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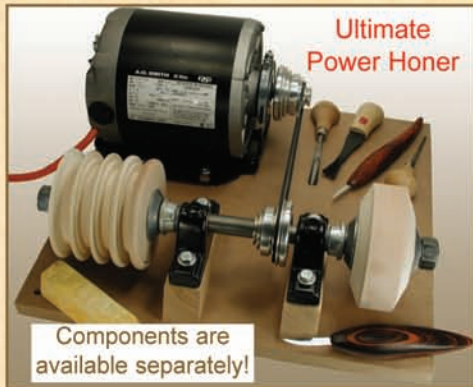
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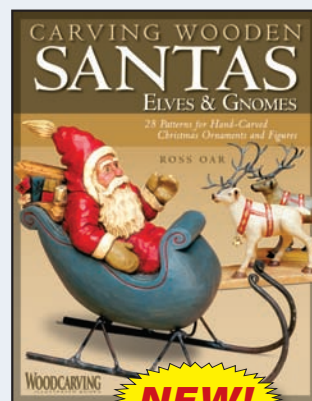


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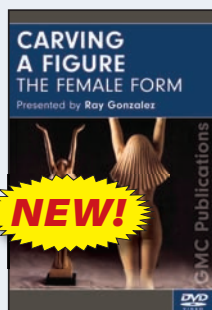
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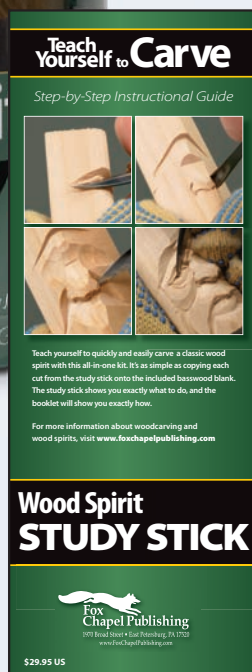


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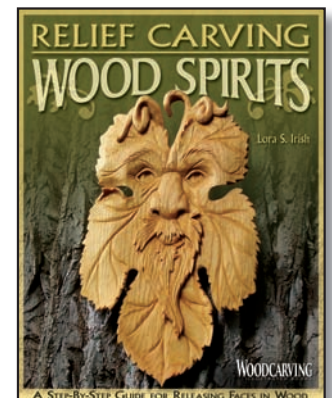


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Download six additional geometric designs not featured in the article.

➤ *Online Carving Gallery*

Teaching Kids to Carve, pg. 40

See a variety of pieces by award-winning carver Jim Calder.

➤ *Deep-relief Mantel Gallery*

Creating a Deep-relief Mantel, pg. 34

See more of Jerry Mifflin's detailed deep-relief mantels.

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Carving Styles

With every issue, we receive e-mails and letters from readers commenting on the mix of carving styles we've included. Some readers say we aren't featuring enough caricature projects, while others feel we cover too much caricature. Experienced carvers say we don't have enough advanced projects and others claim there aren't enough articles for

beginners. For every letter I receive asking for more of a particular type of project, there is another letter requesting the opposite.

Over the course of a year, you will find the mix pretty even. If there's a certain project or a specific artist you would like to see featured, please contact me. I do take readers' opinions and suggestions seriously, and I read every letter or e-mail that comes across my desk.

While it's natural to want articles that speak directly to your interests, we all need to be open to new learning experiences. By exploring new areas, you can discover different techniques that can be adapted to your own carving style. For example, a relief carver could pick up an excellent new finishing method from an article on chip carving. A carver who prefers in-the-round projects can find inspiration in a relief-carving pattern. In this issue's article on chip-carved coasters, Barry McKenzie's inspiration comes from quilt patterns!

Some issues may be a bit slanted to a particular style. This issue has several projects that will appeal to relief carvers, but all carvers can benefit from the articles if they approach them with a bit of creativity. Oak leaves from the mantel article would make wonderful accents for a wildlife carving. The letter-carving techniques demonstrated in the house sign article can be used to add a title to the base of your carving.

Don't be afraid to try new styles of carving. In this issue's installment of the First Cuts series, I was surprised to learn Jack Williams was an accomplished bird carver for many years before trying caricature carving. If he had never stepped outside of his comfort zone and taken that first class with Harold Enlow, would Jack still be carving birds today? You never know where your talents lie unless you explore the possibilities.

Not every article will appeal to every reader, but it's important to keep an open mind and browse through an article even if the subject isn't instantly appealing. You might find a golden nugget in the form of a tip or technique that will help you overcome your current carving challenge. You might even discover a new obsession!

Shannon Flowers

Shannon@FoxChapelPublishing.com

COWGIRL, Jack Williams' first caricature, is prominently displayed in Jack's home, serving as a reminder of a turning point in his carving career.



Photo by Jack A. Williams

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Woodcarving: A New Passion

I bought my father a woodcarving kit at a local art supply store. In the kit was an offer for a free magazine, which I sent in for my dad. After looking through the magazine, I knew I had to try woodcarving.

I've tried oil painting, watercolor painting, charcoal—all sorts of art mediums—without much success or sense of satisfaction. As soon as my father gave me his rotary power carver, I asked my husband for a piece of wood to carve. While carving that first project, I knew I was hooked.

I am now starting my fourth project and have become so engrossed in my new hobby that I am planning to have a workshop built for woodcarving. I ordered a year's subscription to your magazine and was inspired by the tea kettle clock in Summer 2007 (Issue 39). I modified it to produce a rooster clock.

Your magazine is excellent. I really enjoy it and can't wait for the next issue.

Gisele Arsenault
Warren, Ont., Canada



Barry McKenzie's chip-carved clock inspired a rooster clock.



FOX HUNT

R. C. Pascoe, of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Jack Meindl, of Manitowoc, Wis., are the winners drawn from the correct entries received for *WCI* Summer 2008 (Issue 43). The fox was on Page 29, in Dennis Thornton's carving.

If you find the fox in this issue, contact us and tell us the page number and location. Two readers randomly selected from all correct replies will receive a \$25 Fox Chapel Publishing gift certificate. Entries must be received by September 1, 2008, to be eligible. *NOTE: If his feet are on the "ground," the contest fox always faces left (other foxes in WCI don't count).*

Send your entry to *Woodcarving Illustrated*, Attn: Find the Fox, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, PA 17520, or enter online under the contests link at www.woodcarvingillustrated.com.

Carving Cakes

I recently found your magazine on my local bookstore shelf. I am not a woodcarver, but a chef who specializes in custom cakes and pastries. I wanted to pass on that although your patterns and tips pertain to the medium of wood, I have used them for my cake designs.

When one of my customers saw your magazine on my table and inquired why I would have it at a cake shop, I told her that anything you can carve in wood can be carved in chocolate. Your magazine is a great resource for people in any form of carving design. I will be a subscriber in the near future.

I want to share my appreciation and let you know that your magazine is very easy to understand, even for folks who do not carve wood.

Mark James
Custom Cakes By Mark
Edison, N.J.



Mark James uses woodcarving techniques to create custom cakes.



Set It Straight Photo Credit

The in-process photos in the Rugged Bear Bench article by Jeffrey Cooper, which appeared in *WCI* Summer 2008 (Issue 43), were taken by Craig Sander.

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Ice tube trays turn any bag into a carving tool bag.



Cardboard Templates

From Robert F. Newbegin, Sr., Deforest, Wis.

I use old cereal boxes to help transfer patterns to my carving blanks. The stiff cardboard acts as a template that can be used multiple times. Find the seam on the cereal box and carefully cut it open. Cut the cardboard to size to accommodate your pattern. You want the corner of the cereal box to align with the corner of your carving blank.



TOP TIP in our next issue will win a gift certificate from Buckeye Engraving. Send your tip to *Woodcarving Illustrated*, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, PA 17520, or e-mail to Duncan@FoxChapelPublishing.com.



1

Create the template. Copy the pattern and cut out the front and side views. Attach the paper pattern pieces to the cereal box and cut around the outline of the pattern.



2

Transfer the pattern. Tape the template on the blank. Trace around the inside of the template. Remove the template and cut along the lines to rough out the blank.

Tips from the Masters

Good reference material improves your final carving.

(Jack Williams, Page 45)

Use a stab cut to prevent splitting when chip carving.

(Barry McKenzie, Page 64)

Use different colors when basecoating a project to ensure even paint coverage.

(Francis S. Lestingi, Page 76)

Great Ideas for Our Santa Contest!

See page 18 for contest details.

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Wood Spirit

Neal Giummarra of Lincoln Park, N.J., was a taxidermy artist specializing in fish when he saw carvings of fish at a local show. He decided to give woodcarving a try and won a few awards for his carved fish. A wood spirit carved in a cypress knee inspired him to start working with found wood. This is one of several wood spirits Neal has carved.



Folk-art Birds

Walter Fox of Bancroft, Ont., Canada, focused his efforts on carving after retiring. He finds carving to be a relaxing and rewarding hobby. His carving talent has earned him invitations to display his work at various art shows. Walter prefers carving wildlife and birds.



Carved Chair

Harold Washburn of Westland, Mich., taught himself to carve less than two years ago. He embellished this chair with a hand-carved crest rail and flame-shaped finials. The chair is made out of red cedar and pine. Harold made the chair in his shop with hand tools and a spring pole lathe.

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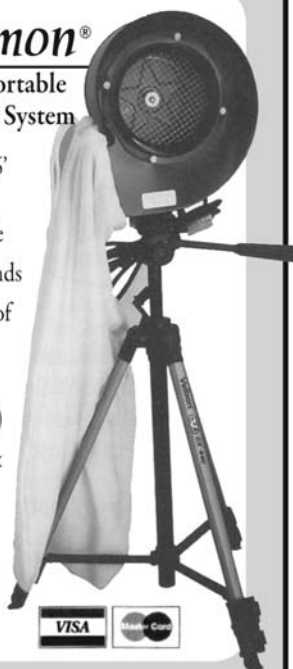
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Flexcut SK120 Scraper Set



Specifically designed for carvers, these tools make it easy to smooth rough surfaces

By Bob Duncan

Flexcut has designed a new set of scrapers especially for carvers. Scrapers are a popular finishing tool for woodworkers. The adaptations on these tools allow carvers to enjoy the same benefits. The tools fit into Flexcut's popular SK series of interchangeable handles.

The primary benefit of scrapers is the speed at which they remove wood and the smooth surface they produce. Most cabinet scrapers used by traditional woodworkers have square or gently curved edges, neither of which fit the irregular edges on carvings. The SK120 scrapers come in a variety of profiles that are ideal for these odd shapes.

In its simplest form, a scraper is a piece of hardened steel. A burnisher, made from an even harder piece of steel, is used to "roll" a wire edge or burr over one side of the scraper. The burr forms a sharp cutting edge that produces fine shavings and an extremely smooth surface.

Most cabinet scrapers are thin and can be flexed slightly to control the depth of cut. Some scrapers, such as the ones in a scraper plane, are thicker. The SK120 scrapers fall between the thickness of a scraper plane and a cabinet scraper. You do not need to flex the SK120 scrapers to control the depth of cut.

The harder the wood, the better scrapers work. Scrapers cut deeper in softer woods and the deep cuts often tear the wood. If the scraper cuts too deep, the fine cutting edge breaks away. With a traditional burr on a square edge, the SK120 scrapers work well with woods like cherry, walnut, and maple.

Dave Bennett of Flexcut suggests an alternative method for creating the wire edge when working with softer woods, such as basswood and mahogany. Instead of maintaining a square edge, Dave suggests filing the edges off at a 45° angle. The filing process creates a much larger burr. This burr resists breaking and makes a cleaner cut in the softer woods.

Unfortunately, the larger burr does not produce as smooth a final surface. I recommend using the scraper with the larger burr to remove the majority of the rough surface, then finishing the area with 220-grit sandpaper.



The various scraper shapes in the SK120 set fit the odd profiles of carvings well.

The scrapers come in a variety of profiles useful for most carving applications. If the profile doesn't quite fit, it is easy to change the shape of the scraper with a file or a diamond bit in a rotary power carver.

The scraper blades fit into all three SK style quick-connect handles. I prefer the SK103 power handle, which is 4½" long, making it easy to use the tools at any angle.

The SK120 six-piece carver scraper set is available for \$45.95. You will need one of the three quick-connect SK handles, which cost an additional \$13.95. The sets are available at most woodcarving suppliers or directly through Flexcut. To find a local retailer or to order direct, visit www.flexcut.com, 800-524-9077.

PL FIX 2-Part Wood Repair Kit

Henkel Consumer Adhesives Inc. has created a new polyurethane-based wood repair and filler. The resin and hardener are mixed together to create a light tan epoxy. The wood filler is thin enough to fit into small gaps and cracks, but thick enough that you can mold it. Unlike some other wood fillers, PL FIX doesn't shrink or crack.

PL FIX cuts easily with a chisel or gouge and sands well, but is a bit tough to cut cleanly with a knife. It has no grain and cannot be stained, so use this product on a project you plan on painting.

Available at Lowe's stores, each PL Fix 2-Part Repair Kit contains one 250-gram tube of resin and one 65-gram tube of hardener for \$18.99.



PL FIX polyurethane epoxy can be used to fill cracks or voids in a carving.

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Harvest Maiden

Flowing lines and multiple textures are ideal for many types of relief carving

By Lora S. Irish

This charming nostalgic design is the perfect embellishment for a bread box. The image makes a stunning presentation when carved in a light wood, such as basswood or butternut, and can be highlighted with subtle colors or finished naturally.

Beginners may find the delicate ribbons and flowing lines difficult to render as a traditional relief carving. The design can be adapted to your skill level and translates well as a simple line carving. It also works well for an intaglio carving, where the subject is recessed into the background.

As with most relief-carving patterns, The Harvest Maiden can also be woodburned or adapted as a free-form chip-carving pattern.



SPECIAL SOURCES:

For more patterns from Lora S. Irish, visit her Website at www.carvingpatterns.com. It features free patterns and patterns for purchase, as well as helpful carving advice. Please note that the patterns are only available online.

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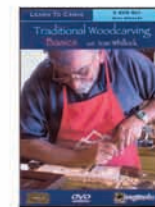
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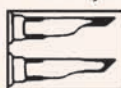
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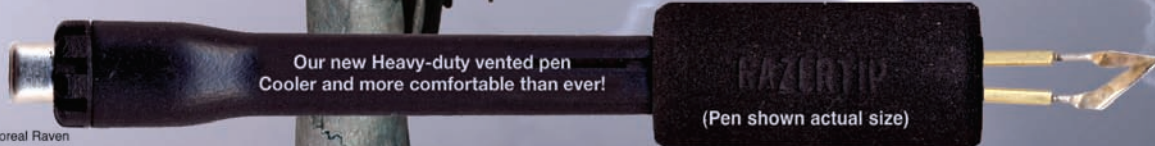


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Carving a New Life for Old Furniture



REJUVENATED: Before and after photos show how relief carving adds value to this old chair.

Traditional relief carving adds value to flea market finds

By Dennis Zongker

Many carvers lack the equipment necessary to produce custom-made furniture. But you can create heirloom-quality furniture by embellishing existing furniture with a traditional design.

Be on the lookout for old chairs, tables, and chests at estate sales and flea markets. You can easily increase the value of these items by enhancing them with a carving. Before you take chisel to wood, make sure you do not have an authentic antique. Look for names, dates, or other signs that could indicate the piece of furniture is an antique with real value.

Look for a piece that has plenty of wood thick enough to carve. Ideally, you want clean straight wood with plenty of space for your design.

Most furniture I run into is made from oak, walnut, cherry, birch, maple, or beech. Maple and beech are the hardest common woods. For most woods, I sharpen my tools to a 25° angle, but I use a 28° angle for maple and beech.

After you've located the right piece of furniture to carve, choose a design. This pattern, called "Nine-Point Shell with Flowers and Leaves," comes from *Classic Carving Patterns* by Lora S. Irish. Make a photocopy and draw two border lines around the pattern with a colored pencil. The first line should be $\frac{1}{8}$ " outside the pattern. Draw the second line $\frac{1}{4}$ " outside of the first line. Cut along the second line with scissors to reduce the pattern to a workable size.



2

Outline the elements. Match the curves on the pattern with various gouge sizes and sweeps. Align the gouge with the pattern line, hold the gouge perpendicular to the wood, and tap it with a mallet to make a $\frac{1}{16}$ "-deep stop cut. After outlining one area, hold the gouge at a 60° angle on the first colored line, and cut up to the stop cut you just made.



Today's mass-produced furniture with factory-stamped designs (inset) falls short of replicating a rich hand-carved look (above).



1

Transfer the pattern to the chair. Draw a line through the center of the pattern and in the center of the area to be carved. Apply spray adhesive to the back of the pattern, align the centerlines, and press it in place. Place clamping blocks on the rails and clamp the chair to your workbench. I use small foam pads under the back rest and the seat rail.



3

Rough in the shell. Make a stop cut perpendicular to the chair along the rays and perimeter of the shell. Position the gouge $\frac{1}{8}$ " away from the stop cut, hold the gouge at a 60° angle, and cut up to the stop cut. Cut up to the stop cut from both sides to create a V-shaped groove along the rays. Pay attention to the curve of the individual rays.



4

Carve the bottom of the shell. The area at the base of the shell will end up $\frac{3}{8}$ " deep. Stop-cut along the scrolls at the bottom of the shell. Starting about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way up the shell, carve up to the stop cuts with an 8mm #3 gouge and an 8mm #2 gouge. Don't worry about carving away the rays of the fan; the ray details will be carved again in step 5.



5

Carve the inner shell. Redraw the rays at the bottom of the shell. Recarve the V-grooves along the bottom of the rays using the techniques explained in step 3. The grooves along the rays should be $\frac{1}{16}$ " deep at the bottom of the shell and $\frac{3}{16}$ " deep at the top of the shell. Soften the edges of the cuts between the rays and around the perimeter of the shell.



6

Round the shell. Turn the gouges upside down to add a slight radius to the shell between each ray. Use an 8mm #3 gouge for the wide areas and a 3mm #3 gouge for the small areas. Add a concave radius to the top of the shell with an 8mm #3 gouge. This gives the shell more of a 3-D look and adds some interesting shadows to the carving when the chair is upright.



7

Shape the scrolls. Stop-cut around the radius of the scrolls. Start with the smallest radius in the center of the scrolls. Shape the scrolls starting just next to the small circles in the middle, which are the highest point of the scrolls. Taper the scrolls down gradually until the end of the scrolls are $\frac{3}{32}$ " deep.



8

Carve the details on the scrolls. Taper the outer corners of the scrolls down. It should look like the spiral and the ball at the end of the spiral wrap over the rest of the scroll. Undercut the inside corner of the balls with a 4mm #7 gouge. Round the balls with the same gouge held upside down.



9

Round over the scrolls. Hold an 8mm #2 gouge upside down to round the area where the left and right scrolls meet. Round the rest of the scrolls, using an 8mm #3 gouge, a 5mm #5 gouge, and a 4mm #7 gouge, matching the size and sweep of the tool to the shape of the scroll.



10

Carve the flower buds and petals. Stop-cut around the outline of the flowers with a 4mm #7 gouge. Cut up to the stop cuts around the perimeter of the flowers using the technique explained in step 2. Hold the gouge at a 45° angle as you carve up to the stop cut around the center flower buds.



11

Carve the flower stems. Stop-cut around the stems and cut up to the stop cut using the techniques explained in step 2. Round over the stems with a 3mm #3 gouge held upside down. Work toward smooth flowing stems.



13

Add the veins. Draw in the leaf veins with a pencil. Follow the flow of the leaves; don't just draw a straight line. Follow along the lines with a 3mm 45° V-tool. Carve the veins 1/32" deep. Remove any remaining paper from the pattern. Use mineral spirits to remove any remaining adhesive.



12

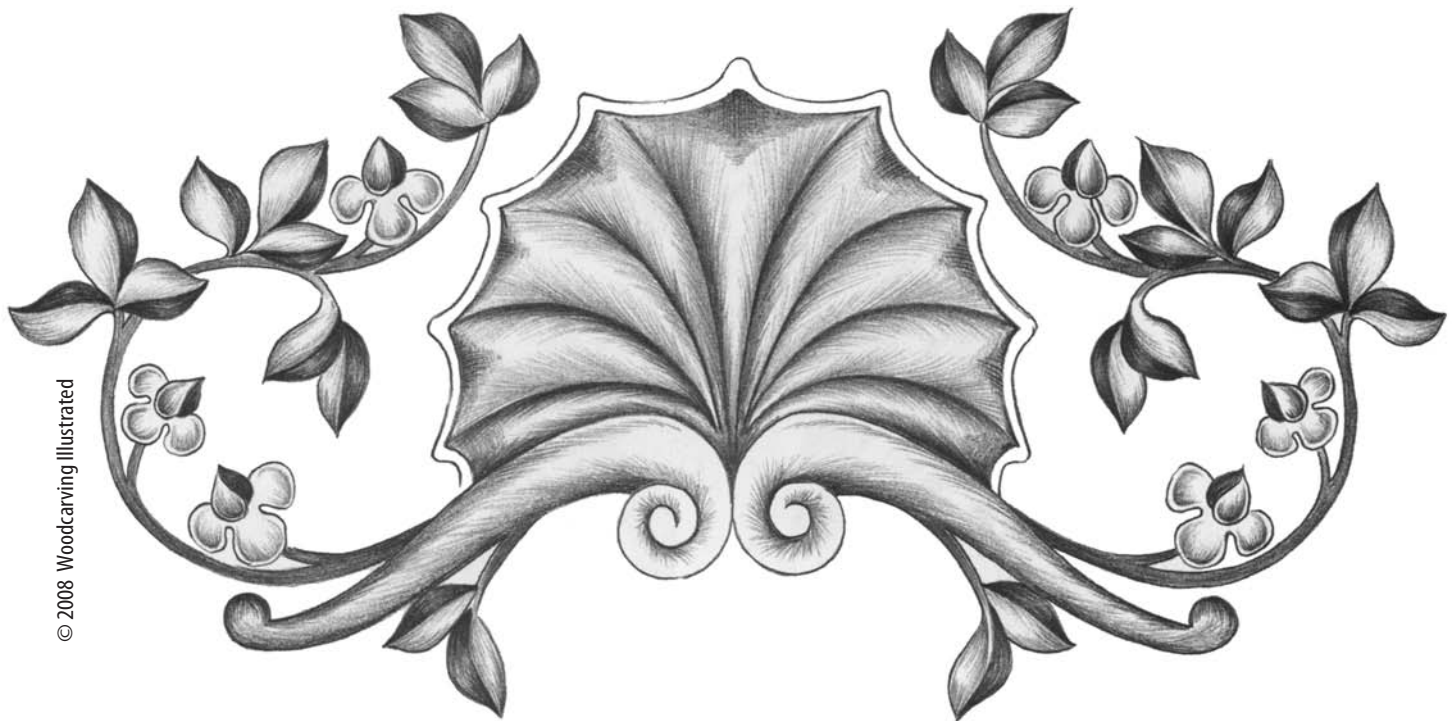
Rough out the leaves. Outline the leaves using the techniques explained in step 2. Use your own judgment to add dips and bulges to the leaves. This makes the leaves look natural. Try to make each leaf a little different.



14

Apply a final finish. Lightly sand the carving and clean up any fuzzies from tight corners with small wood files. Apply an oil finish such as Danish oil. If you are not refinishing the entire piece of furniture, match the finish of the newly carved section to the existing furniture as closely as possible.

Nine-point shell with flowers and leaves pattern



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materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- Furniture of choice
- Spray adhesive
- Oil finish of choice

TOOLS:

Gouge profiles refer to the Pfeil list. Increase the number by one for a close approximate on the Sheffield List.

- 3mm #9 gouge
- 4mm #7 gouge

- 8mm #2 gouge
- #3 gouges: 3mm, 5mm, 8mm, and 12mm
- #5 gouges: 5mm and 12mm
- 3mm 45° V-tool
- Pencils (I use colored pencils to make the lines stand out)
- Small wood files (to remove fuzzies from tight corners)
- Brush and rags (to apply oil finish)



Pattern reprinted from *Classic Carving Patterns* with permission from Lora S. Irish. *Classic Carving Patterns* is available for \$19.95 (+ \$3.50 s&h) from Fox Chapel Publishing, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, Pa., 17520, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com, 800-457-9112. For additional patterns from Lora S. Irish, visit her Website at www.carvingpatterns.com.

Dennis Zongker's Custom-carved Furniture

Dennis Zongker and his brother, Dan, opened Zongkers Custom Furniture in 1986. The goal of the business was to bring back old-world craftsmanship in custom furniture. During the early years of the business, Dennis determined that adding carving to the custom furniture would set them apart from similar companies.

After carving a few projects to build his skills, Dennis started accepting commission work. Carvings range from egg-and-dart molding to intricate scrolled feet and acanthus leaf carvings.

Dennis has completed custom carvings on 64 different pieces of furniture, including dining tables, bathroom vanities, beds, end tables, and game tables. For more of his work, visit www.zongkers.com.



Chris Pye Named WCI Woodcarver of the Year

British master carver honored for his contributions to art

By Bob Duncan

Chris Pye is a well-known name in the carving community. In addition to his comprehensive books and articles, Chris has carved pieces for the Royal Family of Great Britain. Chris shares his knowledge with others and is one of the key players responsible for teaching traditional carving techniques to aspiring artists.

"Carvers who win WCI's coveted *Woodcarver of the Year* award must meet a tough combination of requirements," Alan Giagnocavo, publisher of WCI said. "Firstly, the quality of their pieces must show a devotion to excellence. Secondly, they must show a generosity of spirit in teaching others to pass the craft along. Finally, they must leverage their skills in carving and teaching even further through their writings. Chris Pye passes all of these tests with flying colors, making us proud, on behalf of our readers, to name him 2008's winner."

THE FISHMAN OF CLARE STREET is carved from oak.



"I always feel that I'm only just warming up," Chris said. "Carving is real. A bit of metal, a bit of tree; it couldn't be any simpler. An Egyptian carver 4,500 years ago would understand my workshop."

Humble words from the artist who carves trophies and gifts for Great Britain's royal family. His Royal Highness, Prince Charles, has commissioned Chris to carve trophies for various events. When Prince Charles married the Duchess

of Cornwall, the staff at Clarence House, the London residence of the Prince of Wales, commissioned Chris to carve a breakfast table rosebowl for the couple.

Chris' work appears in private residences, cathedrals, and public buildings all over the world. But he never touched a chisel or gouge until he was 23 years old. Chris was always artistic, but he focused on science and math in school. It was a natural progression for him to follow this focus and he ended up in medical school. After four years, in 1975, he decided medical school wasn't for him. Although he had never held a chisel, he decided to take a class with master carver Gino Masero.

"I spent a weekend with Gino and took to carving like a duck to water," Chris said. "I just knew how to do things before Gino explained them to me. So I got a plank of wood, a bench, and tools and just did it."

Chris set up a carving shop in an upstairs room in a Victorian house. He worked three days a week in an office-setting and carved the other days. Chris eventually moved his shop to a small storefront. He put his carvings in the store's windows and people bought them.

"People started asking me to carve things and I never said no," Chris said.

While Chris continued to take on commissions, Gino evolved into a mentor for Chris, and influences Chris' work to this day. But Chris says he is a self-taught carver.

"All carvers are self-taught," Chris said. "No one can do it for us. Gino started me in the right direction. It was like osmosis; I just absorbed the information."





"A bit of metal, a bit of tree;
it couldn't be any simpler.
An Egyptian carver 4,500 years
ago would understand
my workshop."

CLASSIC DETAILS: A close-up photo of a
headboard carved from lime wood.



NATURE'S FRIEND:
A green man
carved from elm.

Chris gave up carving twice when times were slow. But he came back each time.

"There's something about carving when it's at its best," Chris said. "It's an absolute joy. Everything is focused on the cutting edge of the tool. The edge is attached to the tool; the tool is attached to my hand, my body, the floor. All my thoughts and feelings are focused on the activity of carving. It's a real buzz."

"Carving is therapeutic," Chris said. "It's meditational at its best. You are very focused on what you are doing at each moment."

In 2003, Chris was inducted into the Master Carvers Association, the group of professional carvers in Great Britain.

"They are world-class carvers," Chris said. "You must be elected into the association. You submit work and it is judged by your peers. There are no boxes they can tick and decide you are good enough. These people just know what fine carving is when they see it."

LIME WOOD SHIRT:
Chris captures the
delicate folds and
wrinkles perfectly
in this life-size
carving.



Becoming a member of the association was important for Chris.

"I never felt I could call myself a master without becoming a part of the Master Carvers Association," he said.

Chris got his start as an author when the British magazine *Woodcarving* was launched. The magazine's editor contacted Chris and asked him to write an article.

"When (the editor) got the article, he said it was exemplary," Chris said. "He didn't need to alter anything. I didn't know I could do that."

Chris was able to write magazine articles quickly and he enjoyed writing them. After publishing a few articles, he started talking to the editors about writing a book on woodcarving tools.

"Every carving book at the time had a tiny bit about tools," Chris said. "But for me, it's always been the tools. There is no carving without the tools, and the cutting edge of the tool is the focus of what you are doing. Knowledge about tools is crucial."

"So I wrote *Woodcarving Tools, Materials & Equipment* hoping that no one would ask me about tools again," Chris added with a laugh. "It didn't work."

In all, Chris has written eight books, and produced three DVDs with Rob Cosman. He has also written a host of articles for *Woodcarving Illustrated* and *Woodcarving* magazines.



