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BY CHRISTOPHER SCHWARZ, EDITOR

The Curious Case Of The Stanley Works

When I grew tired of my no-name block plane and chisels, I did what every red-blooded woodworker wants to do: I bought Stanley tools.

After all, Stanley built America and America built The Stanley Works. Stanley made excellent metallic tools. And it was so successful at business that it gobbled up most of its competitors.

But when I bought Stanleys, I didn't buy new ones. I bought a jack plane from the early 20th century and chisels from before World War II.

Why not new?

You know why. After the war, Stanley turned its attention

from building a full range of tools for the carpenter and serious woodworker to making everything for anyone. And I mean everything – garage door openers, sliding glass doors and laser levels. Stanley made almost everything you needed – except high-quality hand tools for woodworking.

This is the void that Lie-Nielsen Toolworks, Veritas, Clifton and other toolmakers filled during the last gasp of the 20th century. By the skin of their teeth, these small toolmakers (and others) made tools that improved upon the tools that The Stanley Works churned out during its early years.

It was these small-scale makers that ignited the renaissance we are now seeing in hand tools. But in the process they might have awakened a sleeping giant.

For Stanley has decided to again pursue the serious hand-tool user. Last year

it introduced a modern line of planes to compete with Lie-Nielsen, Clifton and Veritas.

The results? Mixed. These new planes don't equal the tools Stanley made before the war. The castings are rougher. The lever cap is lightweight. The handles are uncomfortable.

Yes, the planes work. But not as

well as old Stanley tools and new premium planes.

But in this issue of *Popular Woodworking Magazine* I review the new Stanley Sweet Heart chisels, and the results

are different. The chisels are based on venerable Stanley 720 and 750 designs, which are so perfect that Lie-Nielsen used these discarded patterns as the foundation for its chisels – my personal favorite.

After weeks of using the Stanley chisels, I'm torn. The chisels are not as perfect as the Lie-Nielsen versions, but they are excellent. Have woodworkers prodded Stanley into making great tools again? Will Stanley start gobbling up its competitors again?

Can Stanley keep improving its tools to the point where it was in 1939?

I say this with both fear and hope: We'll see. **PWM**




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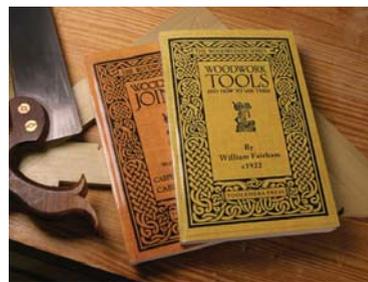
Safety is your responsibility. Manufacturers place safety devices on their equipment for a reason. In many photos you see in *Popular Woodworking Magazine*, these have been removed to provide clarity. In some cases we'll use an awkward body position so you can better see what's being demonstrated. Don't copy us. Think about each procedure you're going to perform beforehand.

Highly Recommended

If you want to start in hand work and hand joinery, it can be difficult to figure out where to begin. Here's a good starting point: inexpensive reprints of two classic books by William Fairham.

"Woodwork Tools" and "Woodwork Joints" are two excellent and underappreciated English texts on handwork. Now Toolemera Press has reprinted them and they are less than \$20 each. This is a steal. The reprints are excellent, but the content is even better. We like the books so much that we carry them in our store, or you can order them at shop.toolemera.com.

— Christopher Schwarz



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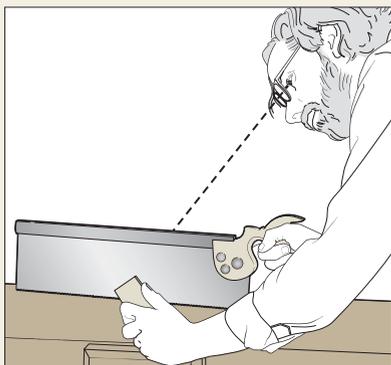
OIS is a trademark of Robert Bosch Tool Corporation. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective owners. *Maximum blade size for Dremel 6300 is 3" for segment blades and 1-1/8" L x 1-1/4" W.

