

Tile Trivet

Practice makes perfect sense; this small tabletop project will give you something practical to show for your effort as you build your skills.

If I've been out of the shop for a while, I like to get some practice before tackling a large project. It gets my skills back in shape, and if I'm a little rusty my mistakes only generate a small amount of firewood. I'll make a few joints to be sure that my skills and tools are ready for the real thing.

Most people with hobbies do this. Golfers hit buckets of balls, softball players head to the batting cages and marathon runners jog through the neighborhood. But for some reason, many woodworkers are reluctant to practice without having something to show for it.

This trivet makes a great warm-up for any project that requires mortise-and-tenon joints, and if you're not sure which method you're most comfortable using, you can try a different technique at each corner. If things go wrong, you'll have material for kindling, not a bonfire; and if they go well, you'll have a nice accessory for your kitchen counter or dining room table.

We chose an attractive reproduction Arts & Crafts-style tile from Ford Craftsman Studios (www.fordcraftsman.com or 877-204-9961), but any 6" x 6" tile will work well. Purchase the tile before making its frame because tiles can vary in size from the stated dimension, and the sizes of all the wood parts depend on the size of the tile.

The tile sits in a $\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide rabbet cut on the inside edge of the completed frame, so the length of the rail from shoulder to shoulder should be $\frac{15}{16}$ " less than the width of the tile. When the frame is together, cutting the two $\frac{1}{2}$ " rabbets will leave room for the tile to drop in place with a little room around the edge. The tenons are 1" long, so the overall length of these pieces will be 2" more than the shoulder-to-shoulder distance.

The length of the stiles is the shoulder-to-shoulder distance of the rails plus two times the

width of the material. We used $2\frac{1}{4}$ "-wide material and our tile was 6" square. Our rails are $7\frac{1}{16}$ " long, and the stiles are $9\frac{9}{16}$ " long. After figuring the lengths, lay out the location of the tenons and hold the parts against each other to make sure the assembled frame will be the same length on all four sides.

The tenons are $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick and 1" wide, and are offset toward the outside of the frame to avoid interfering with the rabbet. After double-checking the layout, cut the joints and assemble the frame. Measure the exact thickness of the tile. It should be about $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and the depth of your rabbet should leave about $\frac{1}{16}$ " of the tile proud of the surface of the wood.

If the trivet frame were mitered, it would be easier to make the rabbets before assembly, but with mortise-and-tenon joinery, the rabbets on the long stiles need to stop before they reach the end. I cut the rabbets with a router after assembly with a $\frac{1}{2}$ "-wide rabbet bit, guided by a bearing below the cutter. This leaves the inside corners rounded, but these can be easily squared off with a sharp chisel.

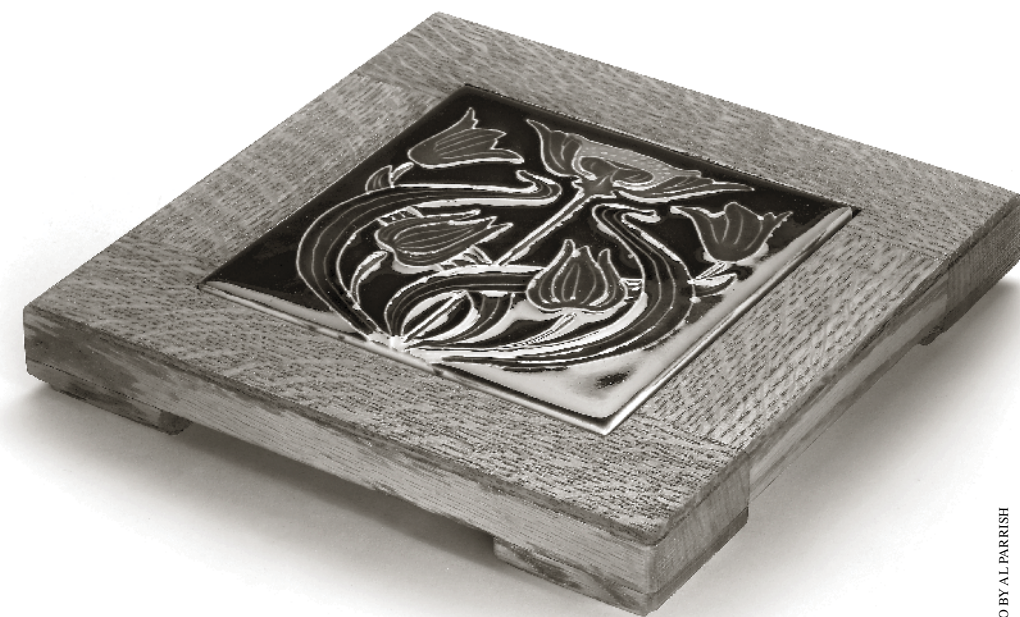
To do this, set the back of the chisel against the vertical edge of the rabbet, and rock the end of the chisel toward the corner. This will make a scoring cut that will maintain a straight line into the corner from each direction. When the scoring cuts meet at the corner, place the sharp edge of the chisel in the cut and remove the end-grain material first. Then chop the long grain, and pare the bottom smooth, using the surface of the rabbet made by the router as a guide for the back of the chisel.