CLASSIC LETTERING: Carved and gilded lettering
is a classic example of traditional carving.

In addition to writing, Chris has taught hundreds of people how to carve. His first taste of teaching was instructing evening classes at a local technical college. The students did well and Chris really enjoyed it. Currently, Chris offers mainly one-on-one instruction at his home studio. He does teach a few classes each year at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, Me., www.woodschoool.org.

“Chris enriches the lives of all of the students he comes into contact with,” according to Peter Korn, executive director of the center. “Chris has been teaching at the center for more than a decade. Every year, we offer intermediate and advanced classes with Chris. Most of these students have studied with Chris in the past and want to come back and study again.

“Chris is very humorous,” Peter added. “He has dry British humor. He is warm and encouraging. He communicates very clearly, especially when it comes to getting across small details.”

Chris finds his talents for carving, writing, and teaching enhance each other.

“All three of my passions feed off each other,” Chris said. “I learn more when I teach, which helps my writing and my carving. Writing helps me to explain things better when I’m teaching and forces me to examine why I do what I do when I carve. The more I carve, the better I can explain, both in writing and in front of a class.”

In recent years, Chris has also created a comprehensive Website and offers a variety of information online. He sends out a monthly e-mail newsletter offering free carving advice and information.

“It’s fascinating,” Chris said. “I didn’t start the Website to evangelize woodcarving. It picked up speed on its own.”

Chris has 6,500 subscribers to his e-mail newsletter, and the e-books posted on his Website have been downloaded more than 120,000 times.

Lora S. Irish, the 2007 Woodcarver of the Year and a popular author, said Chris has a knack for communicating well. Lora and Chris worked together with Shawn Cipa on the book *Wood Spirits and Green Men*.

“The way he interprets the design, Chris makes it easy to share and teach that work to the hobbyist,” Lora said. “He has brought the carving hobby a new and refreshing look at classic historical carvings. He has opened up a range of carving that most hobbyists would never try.

“Chris expresses himself very well in his written tutorials,” Lora continued. “That is a skill few people have—to express in words what you are doing so someone else can verbally see exactly what you are doing and can copy you.”

Chris’ dedication to the art is evident. He continues to push the boundaries of his own skills and works diligently to promote the traditions of classic woodcarving. Chris continues to inspire and teach others by sharing his knowledge through books, articles, videos, and classes, as well as his Website and e-newsletter. His love of woodcarving, and desire to nurture that love in others, earns him the well-deserved title of 2008 *Woodcarving Illustrated* Woodcarver of the Year.

INTRICATE FLOWERS:
A view of the details on a headboard carved from lime wood.



Align the Grain for Impressive Carvings

Grain direction strengthens and accents a carving

By Everett Ellenwood

Editor's Note: Ev Ellenwood's new book, The Complete Book of Woodcarving, covers everything from tools and sharpening, to basic cuts and projects. The following information is a small sample of the wealth of information Ev shares with readers in his thorough guide to carving wood.

Grain can either accent your carving or weaken it considerably, so it is important to pay attention to the grain when planning a carving.

Under a microscope, the cross section of a tree looks like the end of a large bundle of straws. These straws are the vessels that carry water and minerals from the roots to the crown. Collectively, the arrangement of these vessels is referred to as the grain of the wood. Straight grain, spiral grain, coarse grain, and fine grain all refer to what we see when we look at a piece of wood.

Carvings can be laid out so the wood grain enhances the carving. Notice how the grain lines match the natural flow of the face.





Having the grain balanced on the face of a carving makes it more pleasing to the eye. Notice how the grain sets off the nose of the cat.

How grain affects carving

For carvers, grain is most significant in describing how you work with wood. It affects every cut you make. For example, if a knife is allowed to go between these vessels, the fibers that make up the vessel walls will tear apart, and the wood will split. This is called “splitting with the grain” and can cause you to lose control of the cut and easily ruin a carving in progress. Make sure every cut you make with your knife or gouge is cutting across the vessels of the wood, not between them. The following terms are common ways carvers refer to methods of working with grain:

Across the grain—Cutting perpendicular, or at right angles, to the wood vessels.

With the grain—Cutting parallel to the wood vessels.

Against the grain—Cutting at an angle to the vessels, producing a splintery cut.

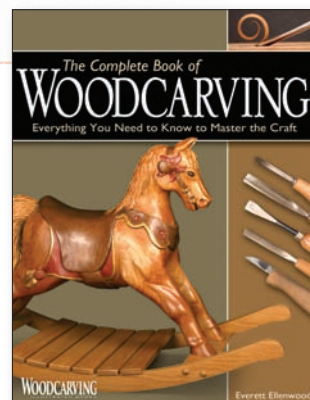
Into the grain—Cutting between the vessels.

Splitting with the grain—Tearing of the wood, which normally occurs when you cut between the vessels.

further reading

The Complete Book of Woodcarving

Brimming with expert instruction and nine attractive projects, you'll learn all about carving styles, techniques, tools, wood, and much more in Ev Ellenwood's new book.



Available for \$27.95 + \$3.50 s&h (parcel post) from Fox Chapel Publishing, 800-457-9112, 1970 Broad Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com, or check your local retailer. For an autographed copy, contact Ev at www.ellenwoodarts.com or 507-289-2616.

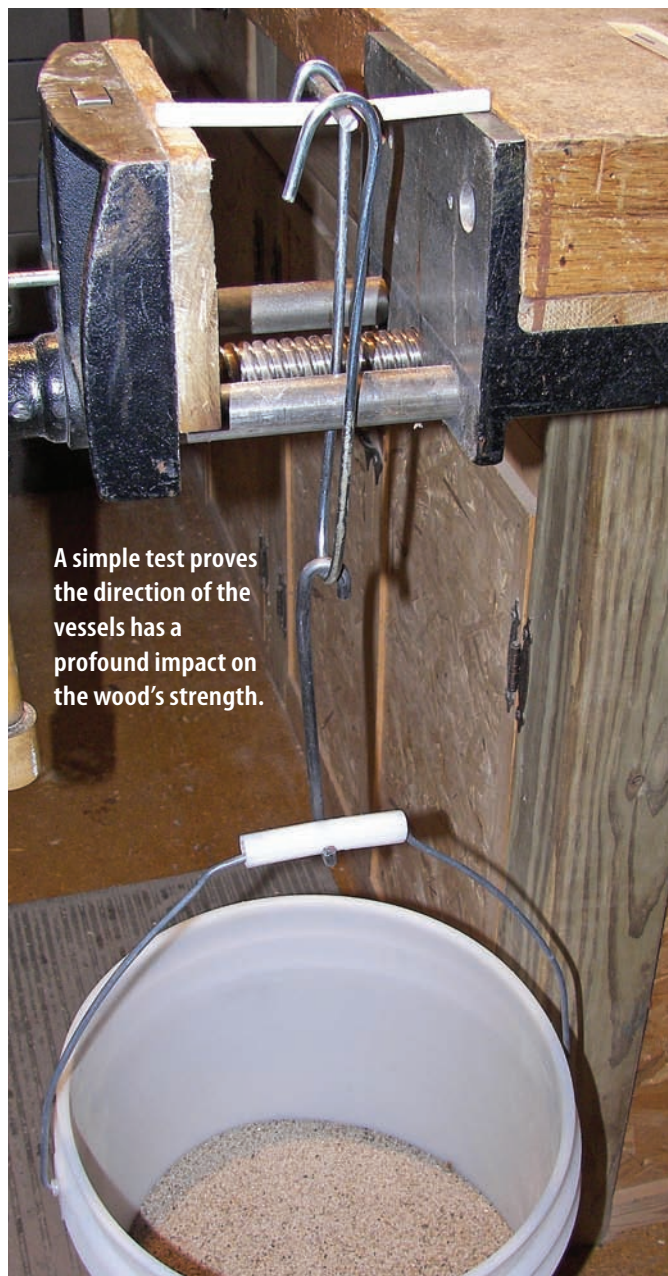
How grain affects strength

In addition to affecting how the wood reacts to tools, grain affects the strength of the wood.

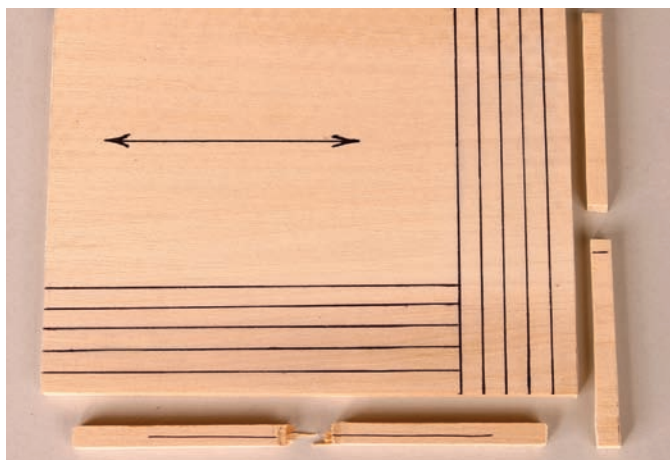
To show how grain direction influences the layout of a carving, I conducted an experiment. I cut $\frac{1}{4}$ "-wide pieces from a piece of $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick board. The arrow on each piece shows the direction of the wood grain. The pieces from the top of the board are composed of short vessels lying next to one another. The pieces from the side of the board have all of the vessels running the full length of each piece. (Remember, vessels form the grain in the wood.)

The three pieces with short vessels running through them were my first test group; the three pieces with long vessels were my second test group. I placed a metal bar across the test piece of wood and attached a hanger to the metal bar and to a container. I added sand to the container until the test piece broke. The hanger, pail, and sand used to break each test piece was weighed, and an average for each group was calculated to see how much weight it took to break each piece of wood. The short-vessel pieces averaged 2 pounds, 13 ounces before they broke. The long-vessel pieces averaged 30 pounds, 11 ounces before they broke, producing a splintered end.

From my results, we can deduce the following: On the pieces with short vessels, the fibers that make up the vessel walls are very short (meaning the grain is running up and down), so they split apart from one another under very little stress. The pieces with long vessels have the grain running the full length of the piece, so each of the fibers that make up the vessel walls had to physically tear before the piece broke. This physical structure is what makes these long-vessel pieces very strong.



A simple test proves the direction of the vessels has a profound impact on the wood's strength.



Keep in mind the way long and short vessels run through the wood affects the strength of the piece of wood.



The pieces with short vessels split under very little stress. The pieces with long vessels broke under much more stress.

Through this experiment, you can see how important it is to lay out a project so the wood grain runs the length of the most fragile area to give it maximum strength. Not all carvings will work out so nicely. For example, in this carving of a dog, the wood grain runs parallel through the head, body, tail, and the top part of the raised leg, leaving the area below the knee (where the short vessels run) as one of the most fragile parts of the dog. To move this fragile part away from the normal viewing area, I turned the head of the dog so it looks away from that side. The leg that is up is to the back of the carving and is less likely to get bumped and broken.



The most fragile part of this carved dog is the tail. To give it strength, I laid out the carving so the grain ran parallel through the tail.



The raised leg posed another fragile area.



About the Author

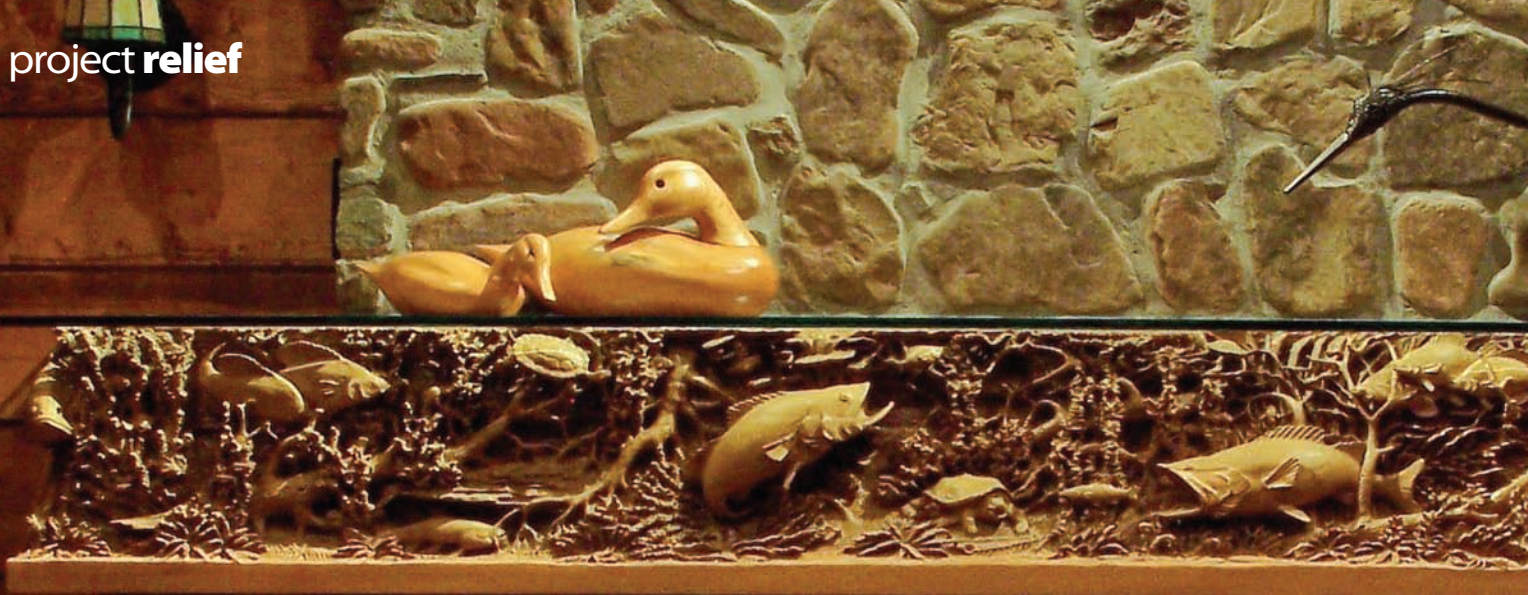
Everett Ellenwood is a well-known carving instructor and author. He also produced DVDs on carving and sharpening. For more of his work, visit www.ellenwoodarts.com.



To make the golf club shaft, I split a piece of wood from a straight-grained scrap piece of wood and then formed it into the shaft.

Maximizing the Strength of Thin Wood

If you want maximum strength in a thin piece of wood, split it with the grain. This procedure ensures all of the vessels are aligned and running parallel to one another, which gives maximum strength to the piece of wood. This method is called a controlled split. To achieve this, select a piece of wood that has straight grain. Clamp the piece and split it using an old knife or a gouge with a shallow sweep. Move the tool over slightly more than the thickness of the piece you want the long vessels running through. Split this off. The piece you split off will have long vessels running through the entire piece, giving it maximum strength.



Creating a Deep-relief Mantel

Power carve individual panels for a full-size mantel

By Jerry Mifflin

A hand-carved mantel adds instant value to your home. Many carvers aspire to carving their own mantel, but don't feel they are ready to undertake the challenge. By approaching the mantel as individual panels with a repeating design, the project is broken down into chunks and becomes more manageable. The traditional oak leaf design can be used to embellish a variety of other projects, such as a mirror frame, door topper, or hope chest.

I use actual leaves from my backyard to create the pattern and then separate the pattern into five separate levels or layers based on the depth of the cuts. Each layer is separated by $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Shade the leaves in the different layers to assist you as you rough them out. Work from

the lowest level of the carving to the highest level in each stage. The acorns are not carved until all the layers of leaves have been finished.

The work piece must be secured to a workbench, especially during the stop-cut process, as both hands are needed to control the router. Use scrap strips of wood against bench dogs to protect the edges of the panel.

To keep the carving surface clear and to make cleaning up easy, hold the nozzle of a shop vacuum in your off hand when carving with a flexible shaft tool. I'm right-handed, so I hold the nozzle in my left hand. Position the nozzle 2" to 4" away from the carving. You can mount





The deep-relief aquatic scene in this mantel makes an impressive focal point for a lake house.



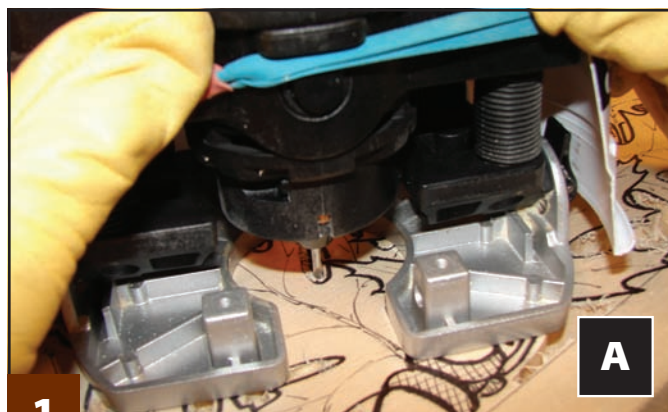
the nozzle close to where you are carving, but holding the nozzle helps collect the dust at the source and keeps the dust from obscuring the area where you are working.

Hold the handpiece of the rotary power carver like a pencil, with the heel of your hand and your forearm resting on the wood surface for stability. To control the cut path, hold the handpiece at a 45° angle, leaning in the direction of the cut. Move the burr in the direction of the rotation to avoid digging into the wood. Throughout the text, the bits are referred to by letters. The bit chart is located on page 36 and the bits are also classified by the letter code in the materials and tools list.

How to Carve an Oak Leaf Mantel

Transfer the design to the blank by taping the pattern to the wood using removable painter's tape. Slip artist's graphite transfer paper under the pattern and trace the pattern onto the blank. Trace the lines on the blank with a marker for better visibility.

NOTE: The lettered boxes inset into the step photos indicate the bits used in each step. Refer to the chart on page 36 for bit identification.



1

Outline the elements. Use a rotary power carver with a router attachment and bit A (see bit chart on next page). Stay $\frac{1}{16}$ " away from the pattern lines as you stop-cut $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep around the elements. Remove the waste between the stop cuts. Continue making passes, increasing the depth of cut by $\frac{1}{4}$ " each time, until the background depth is 1".



2

Separate the leaves. Use a flexible shaft tool and bit B. Make stop cuts perpendicular to the outline of each leaf, keeping $\frac{1}{16}$ " away from the line. Make several passes until the stop cuts are $\frac{1}{4}$ " deep. Make the stop cuts deeper and wider with bit C. The stop cuts are deeper at the stem than at the tip.

MANTEL: ESTABLISH THE LAYERS



3

Rough out the lower levels. Use bit D and begin with the lowest layer, reducing the leaves to approximately $\frac{1}{16}$ " above the background at their stems. For each leaf, the stem is about $\frac{1}{4}$ " lower than the tip. Work up through consecutive layers to layer 3. Each of the five layers is $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " higher than the one below it.



4

Rough out the higher levels. Shape the outlines with bit E. Use bit D to reduce the leaves in layers 1 and 2, maintaining $\frac{1}{8}$ " difference in the depth between layers. Use the same bit to deepen the background $\frac{1}{4}$ " at all of the stems and to overlap sections of leaves. Avoid the acorns.



5

Rough shape the leaves. Use bit F. Leave a ridge down the main and secondary veins of the leaves. Create a valley in the curved areas between lobes, tapering out to the edges of the lobes. Scoop out some of the lobes so the tips curl up and shape others to turn down at the tip. Use the photo as a guide.

Bit Identification Chart

BIT	SIZE	SHAPE	TYPE
A	$\frac{1}{8}$ "	safe-end cylinder	carbide bit
B	$\frac{1}{16}$ "	cylinder	carbide bit
C	$\frac{3}{32}$ "	ball-nose	carbide bit
D	$\frac{5}{16}$ "	ball	extreme Kutzall bit
E	$\frac{3}{16}$ "	ball-nose cylinder	coarse Kutzall bit
F	$\frac{7}{16}$ "	ball	coarse Kutzall bit
G	$\frac{7}{16}$ "	ball	fine Kutzall bit
H	$\frac{3}{16}$ "	tapered	extreme Kutzall bit
I	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	ball	ruby bit
J	$\frac{1}{8}$ "	tapered	coarse ruby bit
K	$\frac{1}{8}$ "	ball	carbide bit
L	$\frac{3}{16}$ "	ball	carbide bit
M	$\frac{5}{16}$ "	ball	fine Kutzall bit
N	$\frac{3}{8}$ "	ball	blue ceramic stone
O	$\frac{3}{16}$ "	ball	green ceramic stone
P	$\frac{3}{32}$ "	ball	fine diamond bit
Q	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	ball-nose cylinder	white ceramic stone
R	$\frac{3}{16}$ "	ball	white ceramic stone
S	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	tapered	white ceramic stone



6

Carve the border. Draw a line $\frac{1}{4}$ " outside the border. Hold a $\frac{5}{8}$ " #5 gouge at a 45° angle and carve from the new line toward the open space around the leaves. Hold the same gouge vertically, in line with the initial cut, and cut straight down, stopping just before the background. Release the chip from the leaf side.

MANTEL: CARVE THE LEAVES



7

Refine the leaves. Use bit G to refine the peaks and valleys of the leaves. Shape, but do not undercut, the edges with bit H. Use bit E to carve the background around the stems and the lobes down to $\frac{1}{4}$ ", tapering it up to 1" deep at the lobe tips.



8

Smooth the surfaces. Use bit I to smooth out the background around the leaves and at the bottom of the border. Use this same bit to smooth the leaves and add more definition to the veins and curling of the lobe tips. Use bit J to further define the stems, leaving them thicker than normal at this stage.

MANTEL: UNDERCUT THE LEAVES



9

Undercut the leaves. Switch between bit K, bit L, and bit M depending on the distance between the surface of the leaf and the background. Taper the cut downward toward the center of the lobe or leaf body. Leave the edges of the leaves $\frac{1}{16}$ " to $\frac{3}{32}$ " thick.



10

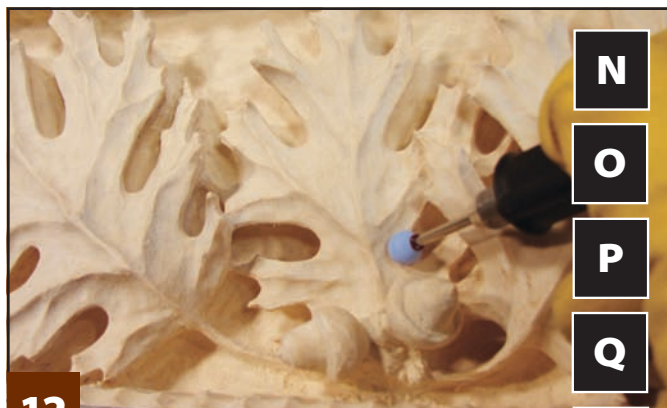
Refine the undercuts. Deepen the undercut to the background on some leaves. Use the photo as a guide. Be careful that the leaves do not become fragile. Some tips remain attached to other leaves or the border for strength. Maintain a background depth of about $\frac{1}{8}$ ", tapering up to 1" deep along the border.

MANTEL: CARVE THE ACORNS



11

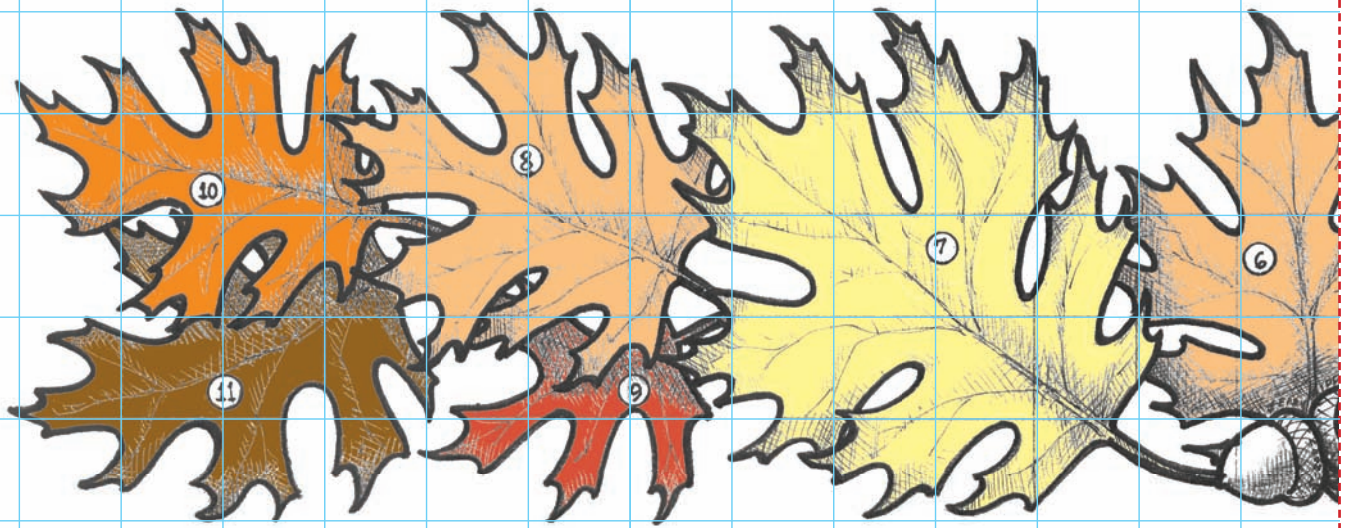
Carve the acorns. Rough out the acorns with bit H. Make $\frac{1}{8}$ "-deep stop cuts to separate the nuts from the caps. Sketch in centerlines and round the acorns on both sides of that line. Carve the nuts $\frac{1}{8}$ " smaller in diameter than the caps. Make both acorns the same size. Smooth the acorns with bit J.



12

Burnish the carving. Use bit N to smooth the surfaces. Switch to bit O or bit P for the tight spots. Use bit Q, bit R and bit S for a polished finish.

Oak leaf mantel pattern

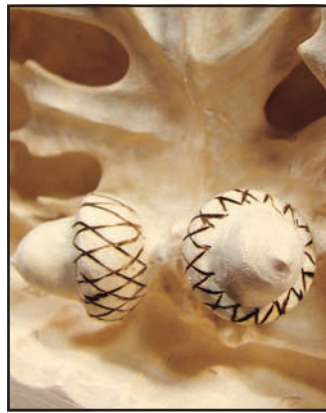


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13

Add the details to the acorn caps. Pencil in a series of "V's" at a 45° angle along the edge of the cap. Extend each right leg up toward the stem, stopping $\frac{1}{8}$ " short of the stem. Repeat the process for the left legs to create a diamond pattern. Burn along the lines with a woodburner on a medium to low setting, using a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-wide skew tip. Clean the lines with an abrasive pad.



Finishing

Sand the uncarved surface of the border with 80-grit, then 100-grit sandpaper to provide a smooth finish and allow good absorption of the stain. Remove all of the sanding dust and coat the entire piece with Minwax Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner. Use a soft-bristle paintbrush to apply a liberal amount of Minwax Stain/Sealer to the entire piece, including the back and undersides of the leaves. Blot your staining brush on a rag and use the dry brush to pick up any excess stain. Let the stain dry thoroughly, then run your fingers over the surface, feeling for any rough spots. Lightly sand any rough spots with 400-grit sandpaper and remove any sanding dust.

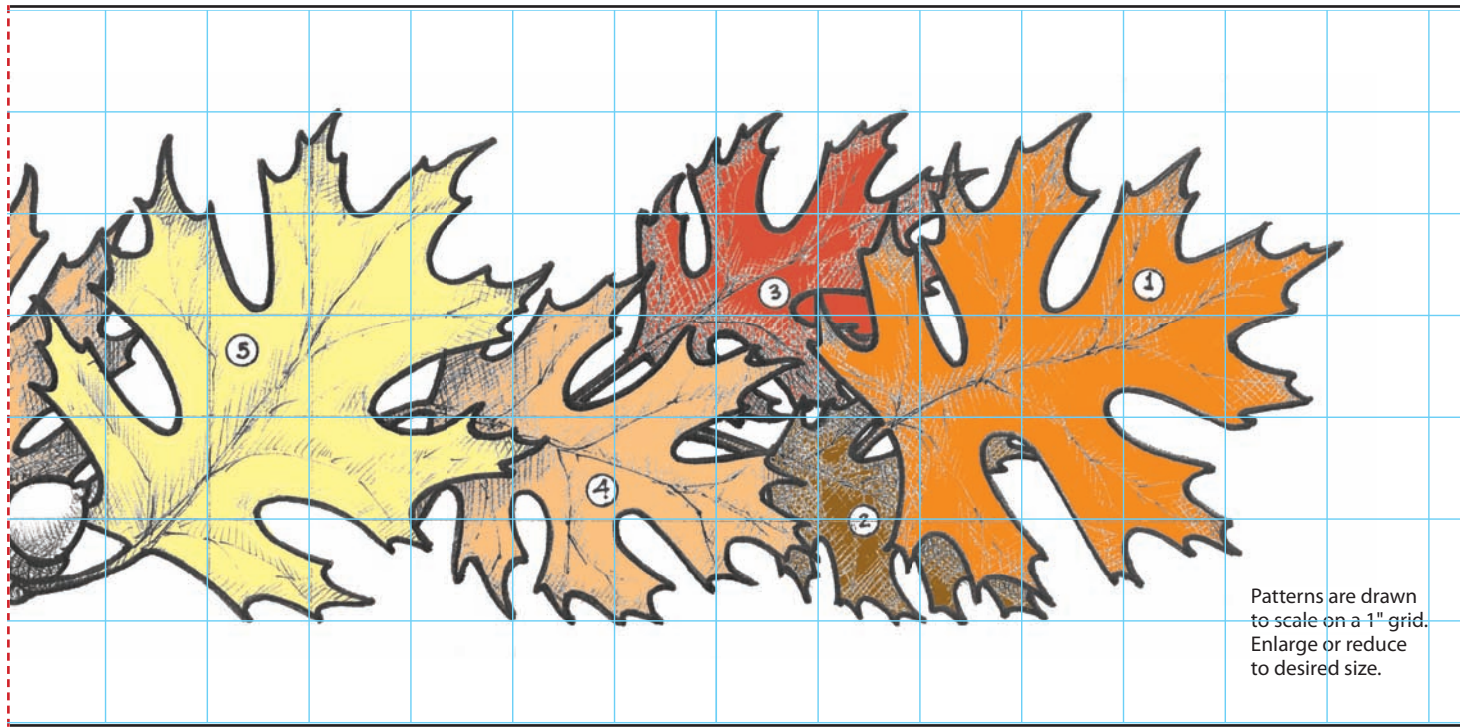
Use Deft Satin Lacquer spray for a final finish coat. Get close to the surface and spray from various angles. When dry, sand any rough surfaces with 400-grit sandpaper. Remove any dust and apply a second coat.