Sawing for Lefties

In “How to Saw” (a post on his blog), Christopher Schwarz states that if you are left-handed, you should attempt to cut on the left side of the line when possible. But, on his saw-bench DVD, Christopher states that you should always position the waste toward you.

That seems contradictory to me because to position the waste toward me would have me sawing on the right side of the line. Am I missing something? It seems to me that it would be best to position the waste toward the bench in order to saw to the left of the line. Please clarify.

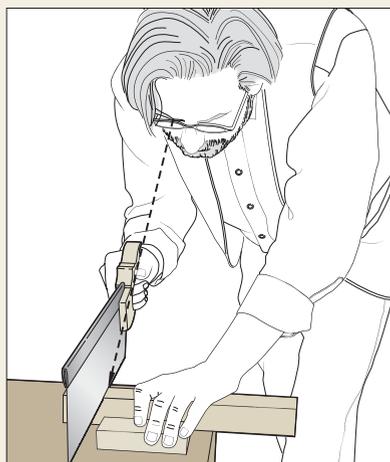
Duane Lindsey
via e-mail



Duane,
You raise a good point that I should have clarified. When I saw in the vise, I find I am more accurate with the waste to the front and with my saw on the left of the line. I need to ponder “why” this is so, but I think it has to do with the different body positions. When sawing in the vise (for a tenon cheek), my body is parallel to the bench. But when I saw using a bench hook, I (a right-hander) saw on the right of the line.

So that’s what I meant. Sorry for the confusion.

Christopher Schwarz, editor



with a number of the brands. Bartley’s dries considerably faster than the others, which causes some problems (which you have surely gotten used to) on larger surfaces. You may be able to recoat sooner, though. But after using all the brands, I actually liked using Bartley’s the least.

All the brands had one really critical downside: None is water-resistant. So I recommended coating with another finish (which it sounds like you’re doing), then coating over with the gel varnish at the end to produce the pleasing satin sheen, and dust- and brush-free results.

One more thing: There did appear to be a slight difference in the degree of gloss (shine). I applied seven coats of each brand, and the more I applied the more apparent the differences. Bartley’s and Old Masters seemed to be a little glossier than General Finishes and Woodkote.

So I guess if you were trying to find the exact same “look,” you should try to find someone who carries Old Masters, which is labeled “Gel Polyurethane.”

It’d be curious to hear how you apply the gel varnish.

Bob Flexner, contributing editor

Kids & Woodworking

I have a 5-year-old grandson who I’m trying to get started in woodworking. And like elsewhere, the schools here aren’t going to help.

I’m not an expert at which motor skills are available to pursue at what age, and perhaps in what sequence, and which tools might relate to a particular developmental stage. I do know the 5-year-old can navigate the Internet and find approved game sites on which to play. And on Wii he can beat teenage cousins in select games.

It’s a stretch to expect a child accustomed to such quick feedback to accept “exercises” for skill building, nor will he learn to use a hammer by straightening all the reclaimed nails in the coffee can as I did. (Yes, I’m that old.)

Lowe’s is trying to help by providing simple pre-cut projects for free (Sat-

Replacement for Gel Varnish

In my part-time work restoring antique furniture, I’ve been using Bartley’s “Wipe On Gel Varnish” (satin) as a top coat on most of the pieces I repair and refinish. Regrettably, this product is no longer being made (though I hear someone may bring it back into production). Is there a product on the market that in your opinion might give me the same results as the Bartley’s?

I hate to bother you with such a mundane request but I am running out of

my hoard of Bartley’s and may soon be getting desperate.

Ron Potter,
Forest City, Pennsylvania

Ron,
There are other brands of gel varnish, including Old Masters and General Finishes. Old Masters is sold in paint stores. General Finishes is sold in woodworking stores and catalogs. You may find “neutral” gel stain, also, which is gel varnish.

For an article on gel varnish I wrote for the December 2009 issue (#180), I did tests

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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"We learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself."

