in each end of the handle will do the trick. Flush up all the bottom edges of the tray and get ready to install the bottom. Handberg's drawing shows the bottom as one piece that's glued or nailed to the sides and handle. I am not that brave when it comes to facing the possibility of future wood movement.

Make the bottom from three pieces that are either shiplapped (like in the back for the Enfield Cabinet) or use a tongue-and-groove joint. Make your bottom pieces just a bit too long (¼" will do) and a bit too wide (even less than ¼"). This

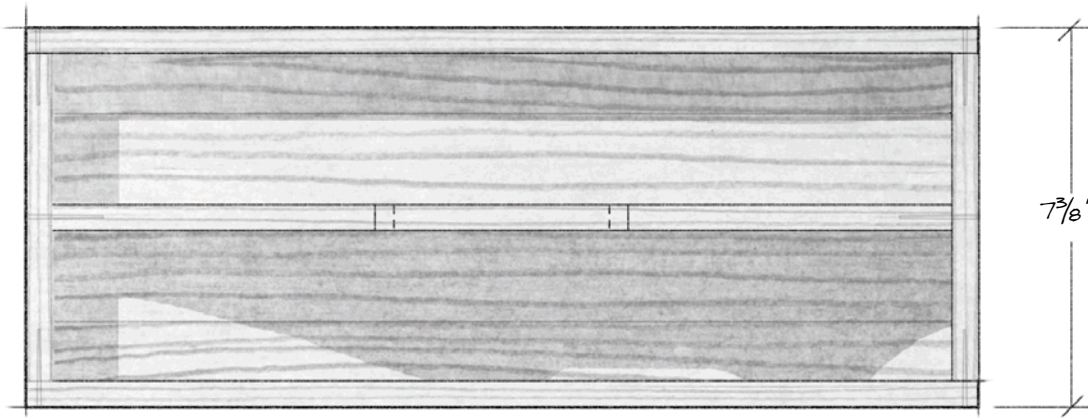
will allow you to trim the bottom to a perfect finished size. To join the bottom boards, cut a ⅜" x ⅜" groove on the edges then cut a matching tongue on the mate. Prepare all the bottom pieces for finishing.

To attach the bottom, run a small bead of glue down the bottom edge of the handle and then center the middle bottom piece on it. Nail it to the handle – five brads down the handle will do. Ensure the other two bottom pieces will fit tight against the ends and the side pieces.

Run a bead of glue down the edge of the side pieces only and insert the bottom pieces. Position each so there's a ¼" gap between it and its neighbor. Nail each bottom piece to the sides only. Trim the bottom pieces flush with the outside of the tray. Break all the sharp edges with sandpaper.

This is a good project to also practice your finishing strategies for cherry. We ragged on a coat of linseed oil, let the project sit outside for an afternoon, then finished it up with some spray lacquer from an aerosol can a week later. **WM**

— Christopher Schwarz



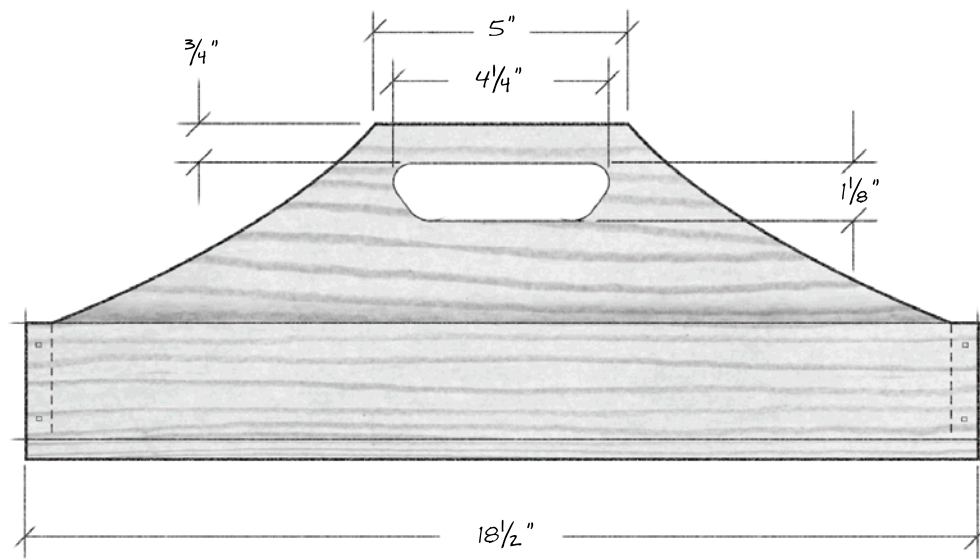
TOP VIEW

SUPPLIES

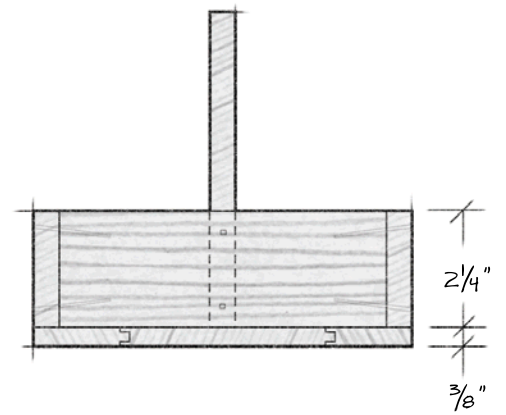
Tremont Nail Co.
800-842-0560 or tremontnail.com

- 4d (1 1/2") cut headless brads, one-pound box, #CFB-4-1, \$22.80

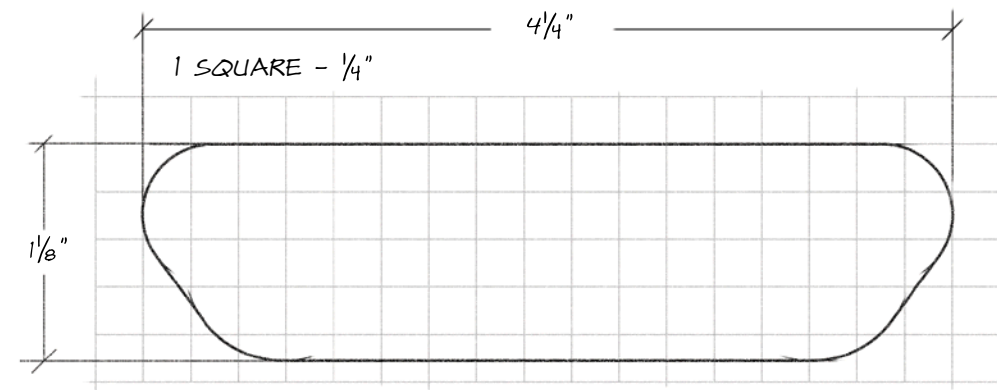
Price correct at publication deadline.



FRONT VIEW



END VIEW



FULL-SIZE HANDLE PATTERN

Dining Room Tray

NO.	PART	SIZES (INCHES)			MATERIAL
		T	W	L	
□ 2	Sides	1/2	2 1/4	18 1/2	Cherry
□ 2	Ends	1/2	2 1/4	6 3/8	Cherry
□ 1	Handle	1/2	6 1/8	17 1/2	Cherry
□ 1	Bottom	3/8	7 3/8	18 1/2	Cherry

DINING ROOM TRAY