A Simpler Version

Don't be intimidated by large, seemingly complex projects. By approaching the process one step at a time, you'll find the project much more manageable. If you still find the deep-relief carving a bit daunting, the pattern can easily be translated to a shallow or low relief by reducing the depth of the background, the separation between the different elements, and the undercutting.

The same tools and techniques used in the deep-relief project are applicable, but in this low-relief version, the background depth is $\frac{7}{8}$ " at its deepest. Most of the background is $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The deepest part of the large center leaf is $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Instead of undercutting the elements as demonstrated in the main project, remove only $\frac{1}{4}$ " of wood from the edges of the perimeter of the leaves. The stems only require a hint of an undercut.





Patterns are drawn to scale on a 1" grid. Enlarge or reduce to desired size.

DEPTH CHART:

This profile view of the carving blank shows the individual layers. The stems start at the bottom of each layer and the leaves curve up to the tip at the top of the layer.

- Layer 1: (Closest to surface) Leaves #5 and 7
- Layer 2: Leaves #4, 6 and 8
- Layer 3: Leaves #1 and 10
- Layer 4: Leaves #2 and 11
- Layer 5: (Closest to background) Leaves #3 and 9

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 2" x 7" x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ " basswood or wood of choice (2 or more panels needed for full-size mantel)
- Graphite transfer paper
- Minwax Pre-Stain Wood Conditioner
- Minwax Stain/Sealer of choice
- Deft Spray Satin Lacquer
- Sandpaper: 80, 100, and 400 grits

TOOLS:

- Rotary cutting tool with $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter collet
- Router attachment
- Flexible shaft attachment with $\frac{1}{8}$ "- and $\frac{3}{32}$ "-diameter collets
- $\frac{5}{8}$ " #5 gouge, or reciprocating carver with $\frac{5}{8}$ " #5 gouge attachment
- Wood burner with $\frac{1}{8}$ "-wide skew tip
- Medium and small soft-bristle brushes for applying stain/sealer
- Abrasive pad (to clean up woodburning)

BITS:

- (A) $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter safe-end cylinder-shaped carbide bit
- (B) $\frac{1}{16}$ "-diameter cylinder-shaped carbide bit
- (C) $\frac{3}{32}$ "-diameter ball-nose carbide bit
- (D) $\frac{5}{16}$ "-diameter ball-shaped extreme Kutzall bit
- (E) $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter ball-nose cylinder-shaped coarse Kutzall bit
- (F) $\frac{7}{16}$ "-diameter ball-shaped coarse Kutzall bit
- (G) $\frac{7}{16}$ "-diameter ball-shaped fine Kutzall bit
- (H) $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter tapered extreme Kutzall bit
- (I) $\frac{1}{4}$ "-diameter ball-shaped ruby bit
- (J) $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter tapered coarse ruby bit
- (K) $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter ball-shaped carbide bit
- (L) $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter ball-shaped carbide bit
- (M) $\frac{5}{16}$ "-diameter ball-shaped fine Kutzall bit
- (N) $\frac{3}{8}$ "-diameter blue ceramic ball-shaped stone
- (O) $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter green ceramic ball-shaped stone
- (P) $\frac{3}{32}$ "-diameter ball-shaped fine diamond bit
- (Q) $\frac{1}{4}$ "-diameter white ceramic ball-nose cylinder-shaped stone
- (R) $\frac{3}{16}$ "-diameter white ceramic ball-shaped stone
- (S) $\frac{1}{4}$ "-diameter white ceramic tapered stone



About the Author

Jerry Mifflin, a lifelong artist, has designed and carved custom mantels for the past six years. His customers come from all over the United States through an association with ArtFolk Music & Wood in Branson, Mo., as well as through his Website. Jerry is also now represented by Functional Art Gallery in Washington. You can view more of Jerry's work at www.jerrymifflinwoodcarving.com.

ONLINE BONUS

View incredible samples of Jerry's custom-carved fireplace mantels.
[woodcarvingillustrated.com](http://www.woodcarvingillustrated.com)

Teaching Kids to Carve

Jim Calder's sweet potato faces make carving easy

By Kathleen Ryan

For Jim Calder, teaching kids to carve is a win-win situation. He enjoys it so much, he has taught more than 3,000 children the basics of woodcarving—for free.

"I just love to see children carve for the first time and watch their eyes light up when they see what they are capable of creating," Jim said with a bit of a smile.

Originally from Baltimore, Md., Jim splits his time between Chesapeake, Va., and Haywood County, N.C. But wherever he lives or travels, he constantly looks for opportunities to offer carving classes to kids.

Jim has donated countless hours of time to schools, camps, county fairs, clubs, and other organizations so people of all ages can learn woodcarving. He's even set up shop in his own front yard to pique the interest of neighborhood kids.

Perhaps his affinity for children and his uncanny ability to fire up their interest in an age-old art form comes from the fact that Jim was just seven when he stumbled into woodworking for the first time.

"I used to sneak over to my neighbor's barn and peek inside to see what he was doing. He caught me standing there and told me straight out that if I was going to watch, I'd have to work. So he took me under his wing and taught me the trade," Jim recalled.

It turns out this crusty old neighbor was none other than Norbert Munson, a renowned furniture maker in the 1950s who never used power tools and proudly posted a sign that read, "Sandpaper is for fools who can't sharpen their tools."

Norbert taught the eager lad everything he knew about woodworking, and somewhere along the line, the boy developed his own love of wood. Young Jim couldn't get enough of it.



SWEET CARVINGS: Jim Calder and Maddie Roma show off some of the sweet potato carvings Maddie created under Jim's instruction.

"The only thing Munson required of me, besides my full attention, was to give back to others what he had given to me—to keep the art alive," Jim said. Jim does that every chance he gets.

Daniel Manget, of the Haywood County, N.C., 4-H Program, was thrilled to have Jim offer a free class to his 4-H students. He said the response from the kids and parents alike was overwhelming.

"It's great to see kids enjoying a hobby that requires this kind of concentration, dedication, and artistic expression that is otherwise lacking in our new Internet Age," said Daniel. "Jim inspires kids to put down the video game controller and express themselves in a piece of wood."

At the beginning of each class, Jim reviews the list of dos and don'ts of carving safety with the kids. He relates how, in the past, carving and painting were ways of capturing, recording, and passing down history. When the kids are thoroughly captivated, Jim pulls out the spuds—sweet potatoes that is.

Jim issues students a certificate of completion and a lifelong membership in the Yam Carver's Club.



"Sweet potatoes come in interesting shapes, they're easy to carve, and they dry into a brick-hard substance that retains the carving and actually resembles wood. The kids really get a kick out of it." The tools for carving sweet potatoes vary from pocket knives to sharpened popsicle sticks.

To ensure every kid has a positive experience, Jim developed a simple carving method 28 years ago that he still teaches today. Called the "Calder Triangle Method[®]," it involves overlaying a series of triangles to create a face. Jim's method, shown on the following pages, has been successful with beginners of all ages.

"I see carving being renewed as each child takes with them a piece of the art," he said. "My legacy will be the children I've taught and knowing I've opened a door some of them may walk through—to keep the art alive."



Jim demonstrates the Calder Triangle Method[®] (see next page) on a sweet potato for 4-H students.



Wesley Simmons, age nine, said, "It was so neat getting to carve sweet potatoes."



Safety Tips

It is essential that new carvers respect their knives and learn how to use them properly before they begin. Jim reviews the following guidelines with each class before beginning instruction:

- Use only a sharp knife and keep it sharp—a dull knife is harder to control.
- Never horseplay or run with a knife in your hand.
- Never carve when you are tired or distracted.
- Pay attention to your carving, not your buddies.
- Think before you make each cut.
- Make smaller cuts rather than large cuts.
- Take your time—rushing causes carelessness and accidents.
- ALWAYS push the knife away from your body.
- Avoid knots because they require more force.
- Carve with the grain of the wood for smoother cuts.
- Choose softer woods that require less force.
- Always store your knives where young children cannot reach them.

Just Carve Triangles

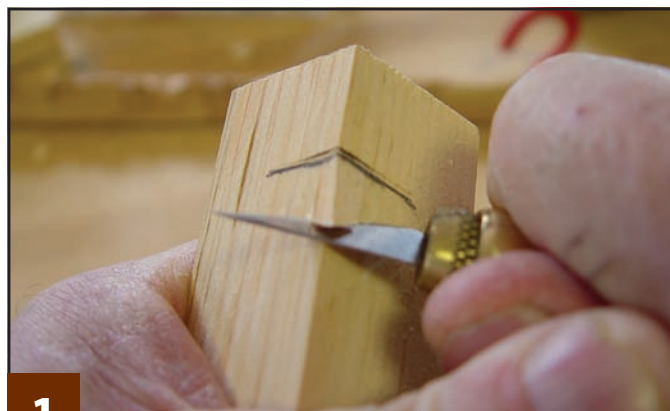
Jim Calder's simple method makes it easy to share the basics of carving

By Jim Calder

I teach beginner woodcarving to hundreds of children each year. To make the process easier, I developed a simple method using geometric forms. I call this kid-tested technique the Calder Triangle Method®.

You don't need to purchase fancy tools or spend a lot of money to learn to carve. Most carving projects can be accomplished with any sharp carving knife. Some specialty knives or blades will come in handy, but they are not necessary. This face can be completed with just a hobby knife and a V-tool.

The best wood for this project is white pine or basswood. After your carving is completed, you may wish to stain your project or apply a protective coat of polyurethane.



1

Cut the first triangle. Draw a line on the corner of the blank for the brow line. Cut straight in at that line with a knife to make a stop cut. Move down a bit and carve up to the line, removing a triangular chip to create the eye and cheek area.



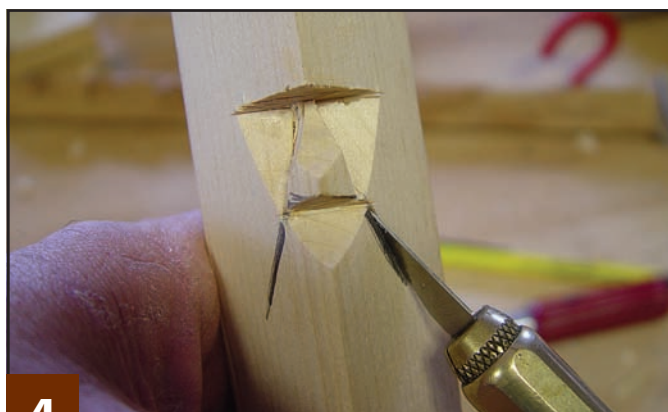
2

Carve the cheeks. Draw two sides of a triangle with the point of the triangle centered on the brow line. Stop-cut along the lines and carve up to the stop cuts from the sides to separate the nose from the cheeks.



3

Outline the base of the nose. Draw a line at the bottom of the nose, then extend the sides of the nose triangle for the top of the mustache. Stop-cut along the bottom of the nose and carve up to the stop cut with the carving knife.



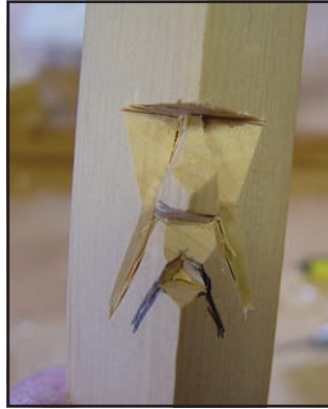
4

Outline the top of the mustache. Stop-cut along the extended lines. Cut up to the stop cuts from the outside to define the mustache and separate it from the cheeks. Taper the tip of the nose from the center out toward each cheek.



5

Carve the mouth. Draw in another triangle as shown in the photo. Extend the side lines beyond the base. Stop-cut along the sides of the triangle. Angle the knife up toward the bottom of the mustache as you cut along the base of the triangle. This will remove a chip, opening the mouth.



6

Rough out the face. Draw a line on the outer edges of the face, stop-cut along the lines, and make a shallow cut up to the stop cuts. Draw in the forehead triangle and the eyes. The eyes are two triangles put base to base, with the bottom triangle being twice as tall as the top triangle.



7

Carve the eyes and forehead. Stop-cut along the common base line between the two triangles. Angle your knife and carve out the upper and lower triangles down to the stop-cut. Stop cut along the top of the forehead and carve from the brow line up to the forehead using a carving knife.



8

Carve the lower lip and mustache. Mark and remove small triangles on the sides of the nose to round the ball of the nose. Draw a triangle under the mouth, leaving a thin area for the lip. Stop-cut along the lip and remove the triangle by cutting up to the lip using a carving knife.



9

Add the hair and beard. Sketch in the beard and hair using the photo as a guide. Stop-cut along the lines and carve up to the stop cuts from the inside. Round off the corner and add texture to the hair and beard with a V-tool. Sand and finish as desired; I suggest stain or polyurethane.



materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 2" x 2" x 5" basswood
- Stain or polyurethane (optional)
- Fine-grit sandpaper (optional)

TOOLS:

- Carving knife of choice
- V-tool of choice (I use a palm-style Flexcut)
- Pencil
- Paintbrush (optional)



About the Author

Jim Calder has been working with wood since he was seven years old and has won many awards for his carvings. For class information or to see more of his work, visit www.carves4u.com.

First Cuts

Artists chronicle their journeys from beginner to accomplished carver



DAVID BOONE

From drawing and painting to carving

"As far back as I can remember, I loved to draw and paint. When I was a kid in school, the teacher would say, 'David, how do you expect to learn if all you do is draw?'"

"In 1968, I was living on a gunboat in the swamps of Vietnam, but somehow I found time for my art. I did several paintings of the Mekong Delta.

"Later, my brother-in-law, who was a woodcarver, said, 'David, why don't you try carving?' I decided to give it a shot. I knew where there was a buckeye tree that had been cut down. So I got my chain saw and cut off a piece about a foot long.

"When my grandfather Wilson died, my mother gave me his pocketknife. One blade was thin and sharp, so I decided to use that to carve the buckeye. Now, I was ready to do my first carving. What should it be? I decided on a mountain man. I had the wood, the sharp knife, and the idea. Now what should I

do? Well, I just cut off everything that didn't look like a mountain man. It worked! There was a mountain man hiding in that piece of buckeye, and all I had to do was let him out. Now when I get a piece of wood, I can't wait to see what's inside.

"Old Daniel Boone said that all a man needs to be happy is a good gun, a fast horse, and a sharp knife. Well here I am, eight generations later, doing what uncle Daniel said. I have a good gun, a fast car, and I keep my knife sharp.

"Remember me saying I was fussed at in school for drawing all the time? I may have been just a little boy, but I knew in my heart I was an artist, not a rocket scientist or a lawyer. I am a woodcarver, and I love every minute of it."

David Boone was elected to the Caricature Carvers of America (CCA) in 1997. He is also a member of the National Woodcarvers Association and the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. Contact David at 8659 Hwy 197 South, Burnsville, N.C. 28714, [eboone15@verizon.net](mailto:dboone15@verizon.net).

MOUNTAIN MAN,
carved in 1985.



A MAN SHOULD BE
WELL GROOMED,
carved in
2007.



tips from David

SCORCHED CARVING

Lightly scorching the wood with a propane torch creates a good surface for painting. I paint most of my carvings with acrylic paint. When I was painting a carved anvil, I just couldn't get it to look like steel. So I burned the paint off with a propane torch. When I started painting again, I found that the wood painted much better. Be careful though, because it can catch fire quickly. Once I was scorching a large eagle carving and wound up with a hummingbird.

CARICATURES REQUIRE EXPRESSION

When carving a caricature, expression is everything. The face, the body—everything—must show expression. I try to pretend the carving is me. Am I sad, happy, or just dumbfounded? Sometimes just a little something with the hands can give your carving the thing it needs. Over-exaggeration is good.



JACK A. WILLIAMS

Bird carving leads to caricatures

"In the fall of 1973, while enjoying our first trip to Disney World, I became fascinated with a carving of an eagle plaque above a door.

I took a picture of it and proclaimed I could carve an eagle. My family bought me a deluxe Dremel tool for Christmas. I knew it was time to carve an eagle. I found a piece of fir left over from our house construction—I didn't know about carving wood at the time—and glued other pieces of fir on for the head. The finished carving looked very much like the one I took a picture of at Disney World, and it still hangs in our home. I knew I was destined to become a bird carver. For ten years I carved birds, taking classes and competing at the Ward World Wildfowl Competition.

"My direction of carving changed dramatically when I took a class with Harold Enlow in 1988. Carving birds required power tools, but caricatures required the use of a knife and gouges. These tools are quiet and

produce chips instead of dust. I could carry on a conversation with other carvers while working. My class project was a cowgirl and as I carved, I knew I was hooked on caricature carving. My wife, Carole, purchased my first Enlow carving and today it sits under glass in a prominent spot.

"As a caricature carver, I have had three proud moments. First, in 2001 when I won the Flex-Cut Tool Internet Carving Competition with a bottle stopper. Second, in 2002 when Harold Enlow asked me if he could present my name for membership in the CCA, and, third, in 2003 when I became a member."

Jack retired from professional commercial photography and uses his talents to help promote other carvers. He has also been involved in the publication of many books and articles on woodcarving. Jack received the prestigious Ron Ryan Award from the Dayton Carvers Guild in 2004. Contact him at 22205 N Golf Club Dr., Sun City West, Ariz. 85375, carolejack@cox.net.



BALD EAGLE carved in 1974.

tips from Jack

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Take photographs of yourself or a friend for reference. Place your model in position with the folds and wrinkles you want to convey in the carving. Then take photographs from all four sides. A caricature carving exaggerates some features in an interesting way, but clothing should still have realistic characteristics. This will give you extra points in competition. Build a clay model using Sculpey or Plasteline-type modeling clay. Clay models are becoming so popular with folks who are creating original woodcarvings that sculpting in clay has become a course of study at carving seminars. If you have the opportunity, attend a clay modeling session like the one by Adair and Patty Rucker held at the International Carving Congress in Davenport, Iowa.

SQUARE CARVINGS

New carvers hesitate to remove too much wood, which leaves the faces and bodies square. The human body has few square corners. And finally, in the words of the mythical old ear carver: "he who undercuts before it's time might end up with pierced ears," and "if you have wood, you still have hope."



DOME GUY, carved in 2007.

Photos by Jack A. Williams



PETER ORTEL

Cartooning in wood

"I was born and raised in a borough of New York City called 'da Bronx.' As far back as I can remember, I had a fascination with knives and loved whittling

tree branches. Of course, all of my knives had to be hidden from my mother or any adult who knew my mom. Whenever I couldn't whittle, I used the next best tool I could think of—a pencil. I always loved to draw, especially cartoons, copying them from newspapers or comic books.

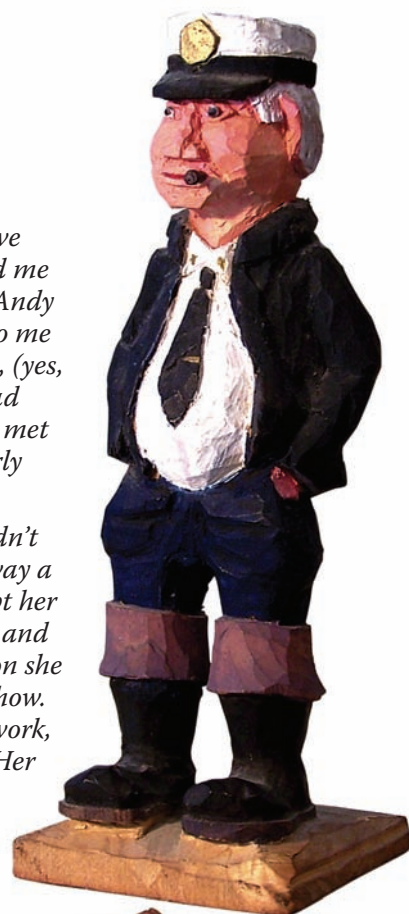
"In the late 1970s, I was married and raising three sons with my wife, Madelyn, in Monroe, N.Y. I commuted to the city, working for the New York City Fire Department. One Sunday, I read an article in our local newspaper about Ken Ernest, who lived not far from my home. Ken was a retired sign painter who carved these funny little people out of wood. I contacted Ken by phone, and he invited me over to visit. Ken carved Ozark-style characters and funny scenes. I realized Ken was actually cartooning in wood. I use that phrase to describe my work today.

"Ken inspired me and encouraged me to carve caricatures. He taught me about

carving tools and basswood, and he gave me my first copy of Chip Chats. He told me his style of characters was inspired by Andy Anderson—this name meant nothing to me at the time. Ken and his wife, Madelyn, (yes, Ken and I both married a Madelyn) had vacationed in New Mexico, where they met Andy Anderson. Ken and Andy regularly wrote each other and became friends.

"My friendship with Ken Ernest didn't last long enough for me. Ken passed away a few years after I met him. Madelyn kept her subscription to Chip Chats. Every now and then she would write to me and mention she read I had won a ribbon in a carving show. She said she was proud of me and my work, and that Ken would be proud as well. Her words mean a lot to me even today."

Peter Ortel was invited to become a member of the CCA in 1992. He went on to serve as president-elect and then president for two years. He now enjoys the status of emeritus membership. He and Madelyn reside in South Carolina. He teaches woodcarving and does commission work. Contact Peter at 116 Mesa Raven Drive, Longs, S.C. 29568, or e-mail him at peterjortel@yahoo.com.



THE FIRE CHIEF,
carved in
1980.



THE GOLFER, carved
in 2008.

tips from Peter

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF

The best advice I can give to carvers is to keep at it. Sketch as much and as often as you can. Keep a small sketchbook or pad with you at all times. No one has to see your sketches but you. The time you don't have a sketchbook with you is when you'll see that great face, nose, eyes, or ears, and you'll think, "Oh boy, I'd love to carve that!" The paper place mats or napkins from a restaurant don't work as well, or hold up as long. Keep at it and don't be discouraged.

KNOW YOUR SUBJECT

Pick a subject that you know so you'll have all sorts of information in your head to start with. That way, you'll be able to concentrate more on how to carve it. Don't be too hard on yourself. Sure, there are some great carvers out there, but they all had to start out just like you. Some were great from the beginning, and others were not. The best carvers have a passion for carving and the persistence to go on and on. Set a goal for yourself and go for it!



TOM WOLFE

Falling in love with a pocket knife

"I did my first carving when I was ten years old. Since I'm now 71, my trail as a woodcarver has been a long one."

"Both of my grandfathers

carved, but I was first introduced to whittling at age ten. My parents had to do something in our local courthouse, so I walked around the courthouse and talked with the old men who sat on the courthouse benches, whittling with their pocket knives. I walked up to the one who looked the friendliest and I asked him what he was carving. He looked at me with a wise smile and said, 'I'm not carving, I'm whittling.'

"I asked him what the difference between carving and whittling was, and he said, 'When you carve, you make something; when you whittle you make shavings.'

"I asked him what the point of whittling was. He said 'We do this to see who has the sharpest pocket knife. The sharper the blade, the longer and curlier the shaving you can get.' Then he cut a 2 foot-long shaving from the cedar board he was carving. It was as curly as a pig's tail."

"He looked at me with a serene smile and said 'Yesterday, I got a shaving off this same cedar board that went around the courthouse three times and there was enough left over to start a three-log fire.'

"I learned two things that day. First, I learned the difference between carving and whittling. Second, I learned old men lie. I also fell in love with the pocket knife as a carving tool."

"In 1970, I opened my first carving shop on old Highway 301 near Sante, S.C. Then they opened the I-95 expressway a quarter-mile from my shop. That was my first class in the school of hard knocks."

"Now my studio, which is open six months out of the year, is located inside the park at Grandfather Mountain. I've talked to hundreds of thousands of people. I still carve and whittle with a Case pocket knife. I teach a seminar at the W.R. Case & Sons/Zippos Swap Meet every other year in Bradford, Pa. I even wrote a poem about a good Case knife. I adapted it from an old mountain folk song."

Good Case Knife

When I was a boy, all I wanted
was a good Case knife.

When I grew a little older,
with all the hardships of life,
All I craved was a pretty little
red-headed wife.

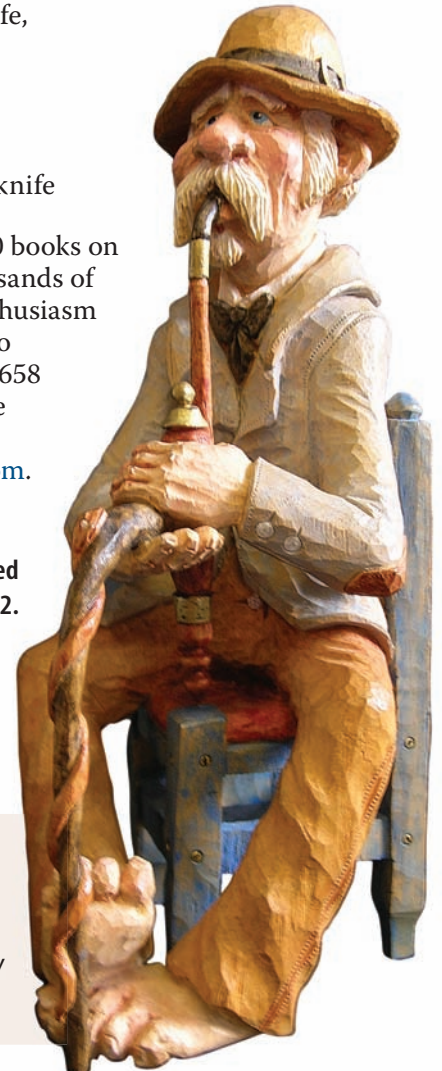
Now, with the serenity of time
It comes to my mind that
All I needed was a good Case knife

Tom has written more than 50 books on woodcarving and has helped thousands of people develop their skills and enthusiasm for woodcarving. He was elected to the CCA in 1992. Contact Tom at 658 Upper Hanging Rock Road, Spruce Pine, N.C. 28777, 828-766-2671, tomwolfewoodcarver37@yahoo.com.

SOLDIER, CARVED
IN 1968.



SMOKING, carved
in 2002.



tips from Tom

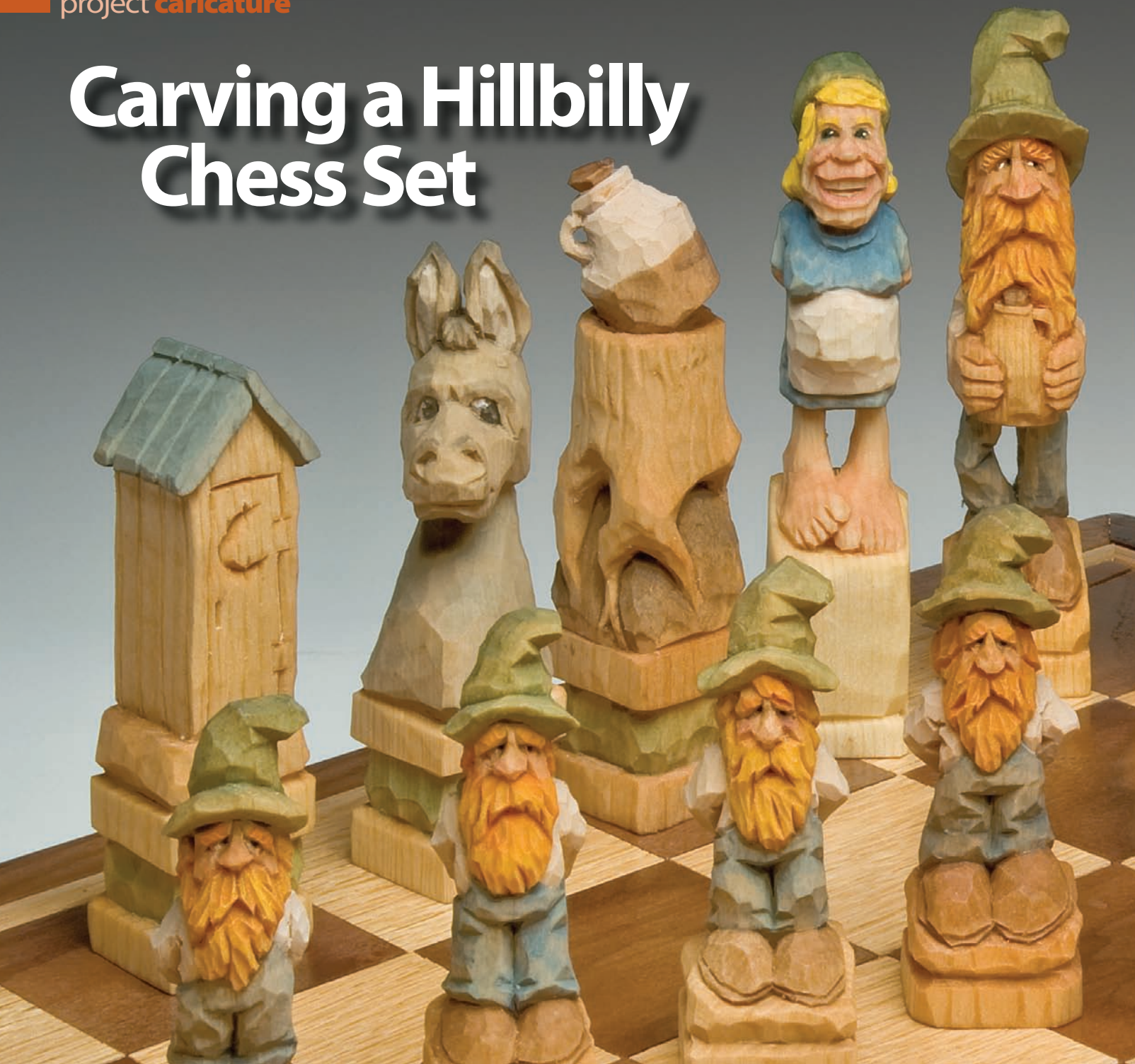
MOVE AROUND WHEN CARVING

Don't carve in one place too long. I've seen people work at a dog's leg until it is as thin as a ribbon. Keep everything square, then carve it to an octagon shape, and then round it from there. Don't work or look too long at one place.