— Lloyd Alexander (1924-2007)
American author

urday morning kids' sessions) or for a modest sum when purchased off the shelf. The sessions do hold his interest, but there's not a lot of skill building going on there. Skill-building projects that provide reasonably quick feedback seem important for today's kids.

I think such a book would find a lot of fathers and grandfathers finding value in it. And we've got to get him trained since he will inherit a terrific shop. Lucky guy.

Do you have any suggestions?

Harlan Janes
Chocowinity, North Carolina

Harlan,
You are right that there isn't a lot of stuff out there for kids. With my girl, I use "Exercises in Wood-Working," which is a school text for older kids, but works fine with the younger ones as well. My little girl is 9.

Doug Stowe has devoted his life to teaching young kids to be woodworkers using the Sloyd system. He could definitely help you out. Read through his blogs on his school and such. That will give you lots of ideas (wisdomofhands.blogspot.com and dougstowe.com).

The Sloyd system is very interesting and probably should be revived. But how?

Christopher Schwarz, editor

Vise & Bench Base Problems

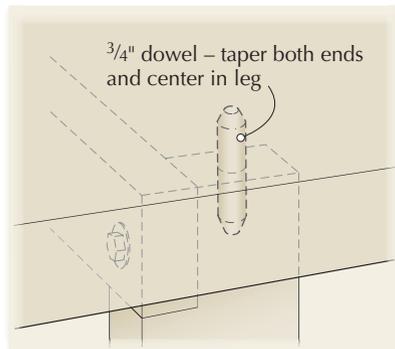
I am trying to retrofit a leg vise on my oddball workbench that I built when I first started years ago. My top, which is laminated plywood, is about 3" thick. The base is quite rough – a 2x4 construction of my own design. The top is attached to the base with angle brackets. I am finding that the force of the leg vise, when I hold small, narrow pieces that are not wider than the depth of the top

(so the leg vise pushes only on the top, not against the leg also), is pushing the top hard enough to offset it from the legs and that the legs are wracking so that they are no longer square. The result is that the top and the leg no longer line up. Do you think I just need to build a better base?

I want to use hem-fir from the home center (I live in the Pacific Northwest and yellow pine is out of the question). The dimensions of the stretchers, at 1⁵/₈" thick, are a bit awkward. If I use one piece of 2x lumber dried and machined in my shop, it will be about 1¹/₄". Is that too thin? But if I laminate two pieces, I am up to 2¹/₂".

Am I the only one who wonders about this type of thing? Any advice would be appreciated.

David Brown,
Spokane, Washington



David,
First, attempt to salvage your current workbench. Angle brackets work fine with some benches (I used them on the "24-hour Workbench" I built years ago). However, they don't play well with a leg vise because the vise will transfer the force of the chop to the front edge of the benchtop.

There's a simple solution: Join the top and base with a few 3/4"-diameter dowels. Some do this by drilling blind holes in the base and top, then dropping the top on the dowel. This will prevent the top from shifting.

As to using dimensional stock, I have found that 2x material will finish out at 1¹/₂" thick. That's thick enough for stretchers. Double up and that's thick enough for legs.

But before you start building a new base, try securing your existing top to your existing base to withstand the force of a leg vise.

Christopher Schwarz, editor

Ticking Stick Memories

In the early 1980s I worked in a boat shop where we used ticking sticks all the time for fitting bulkheads and similar items into the V-bottom of boats and other irregularly shaped spaces.

Through the wonders of social networking, I recently reconnected with a gal I worked with at the time. I had recently unearthed my 30-year-old, 1/4"-plywood scrap, fiberglass-coated ticking stick and sent her a picture of it saying, "Remember this?"

In response, she sent me the November issue of *Popular Woodworking Magazine* (#186) with the article on ticking sticks! We had formed a bond being the only two women in the shop. Careers and families took us to different sides of the Pacific, but we both still work with wood and are looking forward swapping some shop tips when we get together this spring. **PWM**

Jody Fergerstrom
Captain Cook, Hawaii

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Caddy for Your Tea, Governor?

BY GLEN D. HUEY

Use unconventional techniques to construct a traditional tea caddy.