The square foot blocks on each corner give the trivet some character, and make it easy to place your hand under the edge to pick it up. A cove cut

in the bottom edge improves the appearance of the feet. I made the cove cuts on the router table, routing one edge and both ends of a piece about 12" long (see photo below). Using the long piece lets me safely make the cuts using a square piece of scrap to back up the work piece. I wouldn't attempt to rout the edges of parts as small as the feet at their finished size.

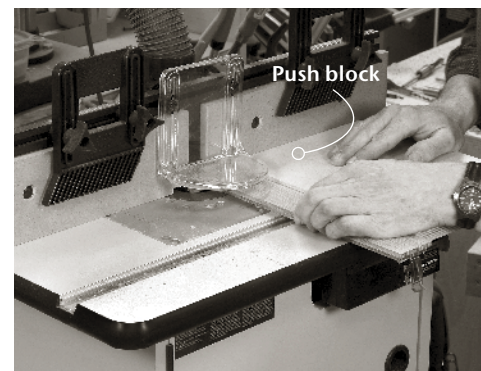
After the edges are done, cut the feet to size and glue them to the bottom of the stiles. Make sure the grain on the feet is oriented in the same direction as the grain in the stile. After the glue is dry, sand the top faces and edges; lightly chamfer the edges and finish. I used the finish formula described on page 31 in this issue, followed by two coats of water-based polyurethane for extra protection. **WM**

—Robert W. Lang

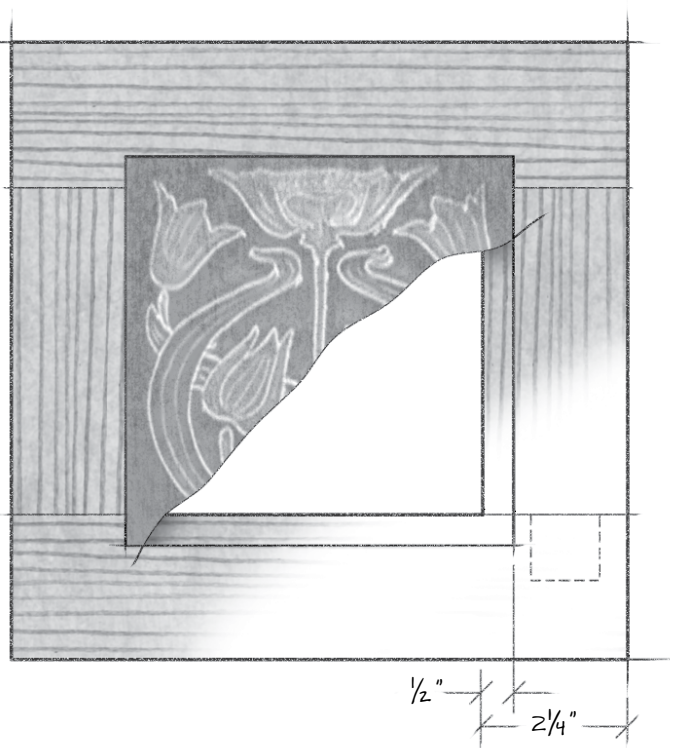


A reproduction tile is the perfect complement for quartersawn white oak in this small accent piece.