DON'T FEAR OIL PAINTS

You can use oil paints the same way you use acrylics. Just replace water with turpentine to thin the paint to a wash. Don't be afraid to try oil paints—they will give you truer colors.

Carving a Hillbilly Chess Set



Stage your own backwoods battle with patterns for a complete chess set

By Mitchell Cartledge

Most of my carvings tend to be small so I can move from an idea to a finished piece relatively quickly. After creating a few typical hillbilly caricatures, they took on a life of their own. It turned into a family feud on opposite sides of a chess board.

I'm not sure if the Hatfields and the McCoys played chess, but if they did, it might look like this set. The king and queen on the red side are the mother and father; the king and queen on the green side are the daughter and her soon-to-be husband—who has



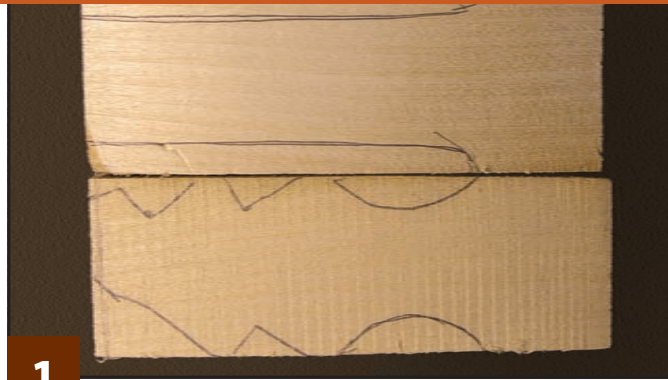
a fondness for moonshine. That's why the bishops accompanying Ma and Pa are preachers and the bishops on the opposing side are moonshine jugs. Mules are a fitting substitute for traditional knights and outhouses serve as a humorous replacement for the rooks.

The carving instructions focus on the pawns, who resemble their respective kings and patiently await instruction with their hands tucked behind their backs. The general technique is the same for all

the pieces. I use a methodical approach to carving represented by the initials "RBD." The first step is "R" or roughing out the carving, which is followed by "B" or blocking out the shape. The final step before painting is "D," which stands for adding detail.

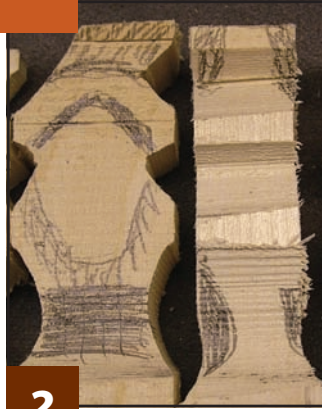
I use the Ortel V-gouge made by Denny Neubauer to rough out the carvings. The V-gouge has straight sides like a V-tool, but the point at the bottom is rounded like a gouge. It is very useful when roughing out and blocking in a carving.

CHESS SET: ROUGHING OUT



1

Cut the blank. Transfer the outline of the pattern to the front and side of the blank. Cut the side view of the design with a band saw. Start at the bottom, but stop about $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the top. Rotate the blank and cut the front profile. Use a carving knife to cut off the bit of wood holding the waste in place.



2

Rough out the front of the carving. Use the pattern as a guide and shade the areas to be removed on the front and side with a pencil. Use an Ortel V-gouge and a $\frac{1}{2}$ " #5 gouge to remove the waste wood around the arms, the forehead, the hat, and in the thigh and knee area.



3

Rough out the sides of the carving. Support the carving against the work bench and use an Ortel V-gouge to separate the arms from the back and hat. While this cut looks dangerous, moving in the direction of my holding hand, it is important to note I do not pull with my entire arm. Instead, a small cocking of the wrist gives me a controlled cut and prevents injury.



4

Rough out the feet. Use an Ortel V-gouge to separate the feet from the base on all four sides. Use the same tool to carve a line approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ " up from the bottom around all four sides of the carving. Make sure the distance from the bottom of the carving to the V-groove is consistent on all of the chess pieces. Round the head and hat with a rough-out knife.

CHESS SET: BLOCKING OUT



5

Establish the facial landmarks. This is the beginning of the blocking phase, where you break the landmarks into smaller sections. Draw in the features and separate the features with a 3mm #11 gouge. Round off these cuts with a rough-out knife. The eye sockets meet at the bridge of the nose. Separate the hair by removing wood from the face with the #11 gouge.



6

Block out the eyes and hair. Sketch in the eyes, nose, and hair. Use a detail knife to make stop cuts along both sides of the bridge of the nose up to the brow, and from the brow to the outside corner of each eye. Cut from the cheek area toward the stop cuts to free the chip. Define the face by making stop cuts and removing a sliver of wood at the hairline and under the hat brim.



7

Block out the nose, mustache, and hat brim. Use a detail knife. Remove triangular chips from under the nose and on both sides of the wings of the nose. Remove triangular chips from beside and below the mustache as well. Remove wood from under the hat brim to define the hat and the head. Block out the beard with an Ortel V-gouge.



8

Block out the back of the carving. Use the pattern as a guide to pencil in the separation of the arms and hands. Use an Ortel V-gouge to block out the arms and carve the bottom of the hair line. Use an Ortel V-gouge to separate the feet and legs. Use a rough-out knife to add shape to the top of the hat and begin to round the arms and legs.

CHESSE SET: ADDING DETAIL



9

Define the arms and hands. Outline the arms and hands with a 1/4" 60° V-tool. Use a detail knife to remove a triangular chip between the thumb and the heel of the hand. This helps to separate the fingers from the palm and produces a simple but effective representation of hands. Use a knife to add further separation to the bottom of the hair and beard.



10

Carve the hands. Use a detail knife to remove a bit more wood from the palms to suggest the fingers are curled up in a fist. Use a detail knife to carve two grooves between the three visible fingers. The fourth finger is hidden by the thumb. To further separate the palm from the fingers, remove a small triangular chip where the little finger meets the palm.



11

Define the clothing. Use a detail knife to outline the suspenders that run across the pawn's shoulder in the back view. Remove small triangular chips beside the beard on the front view to define the edges of the overalls. Carve a shallow groove at the hem of the pant legs to separate the shoes. Separate the legs with a triangular chip in the front and back, and shape the legs.



12

Shape the feet, legs, and beard. Use a detail knife. Refine the separation between the pants and the shoes, and thin the heels under the pants. Separate the shoes from the base. Remove a few triangular chips in the pants to simulate creases. Carve a shallow groove to separate the soles from the shoe uppers. Use a 3mm #11 gouge to add flow to the beard.



13

Carve the hair details. Use a 3mm #11 gouge to carve a few grooves in the beard, mustache, eyebrows, and hair. Remove small triangular chips where the mustache fits over the beard and along the bottom of the beard.



14

Carve the eye sockets. Make a stop cut along the eyebrow line with a detail knife. Make sure the cut is deepest where the eyebrow intersects with the bridge of the nose. This will be the inside corner of the eye socket.



15

Add the pupils. Use a 1/8"-wide deep micro-gouge to remove a small oval of wood. This fellow is looking right, so his left eye is closer to the nose than the right eye. If the round chip doesn't pop out, deepen the stop cut with a detail knife.



16

Finish the face. Use a detail knife to remove a small triangular chip from the outside corner of each eye. This makes it look like there are bags under the pawn's eyes. Go back over the carving and clean up any rough cuts.

Finishing notes

Scrub the carving with an old toothbrush and liquid dishwashing soap. This removes any dirt, oil, or remaining chips. Rinse the soap off and check for any remaining chips.

While the carving is still wet, push the tip of a black permanent marker into the pupil hole and highlight the eyeball with undiluted Light Ivory paint. The rest of the carving is painted with acrylic paints thinned with water to a wash consistency. For most carvings, I mix the paints as I go and test the colors on the bottom of the carving's base. To get you started, I've listed the colors I use for the two opposing pawns in the materials list.

After you finish painting the carving, allow the paint to dry for at least four hours. If the flesh tones look a bit too bright, dilute Brown Iron Oxide with water to make a very thin wash and paint the wash over the exposed skin. This warms up the flesh color

and highlights the wrinkles around the eyes, nose, and mouth. Allow the paint to dry thoroughly.

When dry, antique and seal the carving. Mix a daub of burnt umber oil paint with a quart of boiled linseed oil (BLO). Dip the carving in the mixture and wipe away the excess with a paper towel. Put the used paper towel in a water-filled container or dispose of it properly; BLO can spontaneously combust when it dries. Allow the finish to dry for a couple of days, then apply a coat of polyurethane for extra protection.



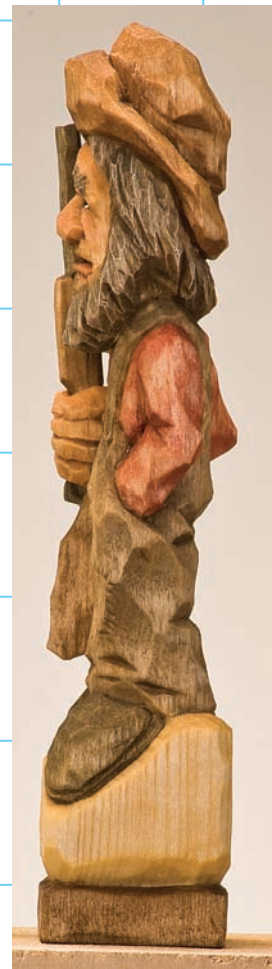
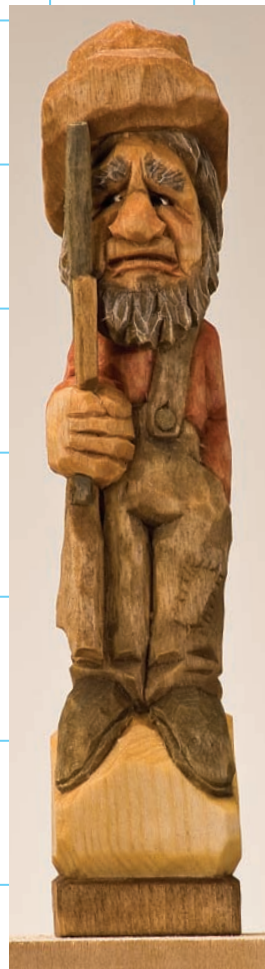
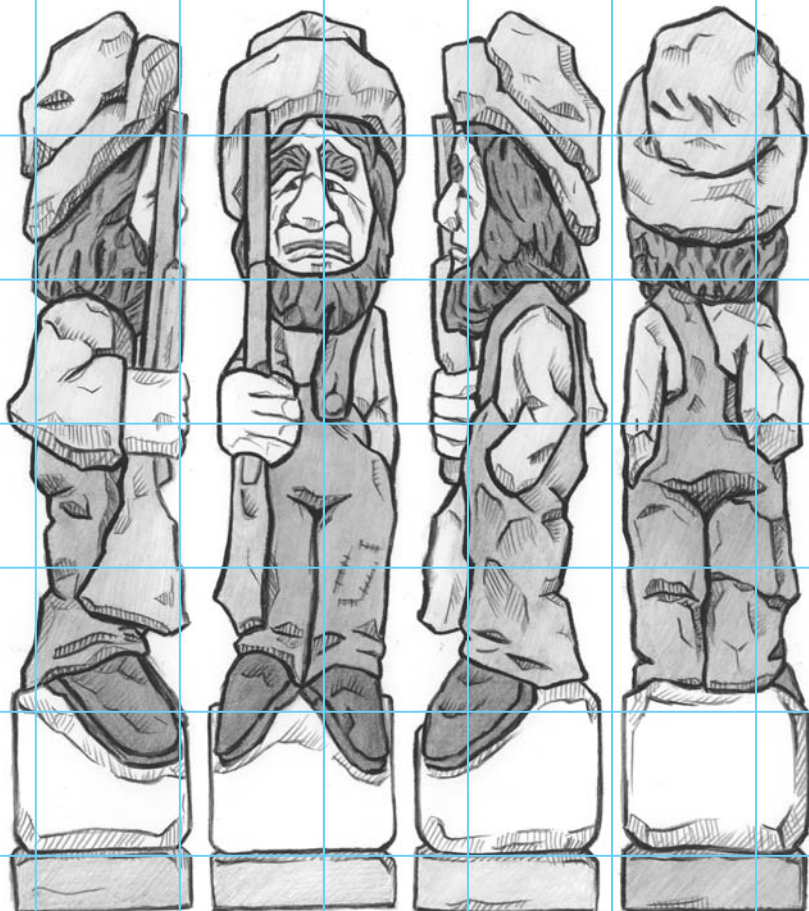
About the Author

Mitchell Cartledge, a manager at a textile company, lives in Morganton, N.C., with his wife, Page. He began carving 28 years ago when he needed a gift for his sister and was too frugal to buy one, so he carved her one instead. Mitchell is a moderator on the Woodcarving Illustrated Message Board, www.WoodcarvingIllustrated.com.

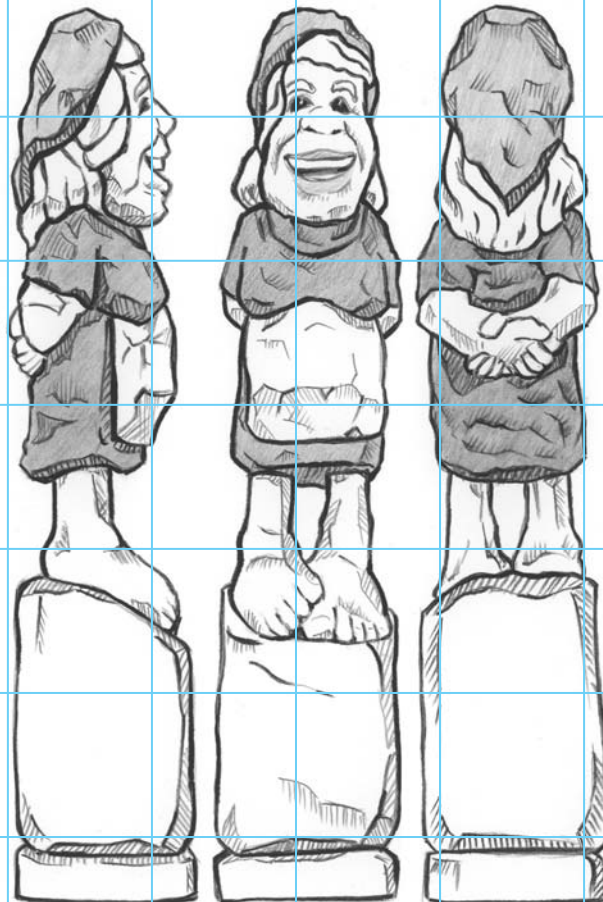
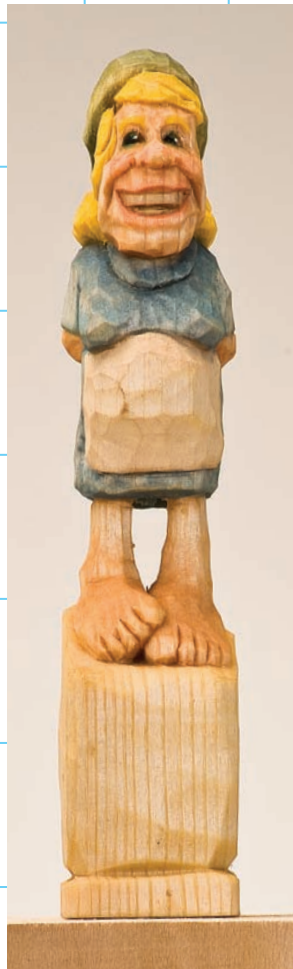
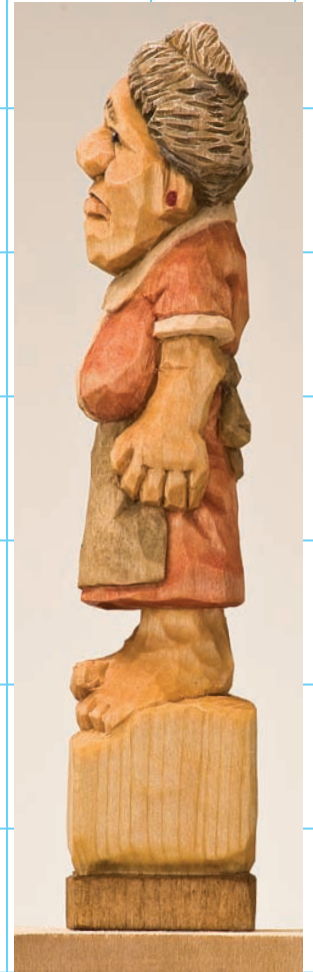
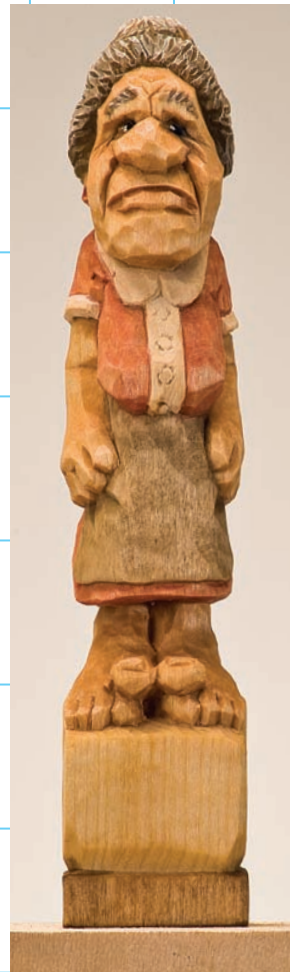
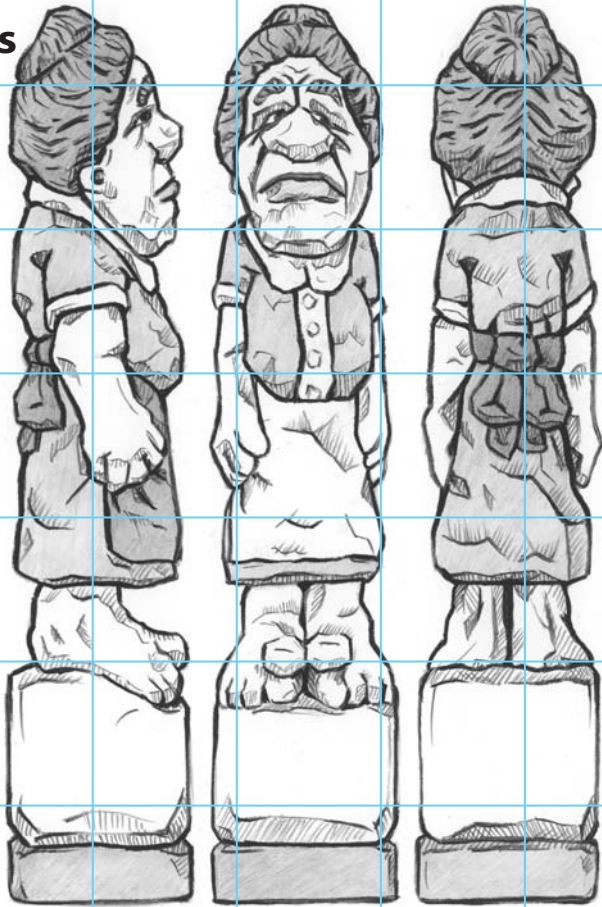
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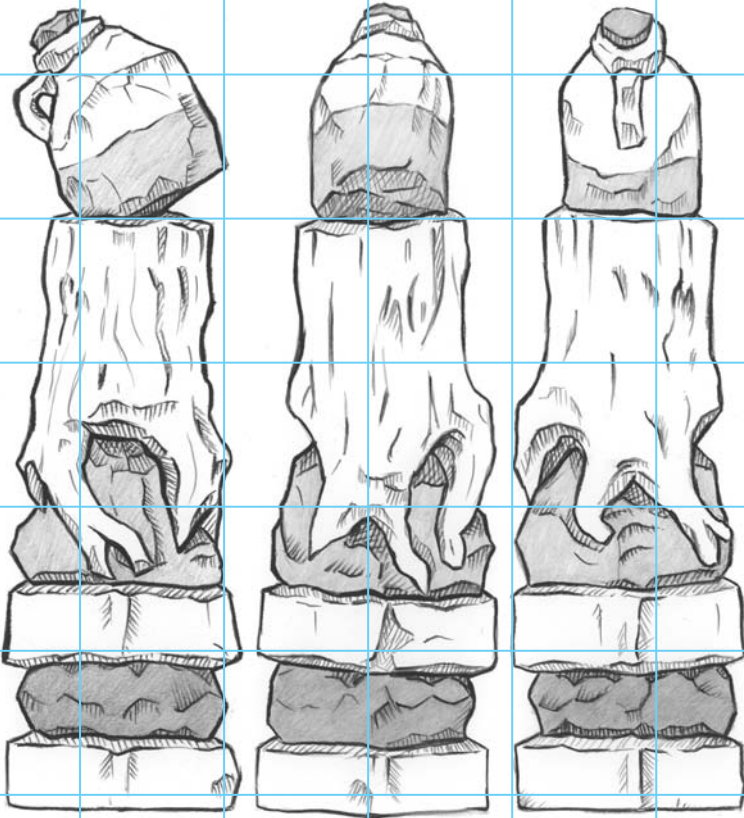
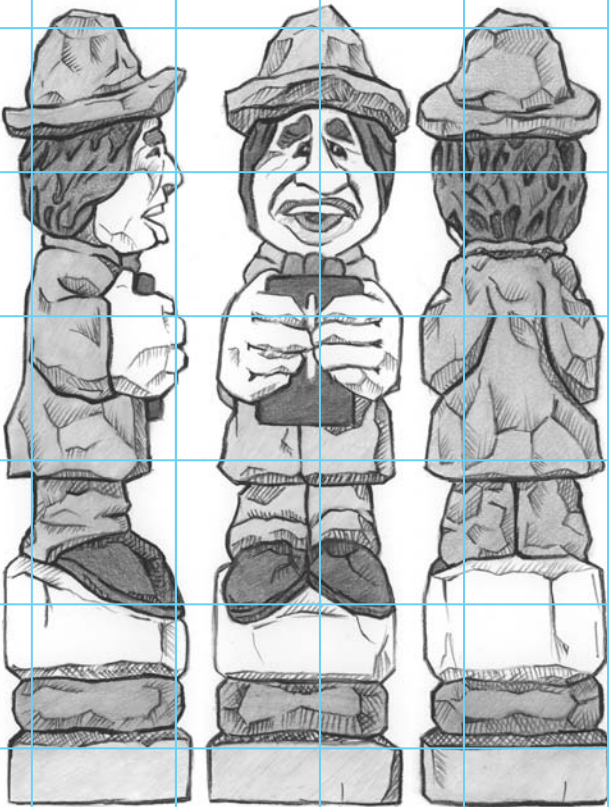
Queen patterns



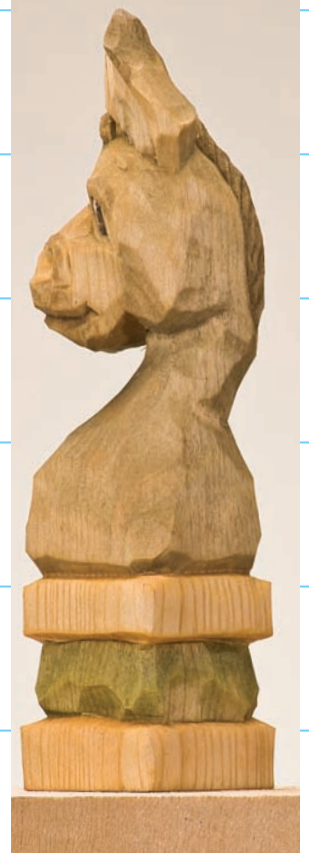
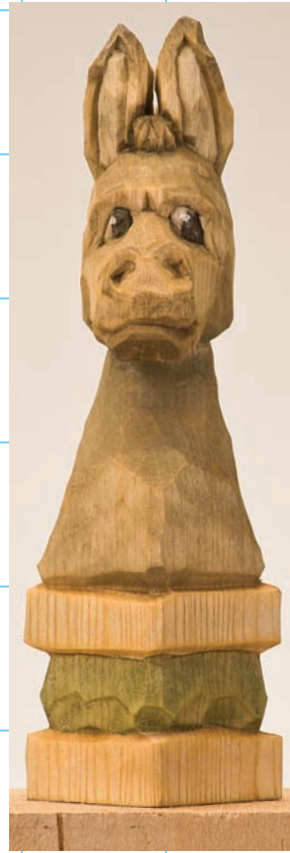
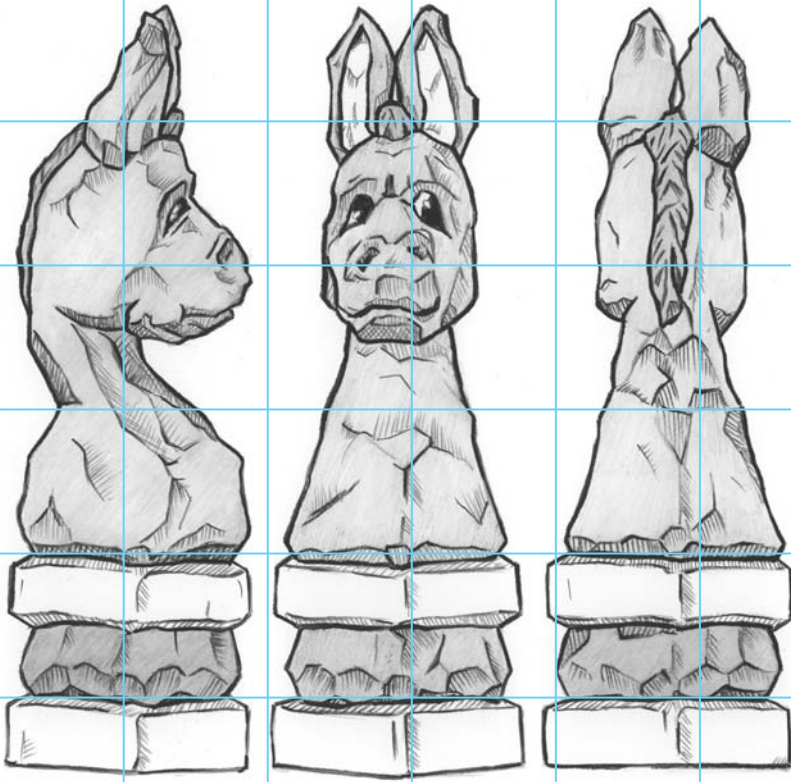
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Bishop patterns