England began to import tea about the middle of the 17th century. When first introduced, tea was expensive, so it was a drink affordable only to the wealthy. That, of course, was an invitation to smugglers who, during the next 100 years, drove down the cost to make tea available to the masses.

As the demand for tea increased, the need to store and protect the tea leaves also grew. By the mid-1800s, woodworkers were making wooden tea caddies of single-, double- or triple-compartmentalized boxes.

Traditionally, caddies are a study in veneer. The boxes are built in pine, oak or mahogany, then veneered with figured hardwoods and inlaid with intricate designs. While my caddy has figured hardwood and striking inlay, there is no veneer. This is how to accomplish similar results using methods that are much more simple.

Choose, But Choose Wisely

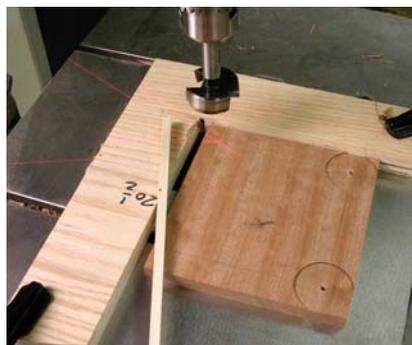
From the get-go, my inlay had to jump from the caddy. That meant no dyes or stains to mute the contrasting colors. I also wanted a mahogany-like color and good figure, so I chose quartersawn sapele for its strong stripe; the inlay is walnut and maple.

To begin, cut and size the four pieces that make up the box, as well as the caddy top. Before any machine work begins, establish the area for the bandings, both inlay and cross. Scribe lines $\frac{3}{4}$ " in along all four edges of the top.



Inlay outside the box. Think differently about inlay as you slice and fit fans – assembled from wedges – into recesses created at your drill press.

But because the caddy top sits on top of the top edge of the box (adding a $\frac{1}{4}$ " in height), only the bottom edges and the ends of the box sides are scribed at this setting. To scribe lines along the top edges of the box sides, adjust your cutting gauge from $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ ".



Proper spacing. A spacer, to compensate for the $\frac{1}{4}$ " added when the box top is attached, moves the box parts into the proper position.

Not by the Book

Preparing the panels for inlay is also not very traditional. Set up a drill press with a $1\frac{5}{8}$ " Forstner bit to cut the fan recesses. Create an L-shaped plywood fence to accurately align each fan location. Set the fence and panel so the bit is centered over the intersection of two $\frac{3}{4}$ " scribe lines. Clamp the fence in place, set the drilling depth to $\frac{1}{16}$ ", then cut the recesses at each corner.

The drill locations along the top edges change, so space the panel away from the fence using a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-square spacer set between the fence and your panel along the $\frac{1}{2}$ " scribe line.

To complete the recesses for the inlay, adjust your table saw to remove $\frac{1}{16}$ " of thickness from the show side of all parts, including the caddy top. Cut from center point to center point of the fan recesses – the top edge requires a blade height adjustment.

“A little inaccuracy saves a ton of explanation.”

— H. H. Munro (Saki) (1870-1916)
British author

Assemble the Box

The four main parts of the box are joined with 45°-mitered corners. The miters need to be accurate. Use a step-off block as shown at right to ensure a matching length after the cuts (as long as your original parts were also identical when sized).

With the blade back to vertical, plow a 1/4" x 1/4" groove in the box parts. Set the groove, into which the caddy bottom fits, 1/4" up from the bottom edge.

Measure the groove from beveled cut to beveled cut, then mill the bottom to size and thickness (leave room for expansion, if needed). Rabbet the four edges of the bottom so the resulting tongues fill the grooves with the bottom flush with the box.

Arrange the pieces so when folded together they form a box – alternate the short and long pieces. Make sure to align the top edges before joining each piece to the next with a short length of tape. With the tape in place, flip the unit so the inside of the miters are up, then apply a thin layer of glue to the bevels and allow it to soak into the end grain. After a few minutes, apply another layer of glue then fold the parts together as the tape acts as a hinge. Don't forget to slip the box bottom in place as you assemble the box. Once the box is folded together, add a piece of tape to the final corner and allow the glue to dry.