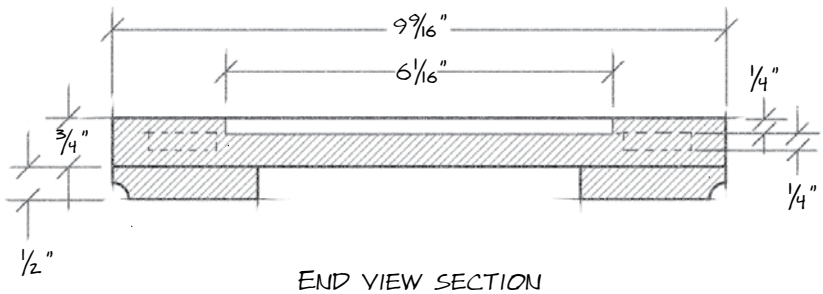
PHOTO BY AL PARRISH



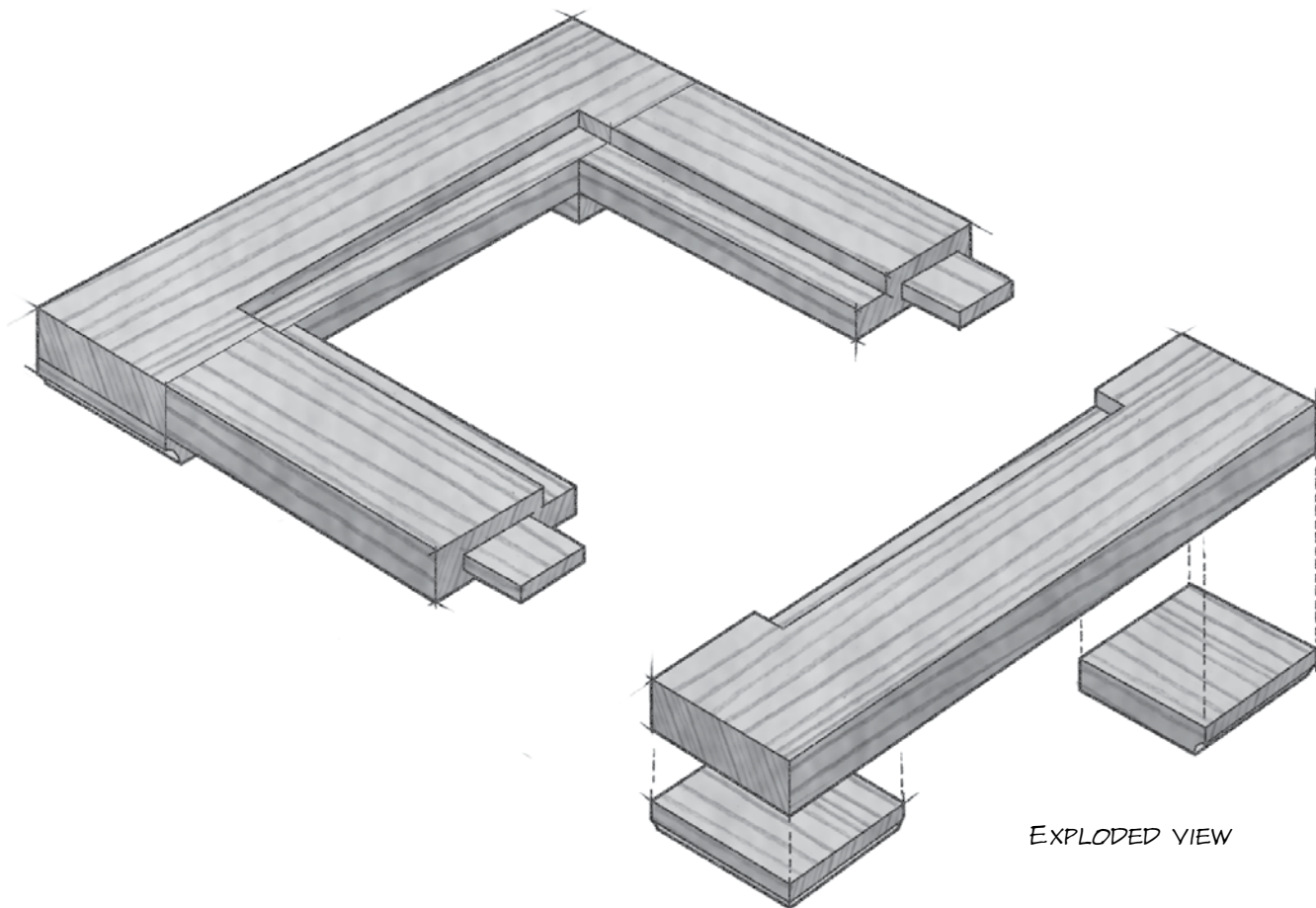
The decorative feet are too small to mill safely when cut to their finished size. Rout the profile in a piece about 1' long, using a square piece of scrap as a push block to move the narrow end of the stock across the router bit.



TOP VIEW



END VIEW SECTION



EXPLODED VIEW

TILE TRIVET

Tile Trivet

NO.	PART	SIZES (INCHES)			MATERIAL	NOTES
		T	W	L		
□ 2	Stiles	3/4	2 1/4	9 9/16	Oak	
□ 2	Rails	3/4	2 1/4	7 1/16	Oak	1" tenon both ends
□ 4	Feet	1/2	2 1/4	2 1/4	Oak	Coved outer edges