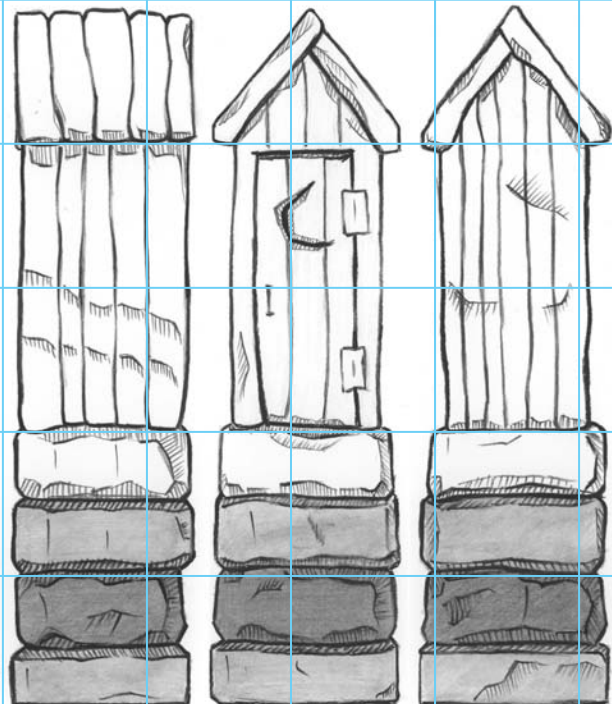
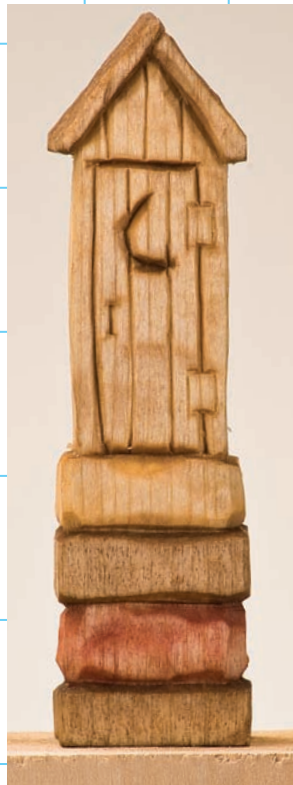
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Knight patterns



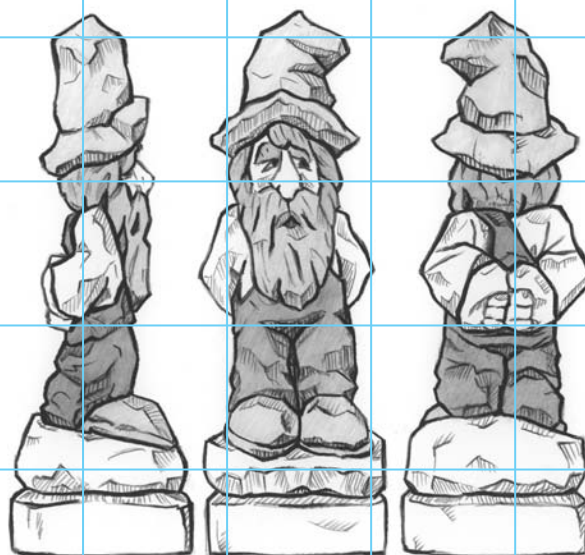
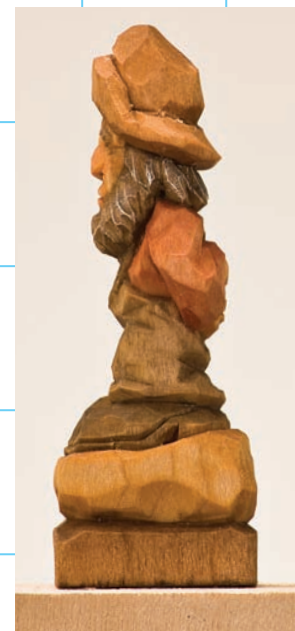
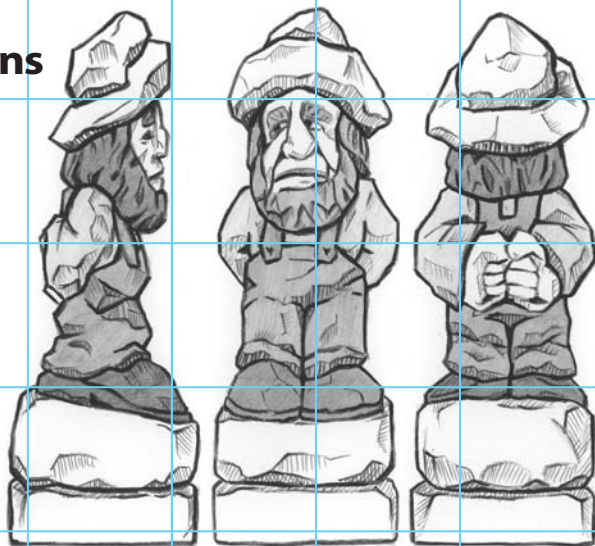
Rook patterns



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Pawn patterns

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materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 16 each 1 1/4" x 1 1/4" x 3 3/4" basswood (pawns)
- 4 each 1 1/4" x 1 1/4" x 4 3/4" basswood (rooks)
- 4 each 1 1/4" x 1 1/4" x 5 1/4" basswood (knights)
- 4 each 1 1/4" x 1 1/4" x 5 1/2" basswood (bishops)
- 4 each 1 1/4" x 1 1/4" x 6 1/4" basswood (kings and queens)
- Liquitex Acrylic Paint: mixture of equal parts Raw Sienna and Burnt Sienna (Red pieces' overalls and base, add a bit of Mars Black to the mixture for the red pieces' beard, hair, and shoes)
- Delta Ceramcoat acrylic paint: Dark Flesh (skin), Bright Red (wash around the mouth), Forest Green (green pieces' hats), Denim Blue (green pieces' overalls), Burnt Umber

- (green pieces' shoes), Light Ivory (green pieces' shirts, all highlights, and dry brush for red pieces' beard, and eye highlight), Brown Iron Oxide (flesh tone highlight wash), Moroccan Red mixed with a bit of Brown Iron Oxide (red pieces' shirts), Yellow with a bit of Orange (green pieces' hair)
- Boiled linseed oil
- Burnt umber oil paint
- Polyurethane

SPECIAL SOURCES:

Denny Ortel V-gouge is available for \$24.95 +\$6.49 s&h from Little Shavers, www.littleshavers.com, 206-767-7421.

TOOLS:

- Denny Ortel V-gouge
- Rough-out knife (I use a custom, sweep-up knife made by Rick Ferry)
- Detail knife
- 1/2" #5 gouge
- Flexcut 1/4" 60° V-tool
- 1/8"-wide deep micro-gouge
- 3mm #11 gouge
- #4 round brush
- #0 round brush or toothpick (eye highlight)

Carving in Low Relief

Learn to create the illusion of a 3-D carving in thin wood

By Chris Pye

In the previous article, "Basic Relief Techniques" (Issue 43), we discussed the three stages of a simple relief carving. The first two stages, lowering the background and outlining the subject, were covered in depth. This article focuses on the third stage, which includes modeling or shaping the subject itself. This is the stage that brings the relief carving to life and provides the illusion of an in-the-round carving caught within the thin piece of wood.

Low relief is flat—you'll see some of the finest low relief on coins. Low relief comes closest to drawing and often uses tricks of perspective. There is not a lot of wood to remove and the success of the carving depends a lot on the fluidity of lines and the overall illusion of depth.

I've chosen a koi or carp as my subject. I have watched these beautiful creatures in ponds, looking from above as they swim past with a slow, lazy movement. I'm trying for the sense of smooth flow with a slight turn of the koi's body. I am not too interested in factual correctness. This is a carving, a representation in wood, not a real fish.

Wood

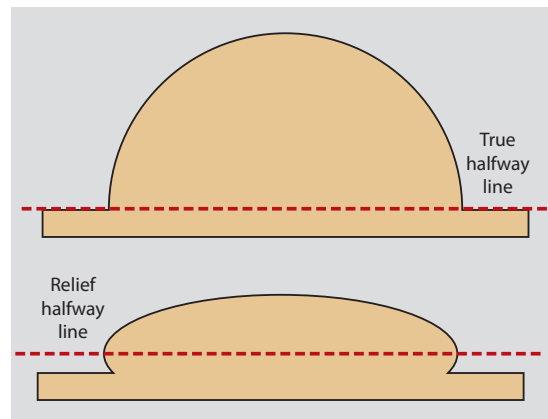
The depth of this carving is about $\frac{3}{16}$ ". I carve the low relief into the surface of a $1\frac{1}{2}$ "-thick block of limewood. Basswood or something similar is also acceptable. I intend to cut the completed carving from the block and carve a high-relief version of the same design in the remaining material next issue. Across the grain, my block is $11\frac{1}{2}$ ". Along the grain, it is 9".

Notice the grain runs horizontal, even though the height of the carving might suggest vertical would be preferable. The principal reason for the choice is strength; you must consider this from the start. I have orientated the grain so it runs into the weaker parts of the koi design: the tail, fins, and whiskers.

Rather than carving reeds or something similar in the background to anchor the design, I choose to bring out the figuring, which gives it a watery effect (see "Finishing," page 63).

A Beginner's Guide to
WOODCARVING

Creating a 3-D appearance



CARVING MORE THAN HALF: To be a proper relief carving, the subject should appear to continue around beyond the halfway line. Half an apple sticking out of a background is not a relief carving of an apple. You must squash the whole apple to reduce the depth dimension. The difference between low and high relief is a matter of how much the subject is compressed.

further reading

A Beginner's Guide to Woodcarving

From an introduction to the basic tools to practical ways to polish your skills, Chris Pye's continuing series is an invaluable reference for artists interested in learning traditional carving techniques. Find the complete series in back issues of Woodcarving Illustrated:

Tools of the Trade: Issue 36

Tuning Your Tools: Issue 37

Setting Up Shop: Issue 38

Tool Control: Issue 39

Basic Cuts: Issue 40

Simple Carved Moldings: Issue 41

Line Carving: Three Simple Styles: Issue 42

Basic Relief Techniques: Issue 43

Carving in Low Relief: Issue 44



Complete your library with individual back issues (\$6.99 + \$3.50 s&h) or Chris' numerous woodcarving books, available from Fox Chapel: 800-457-9112, 1970 Broad St., East Petersburg, Pa. 17520, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com.

CREATING PERSPECTIVE: Shaping, undercutting, and texturing create the illusion of dimension in thin wood.

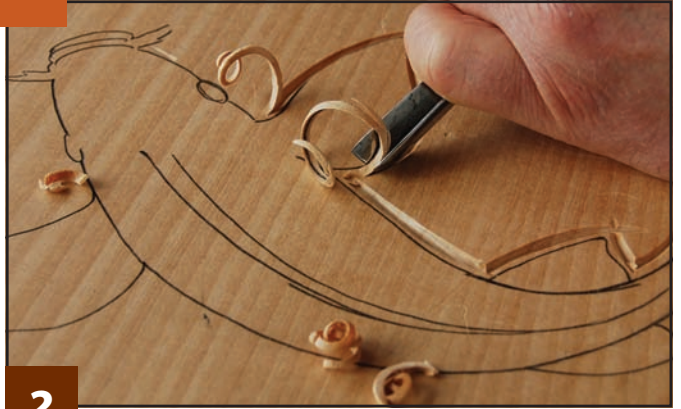


LOW-RELIEF KOI: SETTING IN THE SUBJECT



1

Transfer the design to the blank. Place carbon paper under the pattern and lock the two in place with a piece of masking tape. Trace the design onto the blank. Use a ruler and pencil or a marking gauge to make a mark $\frac{3}{16}$ " down from the top on all four sides. This will be the depth of the carving.



2

Outline the subject. Hold a V-tool in the low-angle grip and carve a groove around the koi. Position the clean side of the cut next to the koi and the rough side to the waste. Give the delicate areas, such as the whiskers, a wide berth and ignore any tricky areas or closed ground at this point.



3

Lower the background. Remove the wood with a #10 gouge held in the low-angle grip. Make long running cuts across the grain and use a narrower gouge in tight areas. Keep the corners clear of the wood. Smooth the background with a flat gouge (a #2 Pfeil or a #3 Sheffield). Carve at right angles to the grain and slice the cutting edge to the left or right. Strive for a smooth level surface, stopping short of the subject's edges.



4

Set in and smooth the outline. Use the high-angle grip and taper the walls 10-15° outward. Don't cut below the background. Match the tight curves with the sweep of a gouge. Slice the long curves with a shallow gouge. Push with your thumb, treating the edge like a knife. Merge the cuts into a smooth line.



5

Finish the background. Smooth the background up to the subject with flat gouges in the low-angle grip. Use the appropriate gouge in the high-angle grip to create a smooth transition between the subject and the background. Do not leave stab marks in the background as they will be readily apparent. Use a skew chisel or a flat short-bent gouge in the tight area where the tail fins come together.

LOW-RELIEF KOI: MODELING THE SUBJECT

This brings us to the third stage where we model or shape the subject. By its very nature, a low-relief carving is essentially flat; there is little wood to remove. It's worth mentioning that without a router, getting to this point in the carving can actually take as long, or longer, than carving the subject itself. Modeling the subject is done in stages. We will start by creating the overall shape of the subject. Undercutting is done next and final details are added last. It is a sign that you have put details in too early if you subsequently change the shape and have to carve the details away.

Begin shaping your relief subject by determining two main features: changes in level or strong changes in planes, and high spots. On the koi, the changes in level are where the fins meet the body, where the tail fins come together, and the whiskers. The high spots on the koi, or areas where you must leave the most wood, are the center spine and the body to either side of the spine. The koi further divides into three sections: body, head, and tail. We will approach the carving in this order, although not all subjects readily divide into such a neat and tidy order.



6

Lower the fin area. Use a V-tool to separate the fins from the body. Make sure the clean side of the cut is against the body. Reduce the fins to a thickness $\frac{1}{3}$ up from the background; this level represents the virtual halfway line of the subject. Use a flat gouge for the small fins, but use a deeper gouge to shape the larger fins.



7

Round the body. Turn a medium-sweep gouge (#5) upside-down and use the curved edge to round the corners of the body. Make long cuts in the direction of the grain and bring the rounded edge down to the background. Blend these cuts to avoid a chamfered look. You may need to set in and finish the background again to tidy up the junction, which is now more visible.



8

Shape the rest of the body. Make the tail end of the body more interesting by tilting it. Remove more wood on the inside curve of the tail. Do not carve the tail fins yet. Run a deep gouge (#8) along both sides of the center spine. Put the clean side of the groove along the spine and taper the spine toward the tail. Merge this groove with the rest of the body.



9

Shape the eyes. Set in the eyes with a $\frac{5}{16}$ " #5 gouge. Shape the eyes with an upside-down $\frac{3}{8}$ " #4 gouge. This fish is viewed from above so the eye will be almost vertical—it is really only the top edge that is seen. Round the corners of the head, merging the head into the body and mouth.



10

Shape the mouth. Separate the whiskers from the mouth. Then trim back and set in the whiskers. Use a V-tool to create the folds around the lips. Carefully separate the whiskers by cutting grooves between them with an appropriate gouge.



11

Shape the tail. Do not round over this part of the koi like the rest of the body. Create contrast by keeping the tail flat, right up to the edges. You may need a grounding tool—a flat short-bent gouge—to clean up the tight space between the tail fins.

LOW-RELIEF KOI: UNDERCUTTING AND DETAILS

Undercutting gives a sense of definition and drama to the subject by lifting it away from the background and forming shadows. Normally an angle of about 20° is enough to create the effect. Only undercut the fins and tail of the koi. Leaving the body and head parts to descend straight to the background without undercutting makes them seem more solid. Undercutting the fins and tail makes them appear lighter.



12

Undercut the fins and tail. There are two methods to undercutting. The first is to remove a sliver of wood from under the edge with a V-tool. The second is to set in the edges with the gouge angled to make a tapered cut inward. Check and clean up the junction between the undercut wall and the background. Gently smooth out any depressions in the background.



13

Carve the scales. Plan your scales. The body narrows towards the tail and you'll need to shape the scale pattern carefully so the fit is believable. You can use a variety of gouges to give different sized scales. Practice on scrap wood first. The simplest method to carving scales is to hold a deep gouge in a high-angle grip. Stab into the wood, overlapping the cuts for the scale effect. Angle the gouge so the corners stab in more deeply.



14

Add the grooves or flutes to the fins and tail. Practice on scrap wood. Draw the flutes lightly with a pencil. The flutes taper in toward the body, but stop short of it. Carve the flutes with a deep gouge. Make a trial cut first, and work backward and forward carving with the clean side and avoiding the tearing side of the gouge to create the clean ridge. The ridges between the flutes—what you actually see—must flow smoothly.

LOW-RELIEF KOI: FINISHING

Work to create contrast between the fish and the water without losing the feel of the wood. I bleach the koi using Rustins, a 2-part bleach for wood, available in the U.K. Test the bleach on scrap wood before applying to your carving. Be careful not to get the bleach on the background. You could also apply a white stain or dye to the wood. Then seal the fish in a matte acrylic varnish to give a light polish to the surface.

Finally, brush tung oil into the background. Danish oil and linseed oil are alternatives. The oil not only brings out the figure of the wood, but also any imperfections, such as stab marks and tears. Make sure your background is immaculately tooled before you apply the oil. The strength of figuring the oil brings out gives a watery effect to the background, a sense of the koi swimming in something. Alternatively, carve wavy lines into the background with a V-tool.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 1½" x 9" (along the grain) x 11½" (across the grain) limewood, basswood, or wood of choice
- Wood bleach, or white stain or dye
- Tung oil, Danish oil, or linseed oil
- Carbon paper

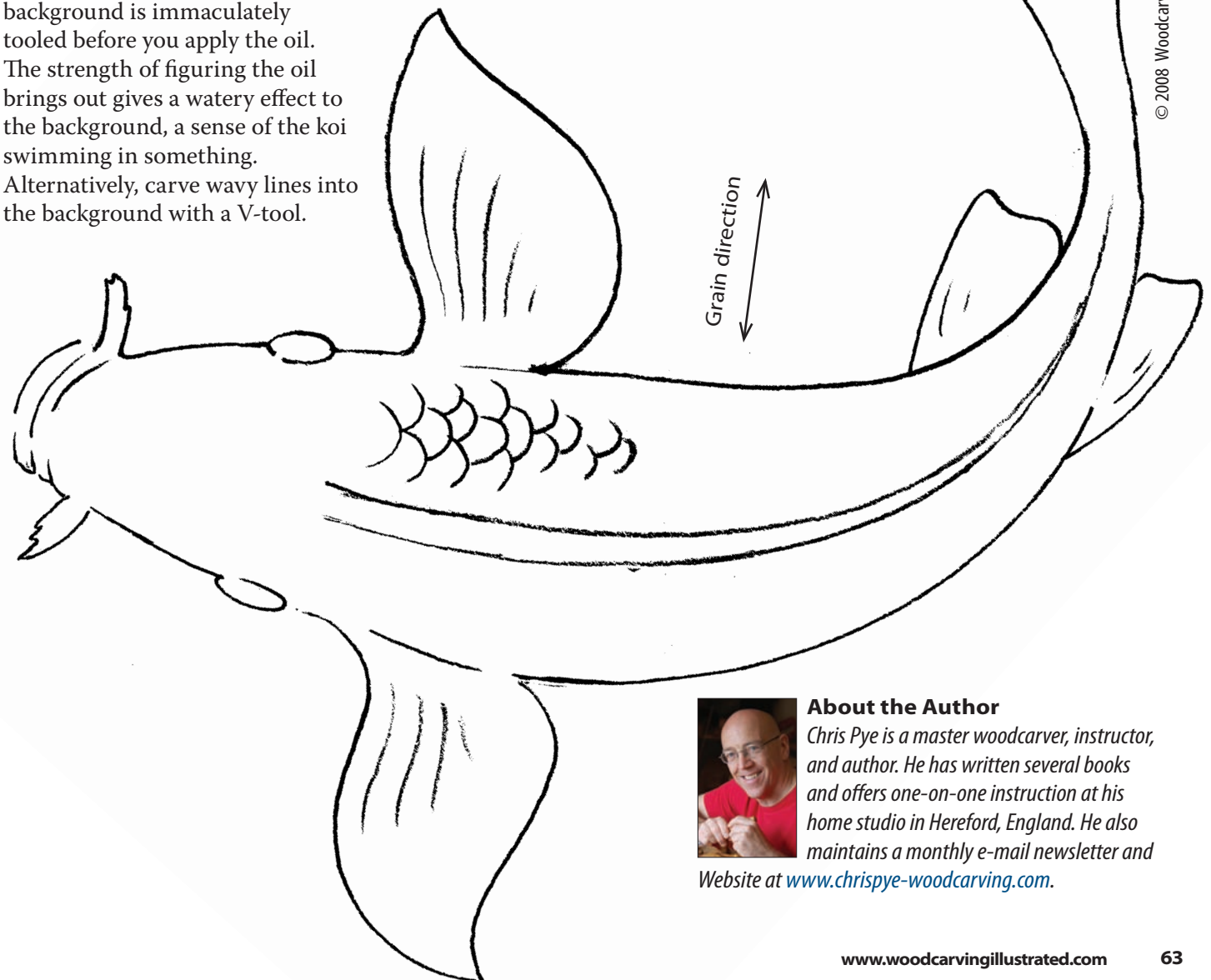
TOOLS:

I've provided a complete list of the regular carving gouges used for this carving.

Reasonably similar tools should work just as well.

Regular Gouges (Sheffield list):

- #3 gouges: ½", ¾", and 1½"
- ⅜" #4 gouge
- ⅝" #5 gouge
- ⅝" #6 gouge
- ⅜" #8 gouge
- ¾" #10 gouge
- 7/16" 60° V-tool
- ⅜" skew chisel
- Flat short-bent gouge (optional)
- Pencil and ruler or marking gauge
- Rags or brushes to apply finish



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About the Author

Chris Pye is a master woodcarver, instructor, and author. He has written several books and offers one-on-one instruction at his home studio in Hereford, England. He also maintains a monthly e-mail newsletter and

Website at www.chrispye-woodcarving.com.

Quilt Patterns Inspire Chip-carved Coasters

Classic geometric designs embellish this useful caddy

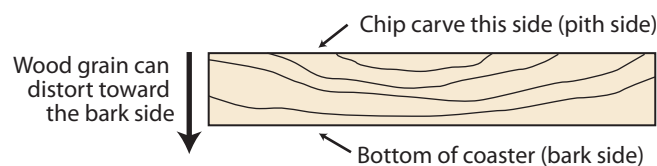
By Barry McKenzie

Learning to convert a variety of patterns into chip-carving patterns will open up a whole new world of opportunities. Nearly any image can be converted into a free-form chip-carving pattern, but quilt patterns are especially well-suited for geometric chip-carved designs.

Books specializing in traditional quilt patterns are a rich source of inspiration. I found inspiration in a fabric quilt square created by my wife, Barbara. Once you are open to using patterns from other sources, you'll start to see chip-carving patterns everywhere. Breaking these designs down into chip-carving patterns is a good way to learn about pattern drafting and study design concepts. This conversion process involves you more in the pattern. The pattern is no longer just random lines.

I've adapted a variety of quilt patterns to create this set of coasters. You can create an entire set using one design or mix and match the designs for a complete set. Each design uses a combination of standard chip-carving techniques. The individual chip styles have been detailed in previous issues of *Woodcarving Illustrated*. Start by cutting your stock into 3½" squares and sanding out any surface irregularities. Then, trace or draw the pattern onto the blank.

One of the most helpful discoveries I have made in chip carving is how placing vertical stab cuts in the chip cavity provides control over the chip. Lateral displacement of the wood by the knife can cause breakout between chips. I control this lateral displacement by making vertical cuts inside the wood to be removed. With the stab cuts in place, the displacement created by the outlining cuts breaks the chips to pieces, producing perfectly shaped chips.



PATTERN PLACEMENT: Wood tends to cup toward the bark side. Examine the end grain and carve on the pith side.

COASTERS: THE DIAMOND CHIP



1

Make the vertical stab cuts. Vertical stab cuts function as stop cuts. Cut at a 90°-angle along the dotted lines. The dotted lines indicate the centerlines of the different segments of the chip. The line in the center denotes the deepest part of the chip.



2

Cut along the sides of the chip. Hold the knife at any angle between 45° and 65°. The actual angle of entry is not critical as long as all of the angles of entry are identical. Cut down to the same depth on each of the cuts. The stab cuts break up the chip, making removal easy.



3

Remove the chip. Brush out the small broken pieces of the chip. Cut across the grain, with the knife held at the same angle, to remove any remaining wood inside the chip.



Geometric designs inspired by quilt patterns make beautiful coasters.

COASTERS: GUIDING STAR COASTER



4

Make the line cuts. Simple line cuts are used to define areas, such as the border, and to highlight the intersection of shallow chips. Angle your knife slightly and cut along both sides of the line. The cuts should intersect in the center at the deepest point of the chip. Free the chips at the corners.



5

Make stop cuts on the two sides of the triangles. The stop cuts are deepest at the point of the triangle and taper to a very shallow cut at the base of the triangle. Most of these chips are less than $\frac{1}{8}$ " deep in the corner of the triangle.



6

Remove the chips. Slice along the base up to the stop cuts. The depth of the cut is shallow at the base, but increases as you approach the point of the triangle. This slicing cut frees the chip. Depending on the depth of your chip, it may take two cuts to remove the entire chip.

COASTERS: THE COASTER CADDY

Cut the pieces of the caddy to the sizes listed in the materials list. Cut 45° miters on the sides of the caddy where indicated on the pattern. Cut the finger cutouts on the sides with a band saw or scroll saw. Transfer the full pattern to the center of the long sides. Fold the full pattern along the dotted line and transfer the pattern to the blanks, aligning the fold with the mitered ends of all four side pieces. Chip carve the designs before assembly. Apply wood glue to the sides of the base and to the miters on the side pieces. Place all six pieces in position and clamp them in place until the glue dries.

COASTERS: FINISHING NOTES

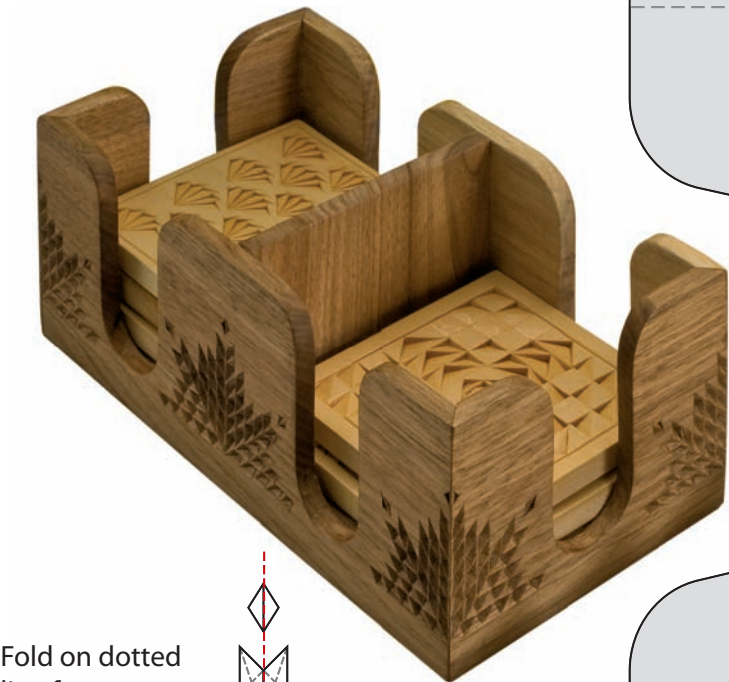
Because wet glasses will be placed on the coasters, they need to be protected. Pay attention to the end grain of the wood when finishing, as it is more porous and will absorb more finish.

For the first coat of finish, dilute one part Behlen Rockhard™ Table Top Varnish with an equal amount of mineral spirits. The thinned varnish will penetrate deeper into the wood. Allow the finish to dry overnight. If the finish bubbles, sand with used 400-grit or finer sandpaper. Keep the finish mixture in a jar and use a stencil-size brush that can be stored inside the closed jar; that way you will not need to clean your brush each time. Add a bit of extra varnish to the mixture and apply a second coat of finish.