With the glue set, remove the tape then cut saw kerfs across the corners, as shown in the top right photo. The kerfs are angled to the corners, similar to the slope of dovetails (the degree of slope doesn't matter). When filled with thin stock milled for a tight fit, these veneer-keyed miters help secure the joint. Glue the veneer into the kerfs, then trim the pieces flush to the caddy.

Cut a 1/2" x 1/4" rabbet along all four edges of the top so that the field fits inside the box. The top is simply glued to the box. This is a cross-grain attachment, but there is no way around the problem – if the top were set into



Accurate lengths. It's important that all the parts maintain their length relationships. Use a step-off block held behind the blade center. You don't lose contact with the block until you're into the cut.



Thin reinforcement. The seldom-used veneer-keyed miters add tremendous strength to a mitered corner.



Be exact. Setting the saw blade at less than 9° leaves your section short of 90°, while a setting of more than 9° results in excess trimming.



Cut extra. Twenty fans are needed to complete the box, but as you're sure to lose a few in the next steps, extras should be cut.

grooves as is the bottom, there would be problems with the cross banding used on the top. (Less movement is one advantage of quartersawn wood.)

Wedges to Fans

Traditionally, corner fans are made from pieces of veneer. After reading Jameel Abraham's "Precision Inlay, Simple Tools" in the April 2011 issue (#189), I decided to make a length of fan inlay that is sliced as needed. It worked great.

Begin with a simple table saw jig, as shown in the photo above. Tip the blade to 9°. With a couple 7/8"-thick pieces of four-squared scrap – use contrasting colors such as maple and walnut – cut one end square at the 9° setting. Flip the stock face down, then align the cut so the resulting offcut is a perfect, 7/8"-tall triangle. (A mark on the jig helps align each cut better than a stop-block – the block tends to hold your offcut at the blade.) Make enough pieces to create a couple fan sections.

Arrange five pieces in an alternating pattern – I used maple for the two out-



There is a trick. Trimming the fans to shape is easy work, but don't cut directly at the line – sneak up on it.

ermost wedges. You're gluing end grain, so use plenty of glue as you assemble the fan inlay section. Arrange the wedges so the outer two pieces meet to form a tight point. Use rubber bands as clamps. Place bands at 1" intervals or the point end of your section will open as the glue dries. A dried fan section is then sliced by hand to produce individual fan inlays – keep the fan thickness at 3/32".

Set a compass to 13/16", place its pivot leg at the point of the fan then draw a quarter circle across the inlay. Next, trim the fans using a flat chisel in a rocking motion. Keep one corner of the chisel in contact with a sacrificial board

as you work to the line. Final smoothing can be done with a file.

The trimmed fans fit perfectly into the recesses created by the drill bit. Apply glue to the fan then affix the fan in position with a rub joint—a piece of blue tape across the fans helps secure the edges to keep them from lifting as the glue sets. Once the glue dries, trim the edges of the fans (if necessary) to align with the straightedges of the box.

Remaining Inlay

Because the diamonds on this 1/4"-wide, store-bought banding are tight end-to-end, it's more difficult to achieve a well-matched corner. Begin on the long sides of each panel. Center the inlay to the box and place a mark on the inside edge of the banding where it meets the edge of the panel. Looking at the reflection in the back of a shiny chisel allows you to make a near 45° cut without measuring each piece. Trim both ends then temporarily attach the banding with blue tape.

With the two long pieces set in position, slide a short section of the banding under the two trimmed ends and transfer the exact cut location with a pencil or marking knife. Match the designs for the best look.

As you finish fitting the banding to a panel, glue the pieces to the box. Apply glue to the banding pieces then use a

rub joint to secure the fit. Add pieces of tape to secure the bandings in position until the glue dries.

The cross banding that wraps the field just outside the inlay banding is cut from 2"-long pieces. Slice those pieces into 3/32"-thick veneer using your band saw then use a spindle sander to dial-in the thickness to 1/16". The number of pieces you need depends on the width of your stock at the start. There's no big expense here, so make sure you prepare enough material.

Score a cut line with your cutting gauge to establish the width of the cross banding, then make the cuts using a

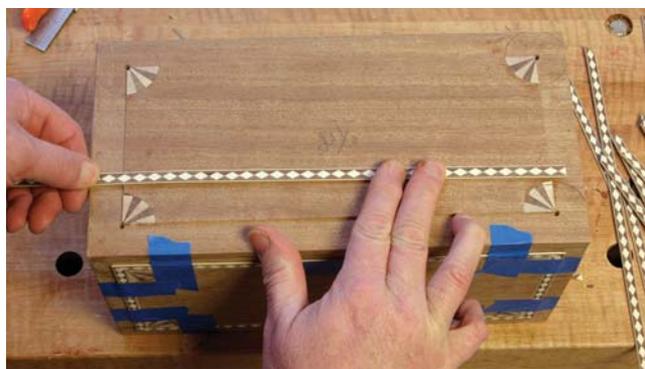
utility knife and straightedge. Fit and install the cross banding just as you did the inlay banding. Of course, the longer runs may be two or more butted pieces.

With the cross banding installed and the glue dry, bring all surfaces flush with a card scraper or by sanding. Next, install the last bit of decoration for the box, the tiger maple 1/8"-square pieces. These protect and hide the cross banding edges.

Use a router and rabbeting bit to cut the edges of the box. Rout and install the vertical corners of the box first, then move on to the horizontal corners. As

Position is pertinent.

Any inlay pieces should be centered to achieve the best look. It's not enough to simply run the inlay banding around the field.



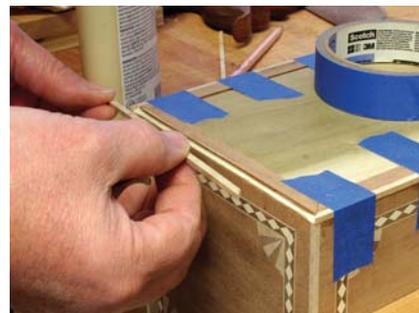
Easily aligned. Fine-tuning the position of the end inlay banding is simple when positioned under the mating pieces. Slide the piece until the best look is attained.



Modified thickness sander. To flatten and thickness the cross banding, squeeze the band-sawn pieces between a fence and the sanding drum of a spindle sander.



Take two. The cross banding fits to the caddy just as the inlay banding did: work the two longer sides, miter the ends, then mark the remaining pieces off of those.



Rabbet. Miter. Glue. Climb-cut the 1/8"-deep by 1/8"-wide rabbet to help alleviate any tear-out, then fit the maple corners to the box. Quality craftsmanship dictates mitered corners.

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you rout the horizontal corners, you cleanly trim the previously installed maple inlay. Miter the corners of the 1/8"-square stock and use tape to hold the inlay secure as the glue dries.

Hardware & Finish

Separate the lid from the box at the table saw. The cut line is positioned 1/4" below the uppermost fan inlays. Use a thin-kerf 7 1/4" saw blade to save as much of the box as possible. Adjust the fence so the box bottom rides along the fence allowing the top to be the offcut. Raise the blade to 9/16" and cut the two long sides of the box.

Next, cut and install a snugly fit filler into the kerf. Attach a clamp to the center of each of the long sides of the box then cut the two ends. As you make the cuts, the lid stays put. It's easy.

Install the 1/8"-square maple inlay along the cut lid and box edges. Miter the corners. Also, make and fit the interior partitions. The partitions are

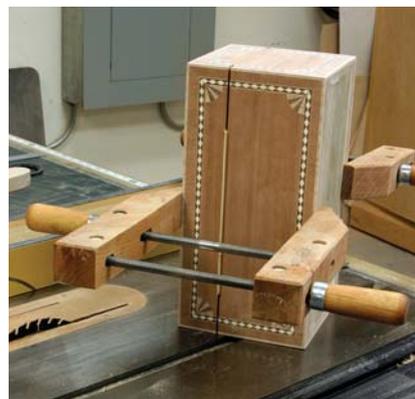
two long pieces that are cut to just fit inside the box and have centered dados to catch the middle divider. These pieces are slip-fit in the caddy.