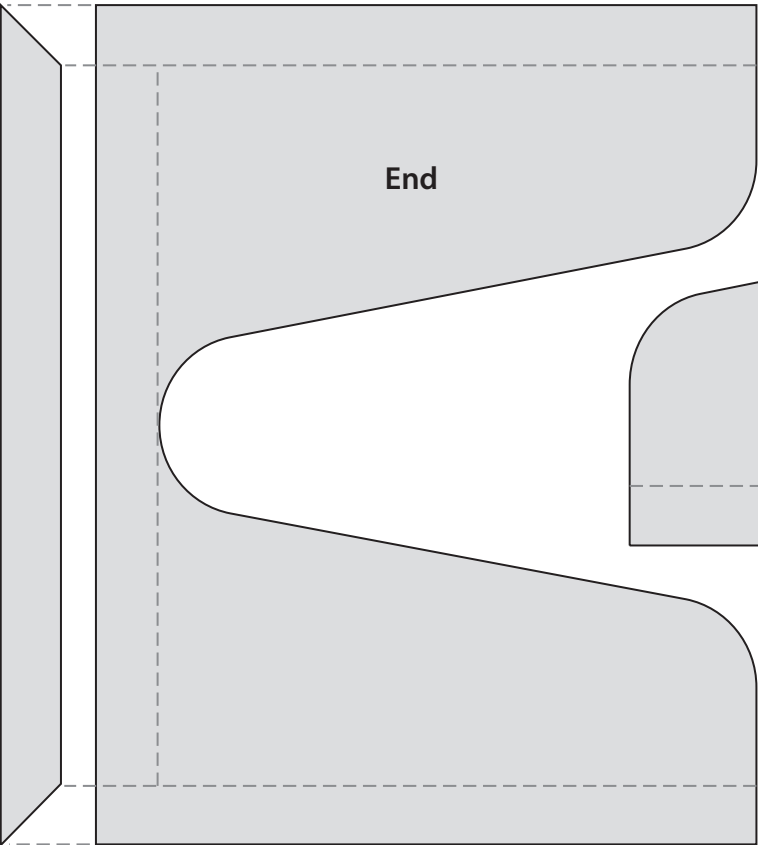
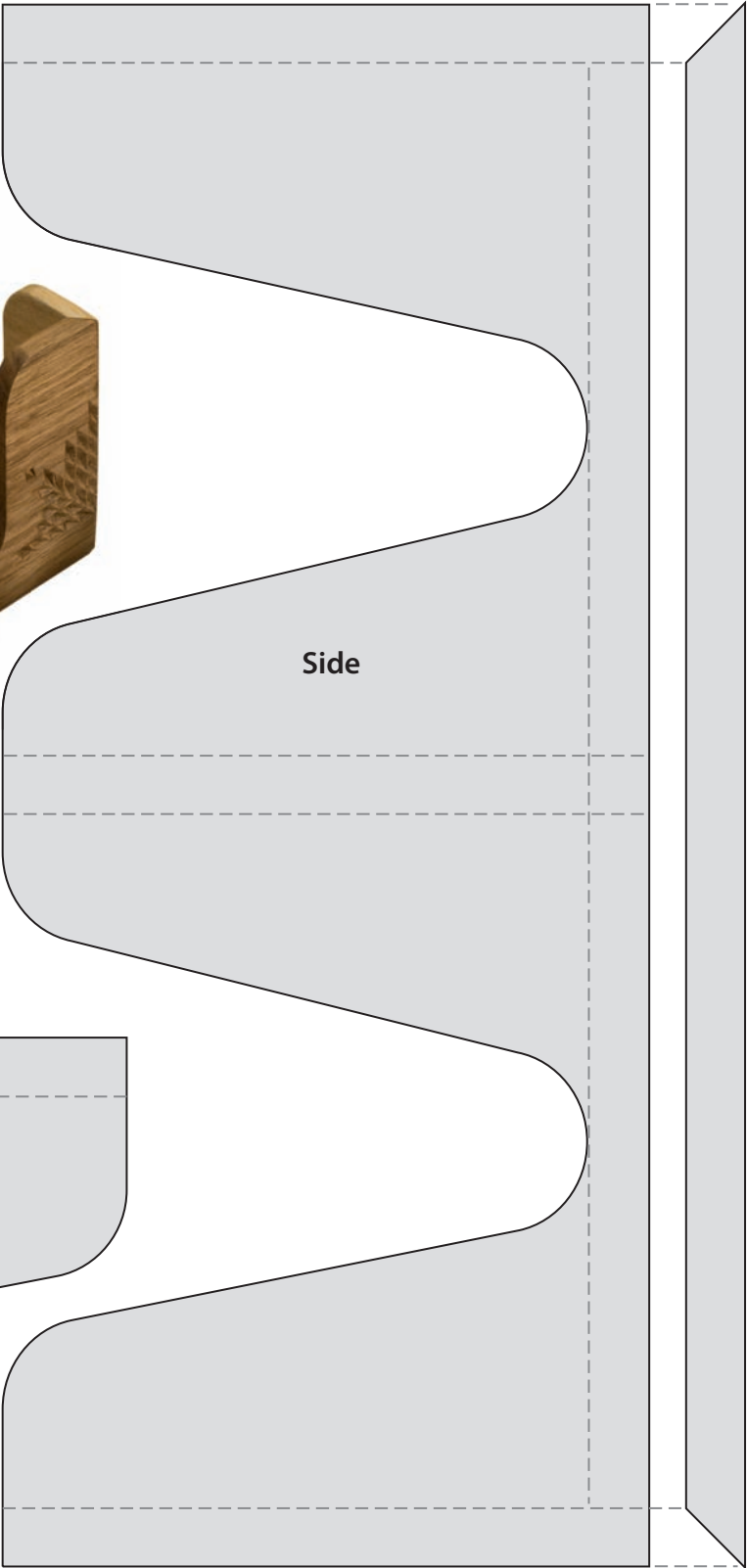
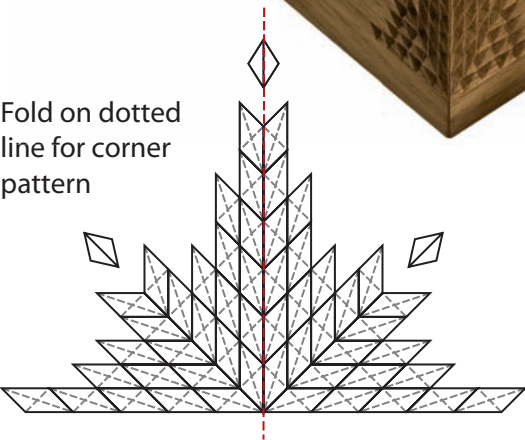
After the second coat has dried, apply a light stain to the chip cavities. Wipe off the stain immediately. Allow the stain to dry overnight. Add more varnish to the finish mixture and apply a third coat. Brush the finish onto the wood with the grain and do not let the finish puddle up in the chip cavities. Tilt the coaster this way and that in a well-lit area to make sure the finish is consistent and bubble-free. After the finish dries, apply a light coat of the thinned varnish to the back of the coasters. You can leave the coasters as they are or attach small self-adhesive felt dots. You will need to adjust the dimensions of the coaster caddy if you add the felt. Polish the varnish with a crumpled-up brown paper bag or used dryer sheets.

Clean your hands and the brushes with dishwashing liquid. The coaster caddy can be sealed using your finish of choice. I use a tung oil finish.

Coaster caddy patterns

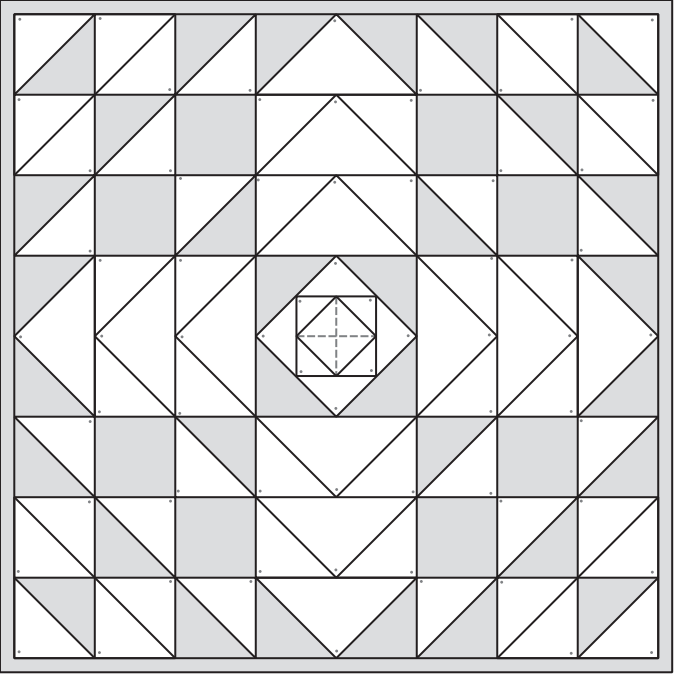
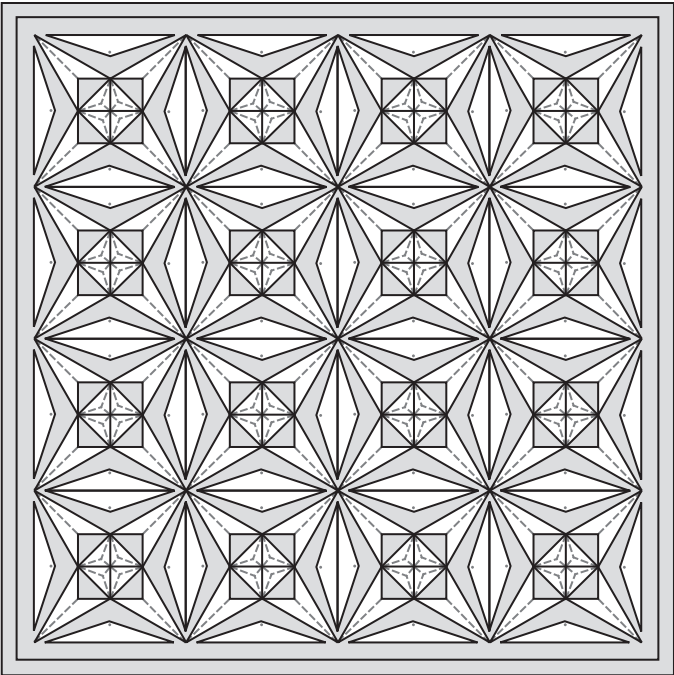
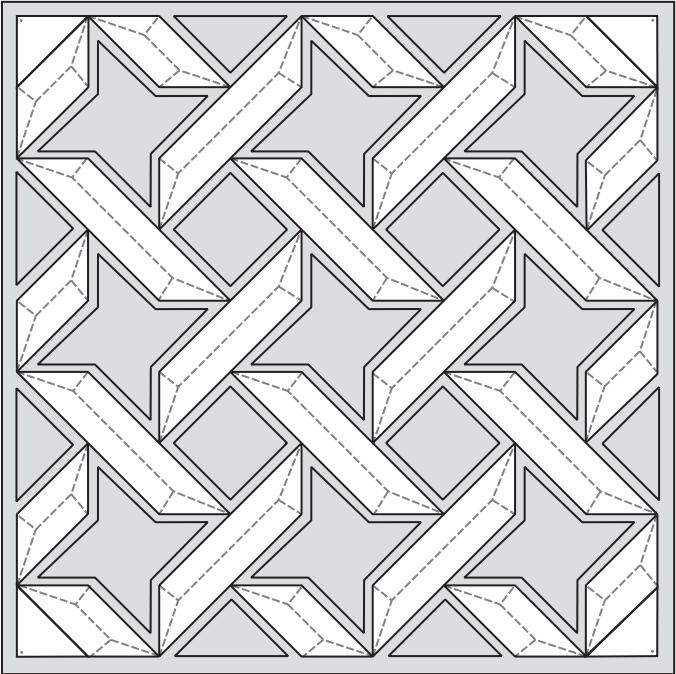
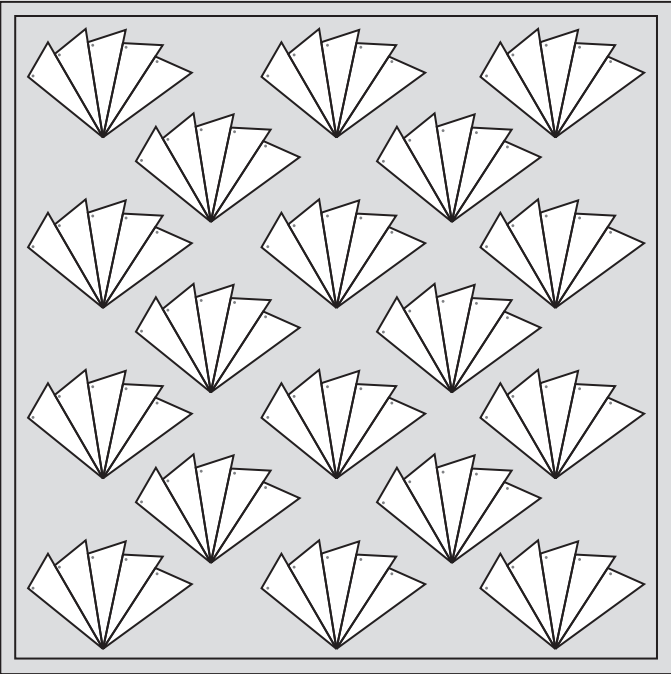


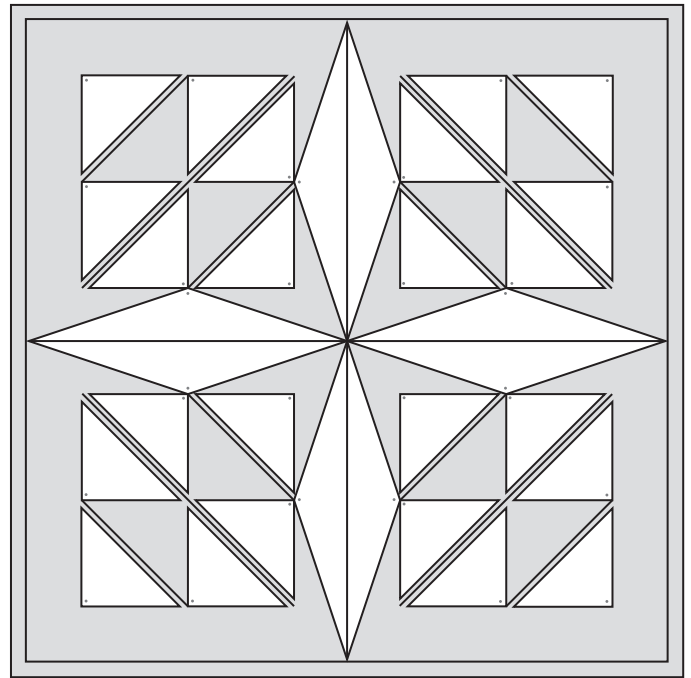
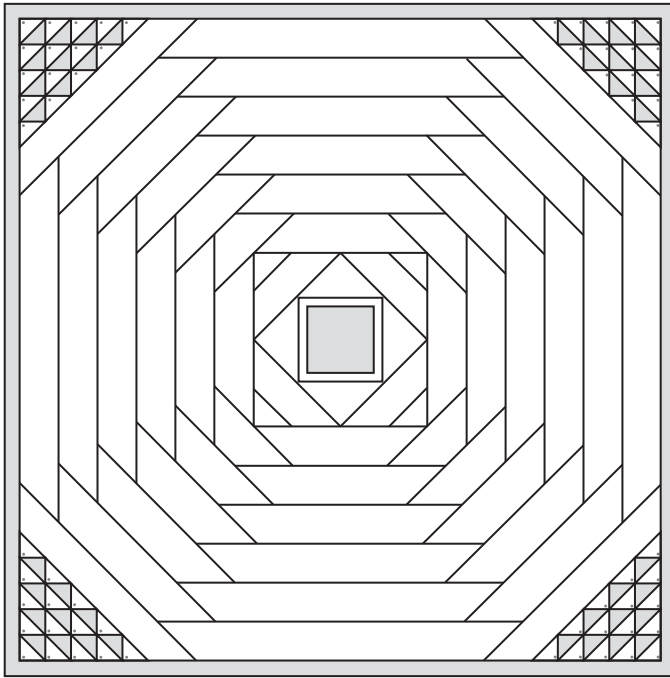
Fold on dotted line for corner pattern



Bottom and center divider dimensions are listed on the Materials & Tools list on page 69.

Coaster patterns





MATERIALS:

- 12 each $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ " basswood or wood of choice (coasters)
- 2 each $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $3\frac{7}{16}$ " x $4\frac{3}{8}$ " butternut or wood of choice (short coaster caddy sides)
- 2 each $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $3\frac{7}{16}$ " x $8\frac{5}{16}$ " butternut or wood of choice (long coaster caddy sides)
- $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $2\frac{7}{8}$ " x $3\frac{3}{4}$ " butternut or wood of choice (coaster caddy center divider)
- $\frac{3}{8}$ " x $3\frac{3}{4}$ " x $7\frac{3}{8}$ " butternut or wood of choice (coaster caddy bottom)
- Behlen Rockhard™ Table Top Varnish, high gloss

- Formby's Tung Oil Satin Finish
- Golden Oak stain or light stain of choice
- Used 400-grit or finer sandpaper (remove bubbles in finish)
- Crumpled up brown paper bag or used dryer sheets (polish finish)
- Self-adhesive felt dots (optional)

materials & tools

TOOLS:

- Chip carving knife of choice
- Ruler, square, and mechanical pencil (to draw on pattern) or graphite paper (to trace on pattern)
- Stencil-size brush (to apply finish)
- Rags (to wipe up excess finish)

SPECIAL SOURCES:

Behlen Rockhard™ Table Top Varnish, high gloss: Woodcraft, 800-225-1153, www.woodcraft.com

ONLINE BONUS

Download six additional quilt square chip patterns from our Website. woodcarvingillustrated.com



About the Author

Barry McKenzie is a popular instructor and owner of the School of Chip Carving. Barry has several pattern booklets available, including a booklet of additional quilt-inspired patterns. Contact him at 23427 Route 66, Lebanon, MO 65536, or chipcarvingschool@hotmail.com.

Quick-carve **Halloween Cat**

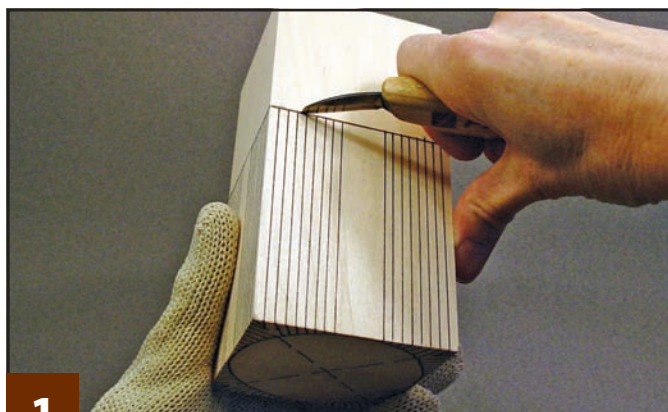
Fun Halloween decoration is easy to carve and paint.

Colorful pumpkins and whimsical cat make a great beginner's project

By Cyndi Joslyn

Just in time for Halloween, this adorable black cat brings Happy Halloween wishes to all who cross his path. Simple instructions and a basic paint scheme make it easy to create several carvings for the special trick-or-treaters in your life.

An excellent project for practicing carving rounded sections, the methodical approach makes it an accessible project for any skill level. Place graphite transfer paper under the pattern and trace the guidelines onto the blanks.



1

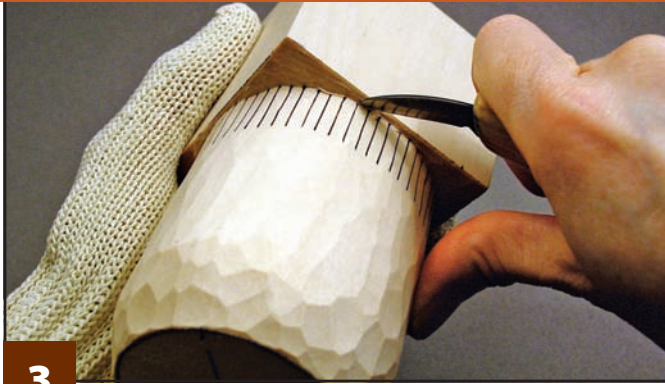
Rough out the bottom pumpkin. Use a bench knife to score the line dividing the two pumpkins. Using the circle on the bottom as a guide, remove the waste wood from the shaded corner areas. Carve away the waste with a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge to carve an evenly rounded cylinder.



2

Round the lower edges of the bottom pumpkin. Measure in $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge of the cylinder, creating a circle on the bottom. Use a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge to round the edges to the circle. Extend this rounding $\frac{1}{4}$ " down the sides.

HALLOWEEN CAT: CARVING THE PUMPKINS



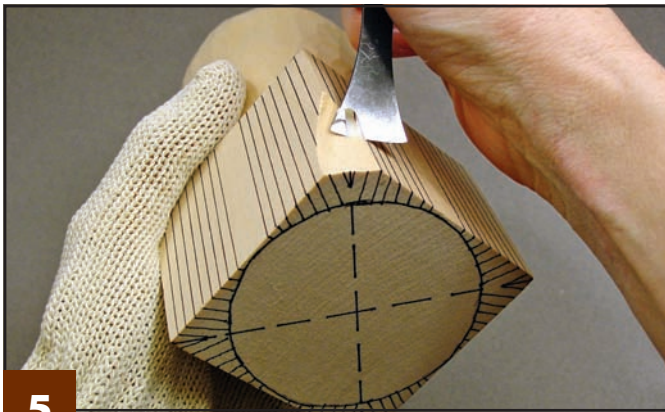
3

Round the top edge of the bottom pumpkin. Score a stop cut along the upper edge of the pumpkin with a bench knife. Then round the top edge of the pumpkin up into the stop cut, using a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge.



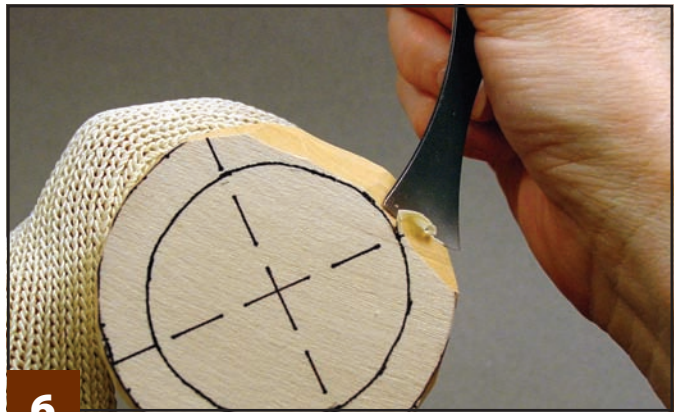
4

Round the bottom pumpkin. Use a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge to blend away any sharp lines so the pumpkin is evenly rounded from top to bottom. Create a smooth transition from the top and bottom into the fuller sides.



5

Rough out the top pumpkin. Use the circle on the top as a guide and shade the waste area in the four corners. Remove the waste with a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge to carve the square into an evenly rounded cylinder.



6

Round the top of the top pumpkin. Measure in $\frac{3}{8}$ " from the edge of the top pumpkin and create a circle. Use a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge to round the edges to the circle. Extend this rounding $1\frac{1}{4}$ " down the sides.



7

Define the pumpkins. Use a bench knife to score a line between the pumpkins. Round the top pumpkin down to the scored line with a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge. Continue to score and carve the top pumpkin until you have created a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-thick rim on the top of the bottom pumpkin so it looks like the top pumpkin is sitting on top of the bottom pumpkin.



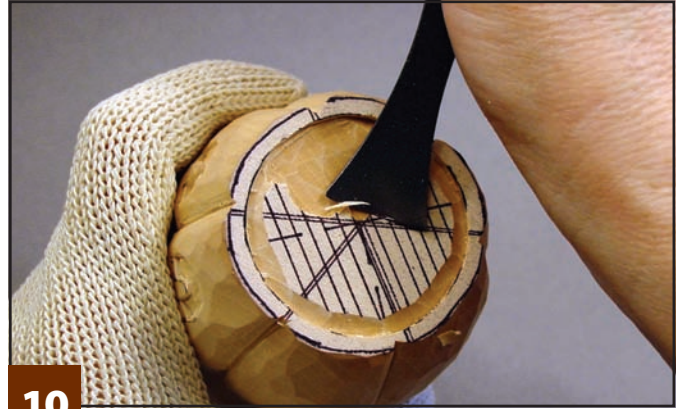
8

Create the pumpkin segments. Divide the circle on the bottom of the lower pumpkin into six evenly spaced sections. Continue the lines up the sides of the pumpkin. Repeat this process on the top pumpkin, staggering the lines from the lower pumpkin. Use a bench knife to score each line and slightly round each segment.



9

Draw faces on the pumpkins. The faces are slightly offset from one another. Trace the patterns onto the pumpkins, then use a detail knife to outline the features. Use a detail knife or a 3mm #5 gouge to carve away a small amount of wood inside each feature, recessing them slightly.



10

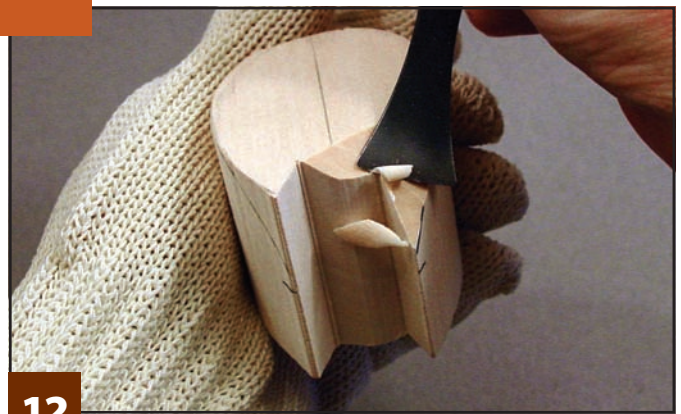
Recess the opening on the top pumpkin. Measure in $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge of the top pumpkin, creating a circle. Score this line with a bench knife or detail knife. Use a bench knife and a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge to form a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-deep recess inside the circle. Round the top edge with a bench knife.

HALLOWEEN CAT: CARVING THE HEAD



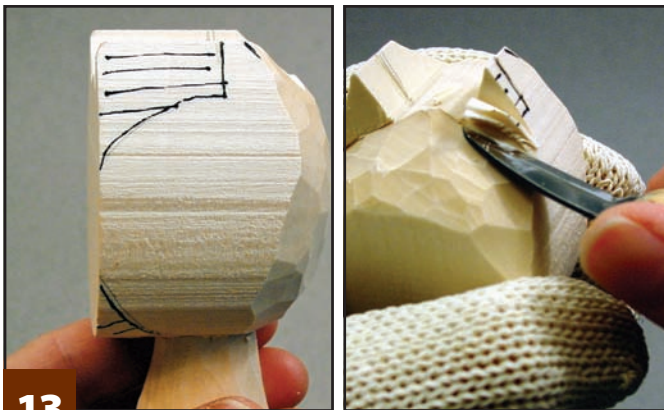
11

Rough out the cat's head. Transfer the cat's head pattern to the front of the blank and cut the outline on a band saw. Use the circle guideline to shape the cat's neck with a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge. Use the same gouge to round the neck. The diameter of the cat's neck is 1" at the base and $\frac{3}{4}$ " where it joins the head.



12

Shape the back of the cat's head. Transfer the profile pattern to both sides of the cat's head. Remove the waste behind the ears and at the bottom of the head. With a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge, carefully round the backs of the ears. Round the wood down to the neck, using a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge.



13

Rough out the cat's face. Remove the waste in the shaded area using a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge. Use a bench knife to cut thin layers in front of the ears until you reach the final thickness. Shape the area between the ears with a bench knife. Round the face into the neck with a $\frac{5}{8}$ " or $\frac{7}{8}$ " #3 gouge.



14

Add the nose. Draw in the cat's nose. It starts $\frac{7}{8}$ " down from the front of the ears. The nose is $1\frac{1}{4}$ " long, $\frac{5}{8}$ " wide at the bottom, and $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide at the top. Score the lines around the nose with a detail knife. Then use the detail knife to remove $\frac{1}{8}$ " of wood on the three sides of the nose.



15

Finish carving the nose and ears. Round off the sharp edges with a bench knife. Use a detail knife to score a $\frac{5}{16}$ "-long line below the nose. Remove a sliver of wood on each side of the line to simulate a mouth. Use a 5mm #9 gouge to shape the recessed areas on the ears.



16

Assemble the carving. Attach the head to the pumpkin by drilling a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter hole in the head and top pumpkin. Apply wood glue to both holes and insert a $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter by 1" dowel into the head. Slide the dowel down into the hole in the pumpkin, turn it to the desired position, and let the glue dry.