Mill the material for the compartment lids, cut the 5/8" recess for the bandings then add the inlay banding and cross banding just as you did on the box. The lids are rabbeted so that the 1/4"-lips rest on the partition.

Sand the project to #180 grit after you fit the hinges and lock to the caddy. Your finish could be as simple as a few coats of an oil/varnish mixture, however, due to time constraints, I added a coat of oil to highlight the wood grain, followed by a couple coats of shellac and a layer of dull-rubbed effect lacquer.

The handle makes for easy transport and a velvet-wrapped plywood panel squeezed into the lid dresses up the interior.

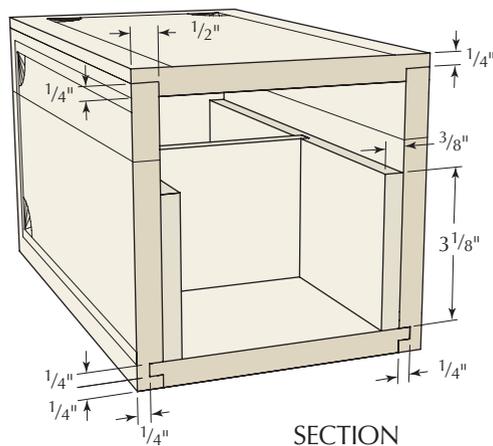
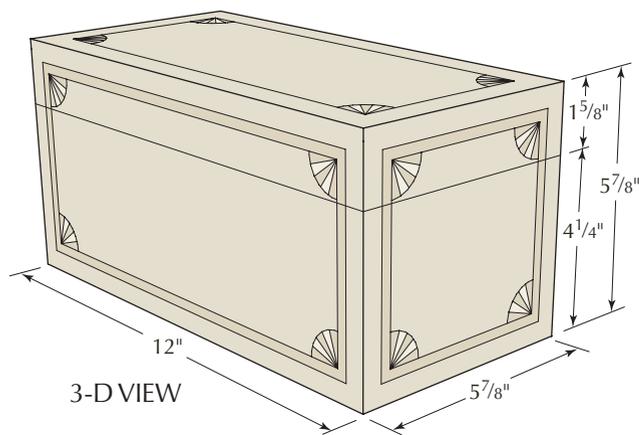
This box is a perfect example of how non-traditional techniques can lead to traditional-looking results. You don't



Fill the slot. To keep the caddy lid from springing free as it's separated from the box, fill in the thin kerf with spacers. Add a couple clamps to hold everything secure.

need a veneer press. While I doubt this box will caddy any tea, I'm sure you'll find a taker when it's complete – if you wish to part with it, that is. **PWM**

Glen is senior editor of this magazine and prefers coffee over tea. Contact him at 513-531-2690 x11293 or glen.huey@fwmedia.com.



Tea Caddy

NO.	ITEM	DIMENSIONS (INCHES)			MATERIAL
		T	W	L	
□ 2	Long sides	1/2	5 5/8	12	Sapele
□ 2	Short sides	1/2	5 5/8	5 7/8	Sapele
□ 1	Bottom	1/2	5 3/8	11 1/2	Poplar
□ 1	Top	1/2	5 7/8	12	Sapele
□ 2	Long partitions	3/8	3 1/8	11	Popular
□ 1	Center partition	3/8	3 1/8	4 3/8	Popular
□ 2	Compartment lids	1/2	4 3/4	5 3/8	Mahogany
□ 2	Fan blanks	7/8	6 1/2	12	Walnut/Maple *
□ 6	Inlay banding	1/16	1/4	36	Purchased
□ 10	Cross banding	1/16	6 1/2	2	Sapele
□ 12	Corner inlay	1/8	1/8	13	Maple

* One each of contrasting colors

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VIDEO: Watch as a fan is sliced, marked and trimmed for the tea caddy.

VIDEO: Watch Rob Millard create a traditional fan inlay using veneer.

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