HALLOWEEN CAT: PAINTING & FINISHING



Paint the carving using the photo as a guide. Varnish and antique the carving with antiquing medium mixed with raw sienna and burnt sienna acrylic paint. Create round dots for the eyes using the wooden end of a paintbrush dipped in apple green paint. Use a fine-line permanent

marker to add the cat's vertical pupils. Finish with a sparkle of light ivory. The whiskers are made from six 2" lengths of 24-gauge black-coated wire. Randomly bend the wire. Drill three $\frac{1}{32}$ "-diameter holes on each side of the face using the orange dots as reference points. The orange dots shown in the above photo are not actually painted on the cat's face. Glue the whiskers in place with cyanoacrylate glue.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- 3" x 3" x 6" basswood block (pumpkins)
- 2" x 2" x 3½" basswood block (cat head)
- ⅛"-diameter by 1" wooden dowel (attach head)
- Six 2" lengths of 24-gauge black-coated wire (whiskers)
- Water-based satin-finish varnish, mixed one part water to one part varnish
- Acrylic paint, such as Delta Ceramcoat, in: apple green, black, dark flesh, ivory, light ivory, and tangerine
- Cyanoacrylate glue
- Wood glue

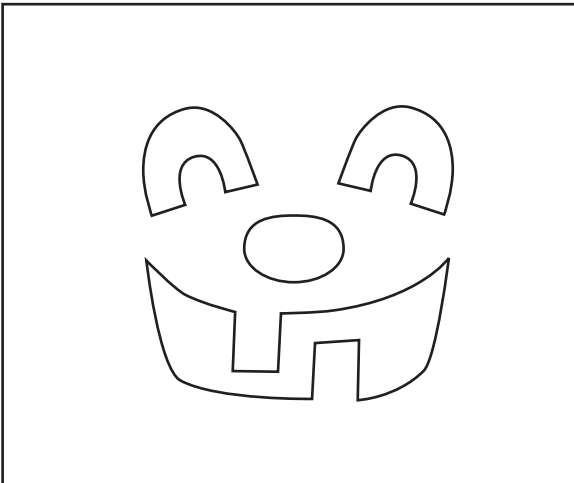
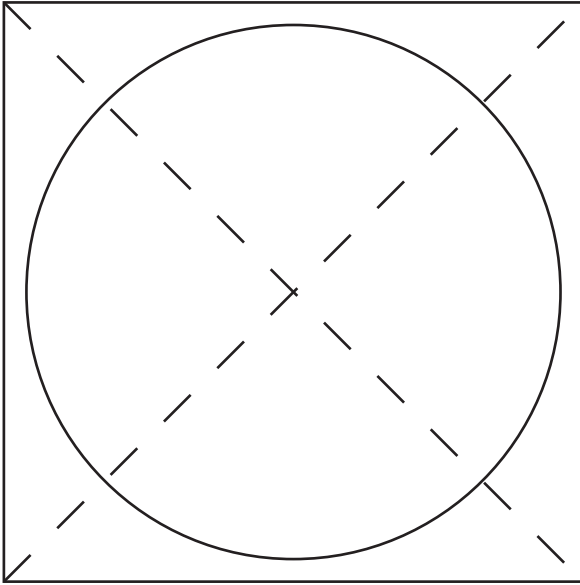
Antiquing:

- Antiquing medium/retarder, such as Jo Sonja's
- Acrylic paint, such as Delta Ceramcoat, in: burnt sienna and raw sienna
- Cotton swabs

TOOLS:

- Bench knife
- Detail knife
- ⅝" or ⅞" #3 gouge
- 3mm #5 gouge
- 5mm #9 gouge
- Ruler
- Band saw
- Drill with ⅛"-diameter drill bit
- Hand drill and ⅛"-diameter drill bit
- ¾" wash brush or small flat brush
- Flat brushes in sizes 2 to 8
- Black fine-line permanent marker
- #0 or #1 liner brushes for detail painting
- Old flat brush (to apply antiquing)
- Soft cloth or old T-shirt (to wipe off extra antiquing)

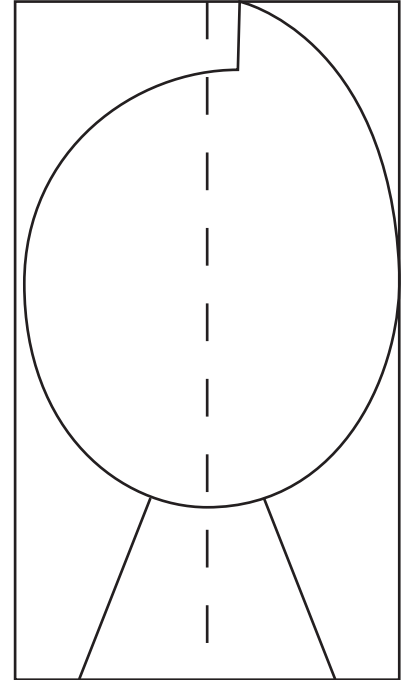
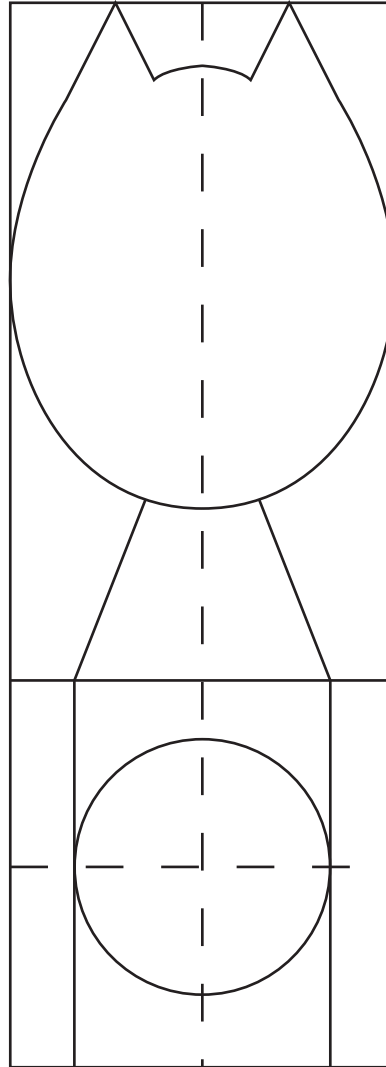
Pumpkin ends
Trace on top and bottom



Pumpkin sides
Trace red line on all four sides

Halloween cat patterns

Cat head
Trace on front before cutting



Cat profile
Trace on both sides after cutting

Cat neck
Trace on bottom

further reading

Halloween Woodcarving

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About the Author

Cyndi Joslyn of Idaho Falls, Idaho, is a prolific carver, author and teacher. For more about her online classes and published works, visit www.cyndijoslyn.com.

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Carving a House Sign

Learn letter-carving and gilding techniques with a traditional residential plaque

By Francis S. Lestingi



Producing a hand-carved, gold-leafed sign is tantamount to creating a methodical masterpiece. Every carved sign requires a set of procedures, which when followed, can be used to produce a sign ranging in size from a large 40-square-foot church sign to a modest house sign. The same methods are used to carve signs of any size.

For signs, I use only mahogany, and despite the beauty of its rich grain, I coat it with paint, because a clear finish cannot withstand the elements as well as sign-industry primers and top coats. I use five

custom-mixed background colors, which are dark and rich, to enhance the applied gold leaf.

There are two approaches to carving a sign: carve first, then paint and gild later; or paint first, carve, then paint again and gild later. The former sounds like the simplest approach, but the latter is actually easier. For this plaque, we will use both techniques on different segments of the plaque.

The sign's design is the most important phase of the production. If the design is mediocre or generic, the finished product can be no better.

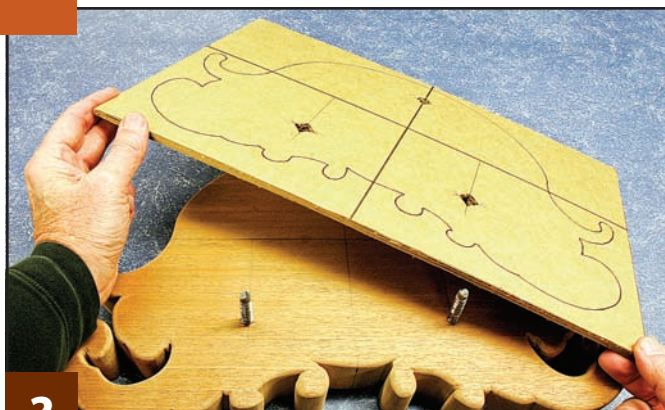
SIGN CARVING: CARVING THE PLAQUE



1

Cut the blank to shape. Transfer the pattern to the blank.

I use a laser print of the pattern and a heat pen transfer tool. You could also position carbon paper or graphite paper under a photocopy of the pattern and trace it onto the wood. Cut the design using a saber saw. Don't worry about the detailed areas yet; they will be refined with hand tools later.



2

Add the hanger bolts. Position and pre-drill the holes for the hanger bolts.

Twist the bolts in place with locking pliers. Use the bolts to produce a cardboard template to make positioning the holes for the bolts on the house easy. Hanger bolts can be found at most hardware stores. They are often used to secure toilets to wooden floors so they may be in the plumbing section.



3

Make registration marks on the sides. Remove the hanger bolts. Carve small nicks onto the sides to mark the centerlines before painting. This will save you the trouble of having to re-measure later. It is particularly important to do this with an oval shape because it is impossible to reestablish the major and minor axes of the oval after the carving is painted.



4

Outline the cove. The oval portion of the plaque has a cove that will be gilded later. Run a 3mm 90° V-tool down the center of the cove. This provides a shallow root line or centerline for the entire cove. To enhance the reflectivity of the gold leaf, it is very important to keep the depth of incised letters, numbers, lines, and scrolls as shallow as possible.



5

Carve the oval. The inner, or concave, side of the curve is carved with a 12mm #1 chisel. Start at the black line and end at the root line. On the outer or convex side of the oval, cuts are made with a 25mm #2 gouge, again starting at the black line and ending at the root line.



6

Carve the scrolls. Repeat steps 4 and 5 to carve the scrolls. Use the same V-tool to establish the root line. The gouge sizes and sweeps, and the chisel sizes, will depend on the tightness of the curves in the scrolls, but the general carving procedure is the same regardless of the shape of the curves.

SIGN CARVING: COATING THE PLAQUE



7

Prime the sign. Apply three coats of a sign-industry, water-based primer. Sand with 120-grit sandpaper between coats to ensure a smooth finish. Use two containers and tint one with a universal tint. Use the tinted primer for the second coat to ensure even coverage. Reinstall the hanger bolts to lift the panel up off the bench so you can paint both sides and the back side can dry.



8

Apply the top coat. Because a sign is typically exposed to the elements, it needs a high-quality top coat. I use a sign-industry, oil-based, high-gloss paint called 1-Shot. Each coat requires 24 hours to dry. Rough up of the surface of the paint with synthetic steel wool between coats. Again, different colors are used to distinguish between coats.

SIGN CARVING: CARVING THE NUMBERS



9

Mask off the main number area. I apply a removable vinyl mask, called GerberMask I, with a plastic squeegee. The mask can be carved through and will simplify the gilding process. Use masking tape to transfer the registration marks to the mask and draw centerlines to help position the pattern.



10

Attach a copy of the number pattern. Photocopy or trace the numbers onto a piece of vellum tracing paper. Apply spray adhesive to the back of the vellum pattern and use the registration marks and centerlines to position the pattern in place. Use a plastic squeegee to press the pattern firmly in place.



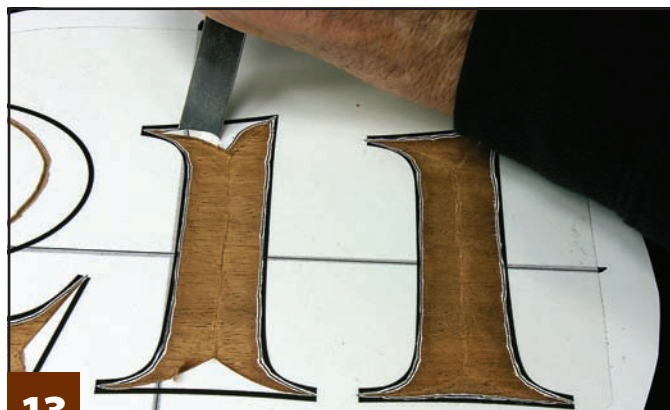
11

Establish the root lines on the numbers. Sketch in the lines representing the lowest part of the number and carve along the lines with a V-tool. Use a small V-tool and make shallow cuts. Eventually, with practice, you will be able to carve the root lines without penciling them in first.



12

Rough out the straight sections. Make shallow cuts with a 25mm #2 gouge, working from the edge in toward the root line. If a cut ends below the root line, the carving is too deep. Try to ride the bevel, keeping the cuts shallow by lowering the angle of the tool immediately after it initially bites into the wood.



13

Rough out the serifs. The triangular segment characteristic of Roman numbers and letters is called the serif. Numbers and letters that do not have serifs are referred to as sans serif. Serif letters look traditional and sans serif letters look modern. Use a 12mm #2 gouge to rough out the serifs, using the same technique explained in step 12.



14

Smooth out the numbers. Use a 30mm straight chisel for the large areas and a 12mm straight chisel for the serifs. Keep the cuts shallow by riding the bevel. It is often easier to produce a deep cut than a shallow one. You may slightly undercut an adjacent surface to produce a crisp line at the intersection of two surfaces at the centerline of the number.

SIGN CARVING: CARVING THE NUMBERS



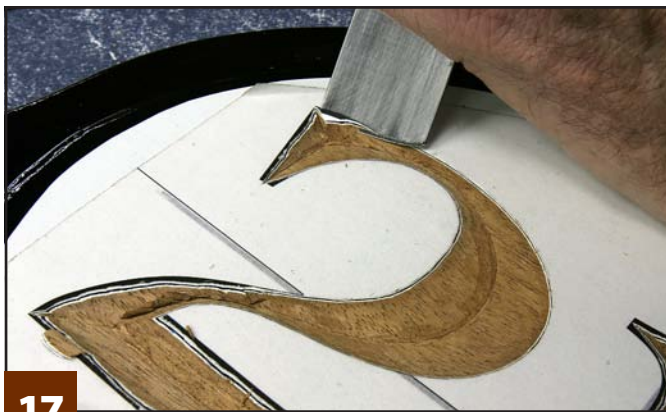
15

Carve the concave side of the curved numbers. Carve the root line. Then use a 12mm #2 gouge to carve down to the root line. Start $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the root line and follow the direction determined by the wood grain. Make additional passes, working $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the root line, etc., until you reach the border line.



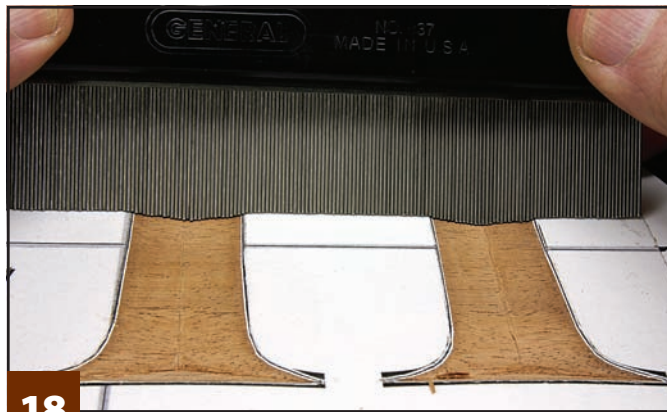
16

Carve the convex side of the curved numbers. Short cuts are made around the curve, following the appropriate direction determined by the wood grain. Work in stages as you did in step 15. Smooth the surface using gouges for the curved areas and chisels for the flat areas. Carve the serifs with the same tool.



17

Smooth the sides of the curved segments. Match the gouge's sweep to the curve. In this case, I use a 20mm #5 gouge. The carving starts near the root line and proceeds to the border where the final smoothing cuts are made. Because most numbers and letters do not maintain a constant curvature, change gouge sweeps to match the curves. The curvature in the number "2" flattens out near the serif so switch to a 25mm #2 gouge.



18

Check the depth of your letters. You can see the numbers are carved very shallow. The depth of the root line is measured to be slightly more than $\frac{1}{8}$ ". After a number has been gilded, light will reflect off its shallow incised surfaces far more readily than it will from the surfaces of deeply carved letters. Besides reflecting more light, shallow numbers require less gold than deep numbers.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

- High-quality vellum tracing paper
- Carbon paper or graphite transfer paper (optional)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 12" x 18" mahogany panel
- 3 each 3"-long hanger bolts
- 14" x 20" piece of cardboard
- Sandpaper, 120-grit
- Synthetic steel wool
- Primer (Jay Cooke's Primer)
- High-gloss oil-based paint (1-Shot Lettering Enamel)
- Removable vinyl (GerberMask I)
- Spray Adhesive

TOOLS:

- Heat transfer tool (optional)
- Saber saw with scroll blade
- Locking pliers
- 1" red sable brush
- Plastic squeegee
- 3mm 90° V-tool
- #1 chisels, 12mm and 30mm
- 25mm #2 gouge
- 20mm #5 gouge



Gilding

The carved sign is now ready for the gold leafing or gilding process. This technique will be covered in the Holiday 2008 issue of *Woodcarving Illustrated*.

About the Author

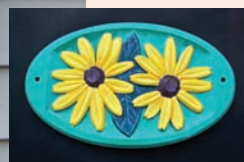
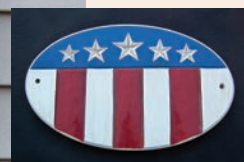
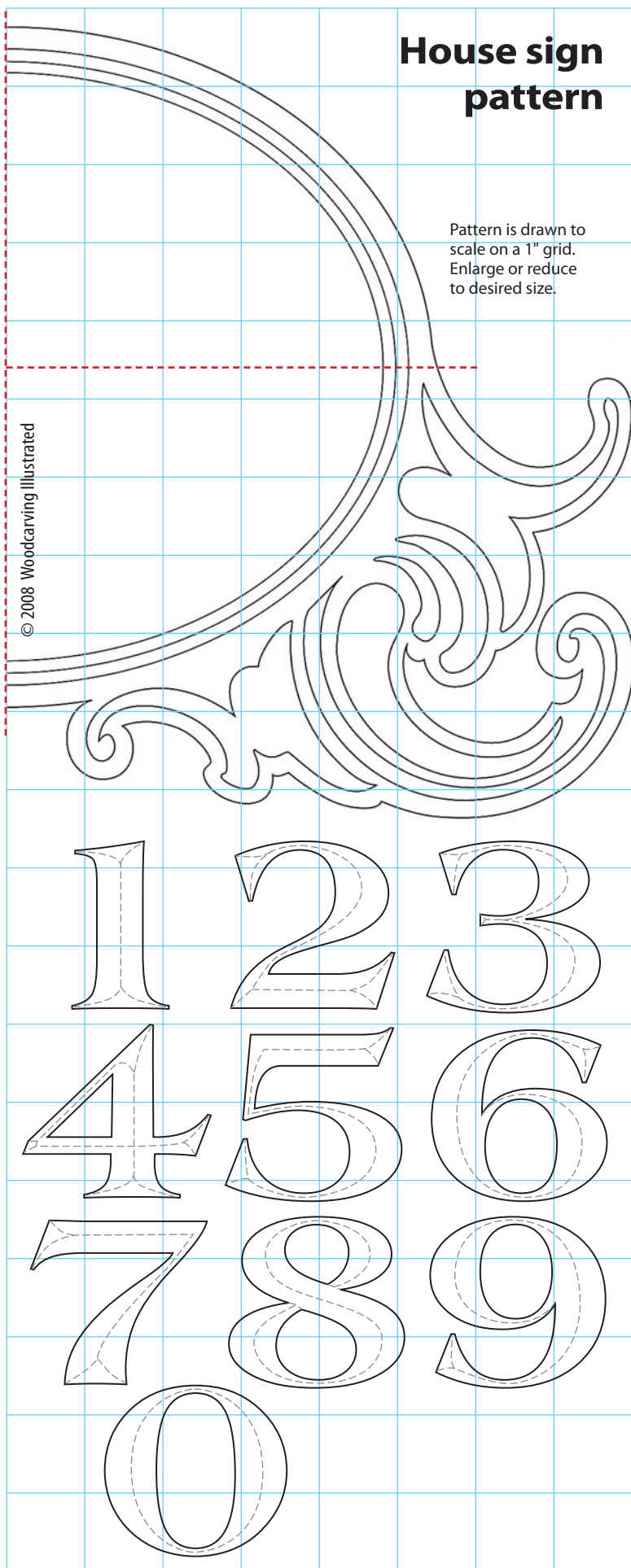
Francis S. Lestingi is a sign artist, calligrapher, and professor emeritus in physics at the State University College of New York at Buffalo. Francis runs Signs of Gold, Inc., and has published 13 articles on sign carving, which are available at his Website www.signsofgold.com.



House sign pattern

Pattern is drawn to scale on a 1" grid. Enlarge or reduce to desired size.

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A sign for all seasons

By Robert Merkel of East Bridgewater, Mass. Robert is a mechanical designer and has been carving for nearly 40 years.

I recently carved a house sign for a friend. He couldn't decide on a single design to accent the numbers so I created a series of decorative panels that can be changed to fit the season.

Step 1: Create the interchangeable panels.

Draw a 9" by 15" ellipse on a piece of plywood to act as the master pattern. Drill the screw holes and cut the oval blank. Use the master pattern and a router with a flush trim bit to produce a series of identical panels.

Step 2: Create the area for the panel. Trace the master pattern onto the main sign and use a router to remove $\frac{5}{8}$ " of wood from the main sign to accommodate the interchangeable panels.

Step 3: Add the mounting studs. Use the master pattern to determine the location of the mounting studs on the main sign. Drill pilot holes and insert the threaded bolts. The completed panels can be quickly affixed to the sign with a pair of wing nuts.

Step 4: Carve and paint the panels. Carve panels to represent specific holidays or the sign owner's personal interests. Be sure to finish each panel with a weather-resistant paint. I use oil-based enamel.

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PRIMARY FOCUS: Strong images without distractions draw viewers into the page.



AVOID CLUTTER: Pages cluttered with text distract from the actual carvings.

Simple methods to create a professional portfolio

By Mary-Ann Jack-Bleach

Most carvers love to see what other people have created. All too often, carvers will part with their work without ever documenting the piece. It's important to keep a visual record of your carvings for your own reference, as well, it is an excellent way to showcase your work. If you display your work at a carving show, a portfolio can also generate commissions or teaching opportunities.

The 'Wow Factor'

For your art to have visual impact, you need to have photographs that accurately portray the carvings.

I asked a photographer friend to photograph some of my work. When I received the proofs back, I experienced the "Wow Factor." My carvings looked alive, and I saw them in a different light. I just stared at the photos, absorbing all of the detail. The

photographer captured the essence of the subject matter in a dramatic way. When possible, I now have all of my carvings professionally photographed. With a photographic record of my carvings, I feel more comfortable parting with them.

Not everyone wants to hire a photographer, as some carvers do an excellent job of capturing their work in photos. However, none of my snapshots came close to the quality of the professional prints. For me, the photography fee was money well spent.

Visual consistency throughout a portfolio is important. Try to have the same person do all of the photography. For maximum effect, I chose a black background. Others prefer a lighter background. Once you have selected a presentation format, keep it consistent throughout the portfolio.



BAD PHOTOS: The reflection in this snapshot detracts from the beauty of the carving.

Durable And Flexible

Purchase a portfolio made from durable material so it stands up to frequent handling. Art and craft suppliers have a variety of portfolios. Use non-glare plastic sheets to protect photographs and information. Some portfolios

have “O” rings for convenient additions, while others have fixed sheets. Make sure you know the dimensions of your portfolio before printing the photographs.

Keep it Clean

Avoid non-carving objects in the photograph; they detract from the carving. This includes people. Years ago I looked through a carver’s reference book and asked him about the cut-out shapes. He had cut out images of his ex-wife because he wasn’t able to edit and reprint the photos. Even though they were good photos of his carvings, I can’t remember anything about them except the cut outs.

A few views of the same carving on one page can present an incredibly effective impression of the carving. When the photograph is uncluttered, and the focus is solely on the carving, the viewer can see the main subject matter and study the detail comfortably, absorbing the carving in its entirety.

Position the main photograph of the carving on the right side of the open portfolio, where people focus first. On the left side, position photographs showing alternate views of the carving.

There should be little or no text near the photograph. If you are including the title of the carving, use clear, easy-to-read text. A section titled “Information on Carvings” can include the title of the carving, date completed, type of wood, and the dimensions of the piece. You can also note the current owner of the piece.

Awards or recognition should not be included on the photograph pages. This information does validate your work, but should be referred to globally in the biography at the front of the portfolio or in a separate section titled “Awards.”

If you are a carving teacher, anyone who reviews your portfolio may be interested in lessons. Include a



BACKGROUND: A common background gives consistency to your entire portfolio.

section that shows photographs of your students’ work and any workshops you have conducted. This provides a starting point to discuss teaching opportunities.

Layout

- **Front page:** Include your photograph. Provide your name, business name, and contact information.
- **Photographs of carvings:** Sort the photos according to the carving’s name, date of completion, or by theme. You will be adding carvings as you complete them, so set the sections up to allow for expansion.
- **Your woodcarving resume:** Keep this brief and to the point. Remember, the photographs will speak for themselves. Sections could include:

Biography: include your motivation or inspiration

Experience: shows attended or judging experience

Recognition: awards, presentations, or appearances

Affiliations: club membership and community events

Publicity: donated carvings, publications, and testimonials from happy customers.

Your portfolio should reflect your personality, talent, and accomplishments. Even if you never publicly share your portfolio, it will become a cherished account of your journey in the world of woodcarving.

About the Author

Mary-Ann Jack-Bleach taught herself to carve in 1979. In 1987, she left South Africa to work in Canada. She has become an award-winning woodcarver, teacher, and judge. Mary-Ann can be contacted at mableach@exculink.com.



The front page of Mary-Ann’s portfolio shows her at work in her London, Ont., Canada studio.

The Illustrated Raptor Series

by Denny Rogers

Reviewed by Anthony Hillman, an award-winning bird carver and prolific author. Visit Anthony's website at www.hillmanart.com

Denny Rogers has produced an incredible amount of useful information with his latest series of books: *The Illustrated Bald Eagle* (2006), *The Illustrated Owl: Screech and Snowy* (2006), *The Illustrated Birds Of Prey: Red-Tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, & Peregrine Falcon* (2007), and *The Illustrated Owl: Barn, Barred, and Great Horned* (2008).

These books, which all follow the same format, provide everything you need to produce accurate paintings and carvings of magnificent raptors. Each species is highlighted with full-color photographs and a brief well-written facts section, that gives natural history information, including general size and color for each species. There are hundreds of illustrations, photographs, and diagrams in each book.

Several pages of very detailed drawings show the profile, front view, back, head, and bill specifics.

A coded measurement chart allows the artist to translate the measurements given to a life-size pattern. Additionally, this chart contains

conversions to nine other scale sizes—a useful tool in itself.

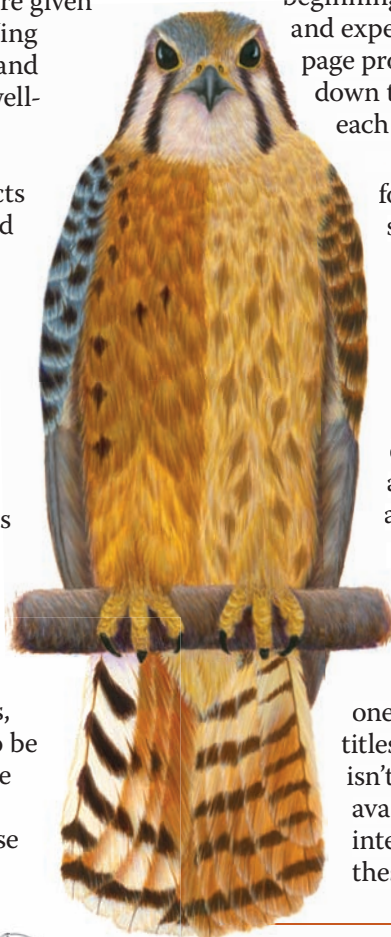
The skeletal structure of the head and bill is shown, while foot and claw details are given thorough coverage. Wing structure, feathering, and feather layout are all well-illustrated. Additional drawings unlock the mystery of feather tracts and shape. The top and bottom views in full wings-spread position are extremely useful. Each wing and tail feather is drawn individually.

A series of full page drawings show many natural positions that serve to inspire as well as inform the artist. All angles are covered, and although not patterns in themselves, study will allow you to be as informed as possible without having the actual bird strike a pose on command!

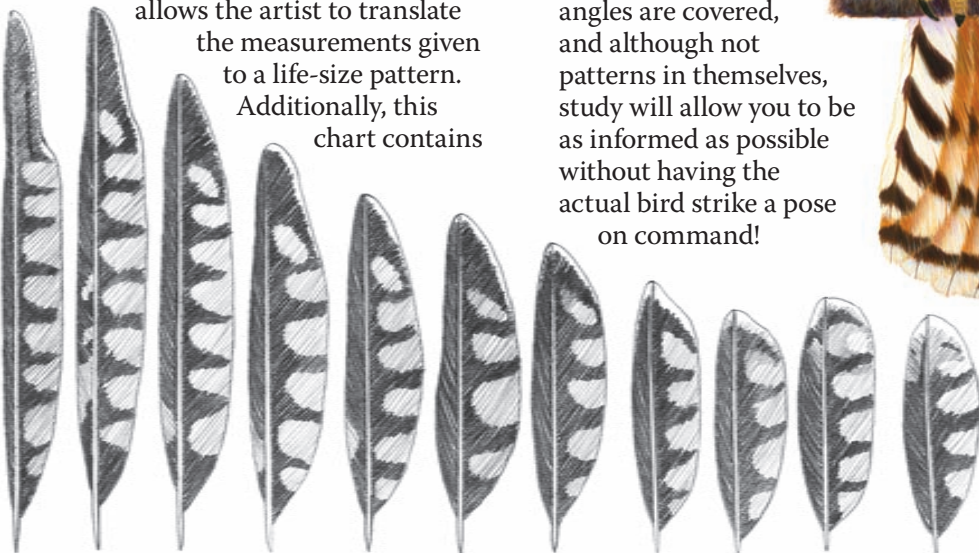
Lori Corbett's color and painting section includes full-color front view, profile, and back illustrations. A mixing chart allows even the beginning painter to save time and experimentation. A full-page profile diagram breaks down the base colors for each major section.

The last section for each species shows examples of other artists' interpretations, and is one of my favorite sections of the book. Flat-art, sculpture, and carvings in full color are featured, and will encourage and inspire you.

I encourage any serious bird student, artist, or photographer to acquire at least one of these spectacular titles. There probably isn't a better reference available for anyone interested in portraying these amazing creatures.



The *Illustrated Bald Eagle* lists for \$24.95, both *Illustrated Owl* books are \$29.95 each, and *The Illustrated Birds Of Prey* is \$34.95. Add \$3.50 s&h (parcel post) for each. Available from Fox Chapel Publishing, 800-457-9112, 1970 Broad Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520, www.FoxChapelPublishing.com, or check your local retailer.



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Woodcarving Illustrated publishes a general listing of carving shows in each issue. If you would like your show listed in our Calendar of Events, please send the following information to Duncan@FoxChapelPublishing.com:

- Name of event
 - Date(s)
 - Location (including city, state, address and building name if applicable)
 - Hours for each day of show
 - Admission
 - Contact information
- Submission deadline for the Holiday Issue is September 1, 2008.

■ AUGUST

Aug 8-10: CANADA, NEW BRUNSWICK. New Brunswick Wood Carving Competition and Show, ST. ANDREWS (W.C. O'Neil Arena). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact www.nbwccs.ca.

Aug 15-24: SOUTH DAKOTA. Central State Fair Woodcarving Competition sponsored by the Hay Camp Woodcarvers Club, RAPID CITY (Central States Fairgrounds). Contact Jim Weets, 605-348-5634, rush-more@juno.com.

Aug 16-17: CANADA: BRITISH COLUMBIA. Shuswap Carvers & Woodworkers Show and Sale, SORRENTO (Memorial Hall, 1148 Passchendaele Rd.). Contact shuswapwoodshow@hotmail.com with "wood show" in subject line.

Aug 16: ILLINOIS. Blackhawk Woodcarvers Annual Show and Competition, ROCKFORD (Tebala Shrine Temple, 7910 Newburg Rd.). 9:30am-4:30pm. \$3 adm., children under 12 free. Contact Bob Hallstrom, 815-963-1326.

Aug 23: MASSACHUSETTS. John LaForest Bird Carving Contest, MARSHFIELD (Marshfield Fair). 11am-5pm. \$10 adm. fee for the fair. Contact Kevin Dunn, 781-837-3786, kdunn603@comcast.net.

Aug 30-31: ILLINOIS. Sangamon Valley Woodcarvers Show, SPRINGFIELD (Illinois State Fairgrounds, Illinois Building). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$2 adm. Contact Lee or Betty Legg, 217-546-8792, www.svwoodcarvers.org.

Aug 30: OHIO. The Merry-Go-Round Museum's Annual Woodcarving Show, SANDUSKY (Merry-Go-Round Museum). 10am-5pm. Free adm. Contact 419-626-6111, www.merrygoroundmuseum.org.

Aug 30-31: VIRGINIA. Chincoteague Island Decoy & Art Festival, CHINCOTEAGUE ISLAND (Chincoteague Community Center, 6155 Community Drive). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$3 adm., \$5 weekend pass. Contact Cindy and John Walls, 410-546-1635.

Aug 30-31: WEST VIRGINIA. Oglebay Woodcarvers Guild, Show & Sale, WHEELING (Oglebay Park, off I-70 in Rt. 88). 10am-5pm. Free adm. Contact Clark Adams, clark@unimaxsystems.com.

■ SEPTEMBER

Sep 5-7: MICHIGAN. "Spit n' Whittle" Weekend, EVART (Osceola County 4H-FFA Fairgrounds). Contact Sandy, 231-734-5125, www.evartroundup.com.

Sep 6-7: OHIO. Shelby Woodcarvers Guild Wood Art Show, SIDNEY (Shelby County Job and Family Service Building, 227 South Ohio St.). Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 12-5pm. Free adm. Contact Jim Foster, 937-773-8820.

Sep 13: MISSOURI. West County Woodcarvers of St. Louis Show and Sale, BALLWIN (Salem United Methodist Church, 14825 Manchester Rd.). 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Art LaTurno, 314-481-3419.

Sep 13-14: RHODE ISLAND. Annual Raptor Event sponsored by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, BRISTON (Environmental Education Center, 1401 Hope St.). 10am-4pm. Contact 401-245-7500, eec@asri.org.

Sep 15-19: ILLINOIS. Gathering of Woodcarvers (GOW) 2008, SANDWICH (Sandwich Fairgrounds). Contact Joe Dillett, 815-498-9290, www.camperjohn.com/GOW.

Sep 19-20: WASHINGTON. Lower Columbia Woodcarvers Show, LONGVIEW (Cowlitz Regional Conference Center). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Angie Buck, 360-295-3661, anjobuck@earthlink.net.

Sep 20: ILLINOIS. Carving Fair, SANDWICH (Fox Valley Community Center). 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Gene Westenburg, 815-786-1890, birdcarvergene@aol.com.

Sep 20: WISCONSIN. Rock River Valley Carvers of Wisconsin Show and Sale, JANESVILLE (Craig Center, Rock County 4-H Fairgrounds, 1301 Craig Ave.). 10am-4pm. Contact Donna Kjendlie, 608-363-0554, www.rockrivervalleycarvers.com.

Sep 20-21: CALIFORNIA. Central Coast Woodcarvers Show, CAYUCOS (Cayucos Vet's Hall). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$2 adm., children under 12 free. Contact Ed Zirbel, 805-927-3951, ezandcz@sbcglobal.net.

Sep 20-21: CALIFORNIA. Tri-Valley Wood Carvers Annual Show, PLEASANTON (Veterans Memorial Building). Contact www.tri-valleycarvers.com.

Sep 20-21: CANADA, ALBERTA. International Decoy Carving Competition and Show, CALGARY (Marlborough Park Community Association, 6021 Madigan Dr. NE). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Tom Inkster, 403-286-4229.

Sep 20-21: COLORADO. Woodcarving Show and Sale, LOVELAND (Ranch-Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Center). Sat. 11am-6pm & Sun. 9am-4pm. \$3 adm. Contact Rich Roberts, 970-407-8523, r-c-roberts@msn.com.

Sep 20-21: OHIO. Wilderness Center Woodcarvers' Show, WILMOT (Wilderness Center Interpretative Building, West of Wilmot, off Rt. 250). Sat. 9am-4:30pm & Sun. 1pm-4:30pm, Free adm. Contact Robert Hawes, 330-359-5235.

Sep 20-21: PENNSYLVANIA. 22nd Annual Middle Creek Wildfowl Show, hosted by Penn. Game Commission, Susquehanna River Waterfowlers Assoc. and Wildlands Conservancy, KLEINFELTERSVILLE (Middle Creek Visitors Center). 9am-5pm. Free adm. Contact Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, 717-733-1512.

Sep 21: NEW YORK. Woodcarvers of Queens Show and Competition, QUEENS (Queens County Farm Museum). 10am-6pm. Advanced registration required. Contact George, 718-544-0265, woodcarvingnyc.com.

Sep 26-27: CANADA: ONTARIO. Kawartha Carving Competition, BOBCAYGEON (Bobcaygeon Fairgrounds). Fri. 9am-10pm & Sat.

8am-5pm. Adm. \$8 adults, \$2 children 13 and under. Contact Kawartha Carving Competition, 705-657-7539, kawarthacarvingcompetition.org.

Sep 26-28: PENNSYLVANIA. Fall Carve In sponsored by the Cherry Ridge Carvers, HONESDALE (Cherry Ridge Campground). Contact Bob Muller, 570-448-9017, rmuller@nep.net.

Sep 26-27: TEXAS. Texas Woodcarvers Show & Sale, FREDERICKSBURG (Gillespie County Fairgrounds). Contact Bill Bang, www.texaswoodcarversguild.com.

Sep 27-28: OHIO. Great Lake Wood Carvers Show, Art in Wood, STRONGSVILLE (Walter F. Ehrnfelt Senior Center, 18100 Royalton Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Stan Stary Jr., 216-661-8142, ssstary2@adelphia.net.

Sep 28: MICHIGAN. Tri-City Wood Carving and Art Show, SAGINAW (Bay Valley Royal Troon Ballroom, 2470 Old Bridge Rd., just west of I-75 off ramp Exit 160). 10am-4pm. \$3 adm., children under 12 free. Contact David Arndt, 989-793-3520, dwardt73@aol.com.

Sep 28: ILLINOIS. 20th Annual Valley Carvers Expo Woodcarving Show, UTICA (Starved Rock State Park Lodge). 9am-5pm. Free adm. Contact Bob Willis, 815-634-3086, bkwoodart.sbcglobal.net.

■ OCTOBER

Oct 3-5: WASHINGTON. Annual Artistry in Wood Show & Sale, SPOKANE (Spokane Community College, Building 6). Contact www.spokanecarvers.com.

Oct 4: VIRGINIA. Northern Virginia Woodcarvers Annual Carving Show, SPRINGFIELD (Woodcraft, Conord Shopping Center, 6123 Backlick Rd.). 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Hap O'Brien, 703-425-8703, hapob2@yahoo.com.

Oct 10-11: UTAH. Utah Valley Woodcarver's Show, SPANISH FORK (VFW Building, 400 North Main St.). Fri. 10am-8pm & Sat. 10am-4pm. Contact Bob Dailey, daileywood@yahoo.com.

(Continued on page 88)

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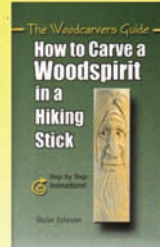
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(Continued from page 86)

Oct 10-11: MARYLAND. Chesapeake Wildfowl Expo, SALISBURY (Ward Museum, 909 S. Schumaker Dr.). Free adm. Contact 410-742-4988, www.wardmuseum.org.

Oct 10-12: NEBRASKA. Mid-American Woodcarvers Annual Fall Show and Sale, OMAHA (German-American Society, 3717 S. 120th St.). Contact Denny Jackson, president@midamericanwoodcarvers.org.

Oct 10-13: RHODE ISLAND. Woodcarver's Retreat in New England, WEST GREENWICH (University of Rhode Island, 401 Victory Highway). Contact Jim O'Dea, 715-775-3437, www.geocities.com/soho/studios/6186.

Oct 11: WISCONSIN. Badger State Carvers of Milwaukee's Fall Carving Show, WEST ALLIS (St. Augustine Church Hall, 2025 S. 67th St.). Sat. 10am-4pm. Contact Steve Klein, 414-321-5298, steveklein@juno.com.

Oct 11-12: ARKANSAS. Woodcarvers of Northwest Arkansas Show & Sale, BENTONVILLE (Bentonville High School, 1801 SE J St.). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Nancy Albin, 479-426-7335 after 6pm Central Time, npalbin@yahoo.com.

Oct 11-12: COLORADO. Colorado Carver's Club 34th Annual Show, Competition and Sale, GOLDEN (Jefferson County Fairgrounds, West 6th Ave & Indiana St.). Adm. \$2, children under 12 free. Contact James Ford, 303-368-1282, oraanna@msn.com.

Oct 11-12: NORTH DAKOTA. Flickertail Woodcarving Show, BISMARCK. Contact Frank Koch, 701-255-0280, fkoch@bis.midco.net.

Oct 11-12: OHIO. Cincinnati Carvers Guild Woodcarving Competition and Show, CINCINNATI (Joy Community Church, 5000 North Bend Rd.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 12-5pm. Adm. \$4, under 12, and scouts or military personnel in uniform free. Contact John Broughton, 859-431-5045, Johnjbroughton@msn.com.

Oct 11-12: ALABAMA. Tannehill Woodcarvers Club, MCCALLA (Tannehill State Park). 9am-3pm. Free adm. to show, only pay park admission. Contact Randy Flowers, rflowers102@charter.net.

Oct 18-19: CALIFORNIA. Orange County Woodcarving and Art Show, TUSTIN (Tustin Senior Center, 200 S. C St.). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact wannabecarver@att.net.

Oct 18: KENTUCKY. River Valley Wood Carvers 3rd Open House, TAYLOR MILL (Hilltop Church of Christ, 5300 Taylor Mill Rd.). Contact Jim Cable, www.rivervalleywoodcarvers.org.

Oct 18: MICHIGAN. Saline Wood Carvers Show, SALINE (UAW Hall 892, 601 Woodland Dr.). \$2 adm. Contact Donald Butler, 734-944-1918, carvinggloveguy@gmail.com.

Oct 18: ILLINOIS. Kickapoo Carvers 27th Annual Show, DANVILLE (New Life Banquet Center, Holiday Square, 1419 N. Bowman Ave.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Buzz Ritchie, 217-427-5996, buzzritchie@sbcglobal.net.

Oct 18-19: OKLAHOMA. Annual Artistry in Wood Show and Sale presented by Oklahoma City Woodcarvers Club, OKLAHOMA CITY (State Fairgrounds, Centennial Building). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 9am-4pm. Contact www.OKCarver.org.

Oct 18-19: OREGON. McKenzie Carvers Annual Woodcarving Show and Sale, EUGENE (Oakway Center). Contact Lois Padgett, 541-747-6897.

Oct 18-19: RHODE ISLAND. Annual Audubon Society Bird and Wildlife Carving Exposition, BRISTOL (Environmental Education Center, 1401 Hope St.). 10am-4pm. Contact the Audubon Society, 401-245-7500, www.asri.org.

Oct 18-19: MAINE. Maine Wood Carvers 22nd Annual Show & Competition, AGUSTA (Agusta Armory, Western Ave.). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 9am-4pm. \$3 adm. Contact David Brown, 207-873-3370.

Oct 19: MASSACHUSETTS. Spirit of Wood Show, BEDFORD (Middlesex Community College, Springs Rd.). 9am-4pm. \$4 adm., children under 17 free. Contact Rober Melanson, 978-368-5923, rolmel@comcast.net.

Oct 19: MICHIGAN. Annual Show and Competition sponsored by the Wood Carving Guild of Franken-

muth Michigan, FRANKENMUTH (Frankenmuth High School, 525 East Genesee St.). 10am-4pm. \$2 adm. Contact Tim, 989-892-4795, www.woodcarvers.biz.

Oct 24-26: CANADA, SASKATCHEWAN. Reflections of Nature 18th Annual Wildlife Art Competition, Show and Sale presented by Saskatchewan Wildlife Art Association, SASKATOON (Saskatoon Exhibition Grounds, Wheatland Building). Contact Bob Drury, 306-382-3155, www.saskwildlifeart.com.

Oct 25: NORTH CAROLINA. Catawba Valley Woodcarvers Competition, HICKORY (Hickory Metro Convention Center). Free adm. Contact 828-327-2840, donmchugh@embarqmail.com.

Oct 25: NEW YORK. Mohawk Valley Arts and Woodcarving Association Annual Exhibit and Show, AMSTERDAM (Horace J. Inman Senior Citizens Center, 53 Guy Park Ave.). \$2 adm. 10am-4pm. Contact Carl Borst, carvingcarl@aol.com.

Oct 25-26: CANADA, ONTARIO. Ontario Wood Carver Association 29th Annual Competition and Show, TORONTO (Black Creek Pioneer Village, 1000 Murry Ross Parkway). Sat. & Sun. 10am-4pm. Contact Emma Perlaky, 905-764-3859, www.ontariowoodcarvers.com.

Oct 25-26: PENNSYLVANIA. Cone-wago Carvers Club 16th Annual Carving and Wildlife Art Show, EAST BERLIN (East Berlin Area Community Center). 9am-4pm. \$3 adm., children under 12 free. Contact Ernest Castelli, 717-308-0769, vestonehaus@earthlink.net.

Oct 25-26: CANADA, ONTARIO. The Windsor Wood Carving Museum presents its 11th Annual Wood Carving Show and Competition, WINDSOR (Moose Lodge 777, Tecumseh Rd. W.). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$3 adm., seniors \$2, and children under 12 free. Contact Anne-Marie Bizier, 519-977-0823, www.windsorwoodcarvingmuseum.ca.

Oct 26: WISCONSIN. Annual Woodcarvers/Wood Turners Show and Sale sponsored by the Capital Area Carvers of Wisconsin and the Badger Woodturners, MADISON (Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 3330

Atwood Ave.). Contact Manny Voeltz, 608-241-1188, www.madison.com/communities/madcarvers/index.php.

Oct 31-Nov 2: TEXAS. Golden Spread Woodcarvers Show, Sale, and Competition, AMARILLO (Amarillo Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan, Regency Room). Free adm. Contact Ginger Webster, 806-352-2417.

NOVEMBER

Nov 1: INDIANA. Woodcarving Magic, FRANKLIN (Franklin Parks Building, 396 Branigan Blvd.). 9am-4pm. Contact Larry Carter, 812-372-1956, larrycarter1215@sbcglobal.net.

Nov 1-2: PENNSYLVANIA. Annual William Rush Woodcarvers Woodcarving & Wildlife Art Show & Sale, LIMA (Penn State Delaware County Campus Rt. 352). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$4 adm., children under 12 free with adult. Contact Al Bailey, 610-494-2781.

Nov 2: OHIO. Black Swamp Woodcarvers Show, TOLEDO (St. Clement Hall, 2990 Tremainsville Rd.). 10am-4pm. Contact Betty Jo, 419-534-2230, bjh@glasscity.net.

Nov 7-8: TEXAS. Wooden Wonderland, TYLER (Rose Garden Center, 1900W. Front St.). Fri. 10am-6pm & Sat. 10am-5pm. \$2 adm., children under 12 free with an adult. Contact Lorrie Thomas, 903-238-8843, justforit@aol.com.

Nov 8-9: OHIO. Dayton Carvers Guild Artistry in Wood Show and Competition, DAYTON (Dayton Exposition Center, Dayton International Airport, 3900 McCauley Dr., Northwood Blvd.). Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 10am-5pm. \$7 adm., \$10 for both days, children under 12 free and Scouts in uniform free with adult. Contact Ralph Moeller, 937-372-7726, www.daytoncarvers.com.

Nov 8-9: ALABAMA. 27th Annual Mid South Woodcarving Show and Competition, HUNTSVILLE (Huntsville Depot Museum Roundhouse, 320 Church St.). Contact 256-881-5897, nawashow@yahoo.com.

Nov 8-9: CALIFORNIA. Riverside Chip Chuckers Annual Show & Sale, RIVERSIDE. Sat. & Sun. 9am-4pm. Contact www.chipchuckers.com.

(Continued on page 90)

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(Continued from page 88)

Nov 8-9: WASHINGTON.

Northwest Wood Carvers Association's Juried Show and Sale, PUYALLUP (Western Washington Fairgrounds). Sat. 10am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Adm. \$7, children under 12 free. Contact Greg Hewitt, 253-874-3164, www.woodcarvers.org.

Nov 9-10: MASSACHUSETTS.

Wildlife Artisans Association's Wildlife Art & Carving Expo, TOPSFIELD (Topsfield Fairgrounds). Sat 10am-4pm & Sun. 9am-4pm. Contact Jim White, 978-768-7218, thewildlifeartisans.com.

Nov 14-16: MARYLAND.

38th Annual Waterfowl Festival, EASTON (40 S. Harrison St.). Fri. & Sat. 10am-6pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Adm., Fri. & Sat. \$12, Sun. \$10, multi-day, \$24. Contact 410-822-4567, www.waterfowlfestival.org.

Nov 14-16: SOUTH CAROLINA.

20th Annual Piedmont Woodcarvers Sculpture & Designs in Wood Show, MAULDIN (Ray Hopkins Senior Center). Contact David Sikkelee, 864-458-7240, www.piedmontwoodcarvers.com.

Nov 22: FLORIDA. Central Florida Wood Carving Show sponsored by Deltona Woodcarvers Club, DELTONA (United Church of Christ, 1649 Providence Blvd.). 10am-4pm. \$2 adm, children under 12 free. Contact Gene Stephenson, 386-775-9321, www.deltonawoodcarvers.com.

Nov 28-30: ONTARIO, CANADA.

Outaouais Wood Carvers Club's Canada's Capital Carving Competition in conjunction with the Ottawa Woodworking Show, OTTAWA (Lansdowne Park, Aberdeen Pavilion, Bank St.). Contact www.owcarvers.com.

Nov 29-30: INDIANA.

Tri-State Woodcarvers Show and Sell, EVANSVILLE (National Guard Armory). Sat 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. \$2 adm. Contact Linda Allen, 812-867-5734, www.tristatecarvers.com.

DECEMBER

Dec 6: FLORIDA. Nature Coast Carving Club's Show, INVERNESS (Citrus County Auditorium,

Highway 41). 9am-3pm. \$2 adm. Contact Dave Melton, 352-527-4561, dmelton6@tampabay.rr.com.

JANUARY

Jan 17-18: FLORIDA. Sun Coast Woodcarvers 15th Annual Show, SEMINOLE (Seminole Recreation Center, 9100 113th St. N.). 10am-4pm. \$5 adm. Contact John Roush, 272-398-0888, jroush2@mac.com.

Jan 24-25: FLORIDA. Southwest Florida Woodcarving/Turning Expo, FT. MYERS (Harborside Events Center, 1375 Monroe St.). Sat. & Sun. 9:30am-4pm. Contact John Franz, 239-768-6570, swfloridawoodcarvingexpo.com.

Jan 30: ARIZONA. Easy Bleeder's Woodcarving Show, APACHE JUNCTION (Superstition Springs RV Resort Ballroom, 702 S. Meridian Rd.). 11am-3pm. Free adm. Contact Bob Andersen, 480-380-3559.

Jan 31: FLORIDA. Space Coast Wood Carvers Annual Show, MELBORNE (Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1551 Highland Ave.). 10am-4pm. Contact Charles Graves, 321-453-6862, chasmo77@aol.com.

FEBRUARY

Feb 7-8: IOWA. The Art of Woodcarving Show and Competition sponsored by the Cedar Valley Woodcarvers, CEDAR RAPIDS (Longbranch Hotel and Convention Center, 90 Twixtown Rd. NE). Sat. 9am-5pm & Sun. 10am-4pm. Free adm. Contact Maurie Vandewalle 319-377-6520, vanlobo32@aol.com.

Feb 14: FLORIDA. Indian River Woodcarvers Art and Sculpture Show, FT. PIERCE (Lakewood Park United Methodist Church, 5405 Turnpike Feeder Rd.). 9am-4pm. \$3 adm. Contact Joe Miller, 772-589-5824, irwoodcarvers@aol.com.

Feb 21: ARIZONA. Desert Woodcarvers Show and Sale, MESA (Mesa Centennial Center, 201 N. Center St.). 9am-5pm. \$5 adm., children under 14 free. Contact Nick Daly, 480-736-9434, dnicday@cs.com.

Feb 21: FLORIDA. Peace River Woodcarving Show, ARCADIA (Turner Center). Contact Bob Holderman, 863-491-0877, janieb1000@yahoo.com.

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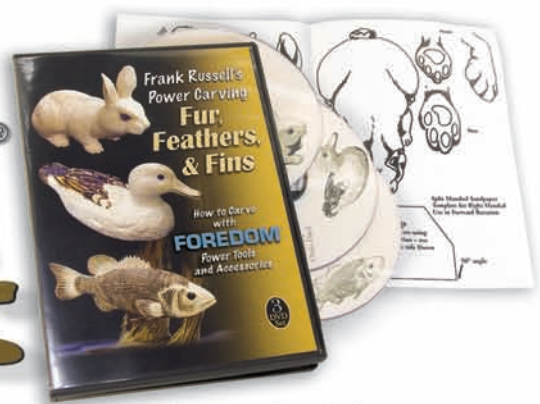
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Setting Up Your Painting Area

Organize your finishing area for maximum efficiency

By Vicki Rhodes

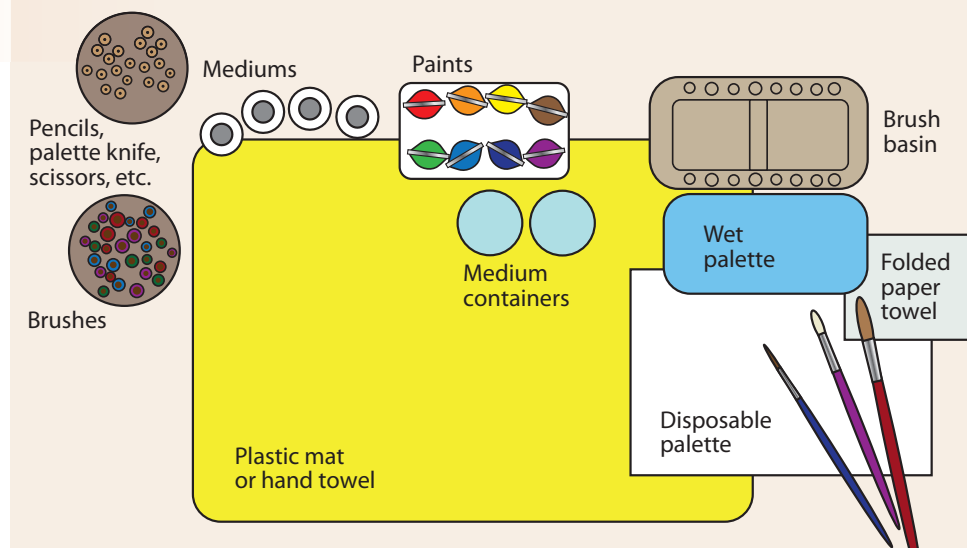
Having a dedicated area set up to paint is as important as having an area set up for carving. It could be an extension of your carving area, but make sure it is organized, convenient, and comfortable. Keep it simple to eliminate clutter and time lost searching for materials or tools.

Specific items were covered in *WCI* Fall 2007 (Issue 40). This article focuses on how to arrange the items in an orderly fashion to make the most of your space and time. If you plan to paint for long periods, a footstool may keep you from hunching over your work. Make sure the area is well lit at all times.

Place a hand towel or place mat over your work area. When soiled, this can be washed or changed.



Disposable Palette: Disposable paper palettes are available in pads. They are used for color mixing and dry palette blending. Place a disposable palette to the right of your work area, within easy reach, for color mixing and blending. Buy a 9" x 12" pad and cut it in half to save space on your work area.



Wet Palette: The wet palette is a shallow container used for paint storage. Position it on top of the dry palette. A wet palette may be as simple as a paper plate or a Styrofoam meat tray. An airtight food storage container keeps paint workable for several days or weeks.

Brush Basin: A divided brush basin makes it easy to clean your brushes. Position it above your palettes. Most basins have two sections: one to clean the brushes in and the other to pick up clean water to dilute the paint as you work. Dirty water will change the color of your paint so keep the water in this side of the basin clean. Fill the basin no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water on either side.

Blotting Paper: Fold a good quality paper towel in quarters and place it under your wet palette or along the side of your disposable palette. This will be used to remove excess paint, medium, or water from the brush while painting. Refold as needed to keep a clean spot to wipe your brush.

Paint: Select the colors needed for your project and arrange them directly in front of your work area. Many people find it helpful to store

the paints in a shallow container that can be moved. Place them so the colors can easily be seen. I sort them into color families.

Mediums: Keep a small container for each of the mediums you use regularly while painting. A container for your mediums may be a lid from a jar, or a small prep bowl or egg holder from the kitchen.

Brushes: Brushes may be stored bristles up in a drinking glass, bottle, or wide-neck vase. After cleaning, allow the brushes to dry on their sides before returning them to their container. Store pencils, palette knife, scissors, and other miscellaneous supplies in a separate container to the left of the work area.

This simple method of organizing your painting supplies allows you an open work area to focus on your project, with your supplies neatly arranged for easy access. Each artist will have their own preferences, but the layout suggested is a good place to start. Feel free to tweak the set up to best suit your individual needs.



About the Author

Vicki Rhodes is the author of numerous articles and three books; *Creative Possibilities* is her most recent. Future

WCI articles will cover specific painting techniques for carvers. Contact Vicki at vrhodes@frontiernet.net.

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Woods for Carving

Members of the *Woodcarving Illustrated* Message Board choose their top carving woods

Carvers today can choose from a variety of woods, but it can be difficult to know which wood to choose for a specific project. We surveyed the members of the *Woodcarving Illustrated* Message Board to find their favorite woods and have highlighted the main qualities of a few of the most popular choices.

Basswood

Basswood carves easily with hand tools and the fine even grain holds details well. "It is an extremely utilitarian wood, being used for both decorative and functional purposes," said relief and fish carver Al Archie. "It's easily finished, in either stains, paint or various oils, stable when cured, safe for food storage and serving, and fairly non allergenic."

Butternut

Butternut carves easily with hand tools, but has a beautifully figured grain. "Butternut is my favorite wood to carve and I don't throw any away, no matter how small the scraps," said ship carver Bob Squarebriggs. "The color is beautiful. It can splinter and chip, so you have to be careful and pay attention to the grain and your cuts."

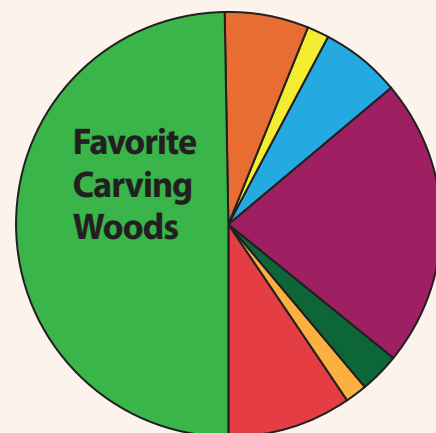


Tupelo

Carvers turn to tupelo because it doesn't fuzz when power carved or char when woodburned. The interlocking grain makes it a strong light wood, but the grain tears when hand carved. "I prefer tupelo because it bends better when carved into thin pieces," said wildlife carver Paul Guraedy.

Walnut

Carvers like walnut because of its dark rich color. Carvers usually use mallets to carve the hard wood. "Walnut is a very clean carving wood," said professional carver Mark Yundt. "It finishes up very well. If you carve it with sharp tools, it looks like it has already been finished."



■	Basswood	50%
■	Tupelo	6%
■	Buckeye	2%
■	Spanish Cedar/Mahogany	6%
■	Walnut/Butternut	22%
■	White Pine	3%
■	White/Red Cedar	2%
■	Other	9%

Chart based on polled responses from www.woodcarvingillustrated.com.

Wood	Description	Best Use	Finish	Price/board foot
Basswood	Cream colored with fine even grain	Hand carving	Paint	\$4-\$5
Butternut	Golden brown with highly figured grain	Hand carving	Varnish or oil	\$5-\$7
Tupelo	Light color with fine grain	Power carving	Paint	\$7
Walnut	Dark with straight grain	Hand carving with mallet	Clear or natural	\$7-\$10

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