



# CANDLE HOLDERS



# CREATING DECORATIVE BLANKS

**M**aking the candle holders on page 3 isn't all that difficult. They're nothing more than rectangular blocks cut on the table saw, or gracefully shaped on the band saw. The key to the eye-catching look is the thin accent strips used in the body of each candle holder.

Adding the accent strips requires making a smooth cut on the band saw, like you see at right. Then, after cutting and planing an accent strip to final size, you glue it in place. Depending on how many accent strips you add, you simply repeat the process.

The accent strips are just thin pieces of hardwood. You can read more about how to make them in the box below. Then for the step-by-step process on cutting and gluing up the blanks, see page 2.



## PREPARING ACCENT STRIPS

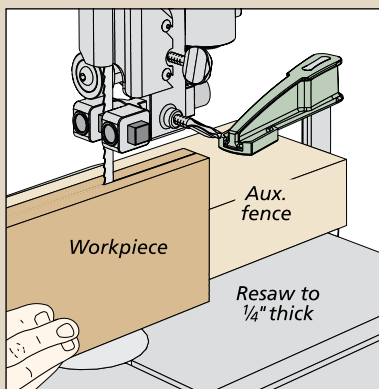
What makes the candle holders stand out are the thin, contrasting accent strips. Since thin stock can be hard to find, it may be easier for you to make your own accent strips from scrap stock you already have.

The first step is to resaw a thicker workpiece on the band saw (left drawing below). Then, to clean up the rough-sawn surfaces, you'll need to run the strips through a planer. Planing the strips down

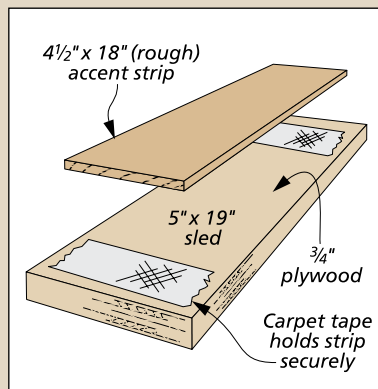
to  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick can be a problem for some planers. To solve this, I made a carrier sled (center drawing). This makes it easy to quickly and safely run the workpiece through the planer (right drawing).



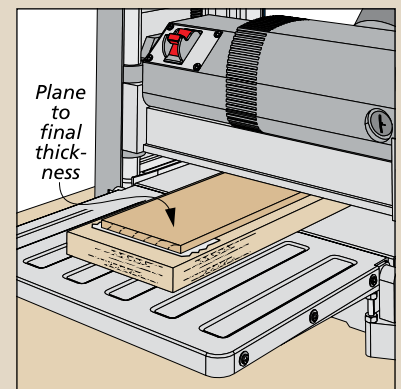
▲ The accent strips that give each candle holder its appeal are simply pieces of veneer resawn from thicker stock.



**Start Thick.** The first step in making the accent strips is to resaw thicker stock on your band saw.



**Veneer Sled.** To clean up the sawn surfaces, attach the strip to a carrier sled with pieces of carpet tape.



**Plane it Smooth.** Finally, run the sled (and accent strip) through a planer to smooth the surface of the veneer.

## 6 Steps for a Perfect Glue-Up

Although the look of the two sets of candle holders on pages 3 and 4 is quite different, they both start out as glued-up blocks of hardwood. (See those pages for specific sizes.)

**ADD THE ACCENT STRIPS.** Once you've glued up and sized each blank, check out the box on the opposite page to learn more about making the accent strips you'll need for each candle holder.

With the accent strips in hand, you're ready to decide on the shape of the curves in each block. You don't need to be too fussy here. All you're really looking for are smooth, gradual curves. If the curves are too tight, it can be difficult to bend the accent strips to shape as you glue them in place.

I found it easy to simply sketch a few different curved shapes until I found a couple I liked. But if you're not comfortable with drawing freehand, the photo at right shows several

different layout tools you can use to get the job done.

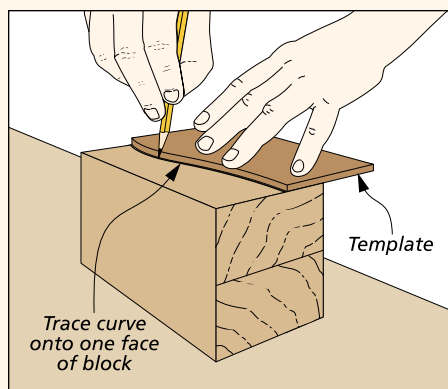
**TEMPLATES.** For the candle holders I made, I repeated some of the curves on the adjacent faces. If you plan on doing this, it's a good idea to make templates of your curves out of hardboard, like you see in Step One. This makes it easy to repeat any curve you want.

After drawing a curve on one face of the block, head to the band saw and cut the block apart by following the layout line (Step Two). The key to getting a tight fit is to make sure that once you start the cut, you don't stop until it's completed at the opposite end. Stopping at any point will widen the cut slightly, making it hard to glue the strip in place without any gaps.

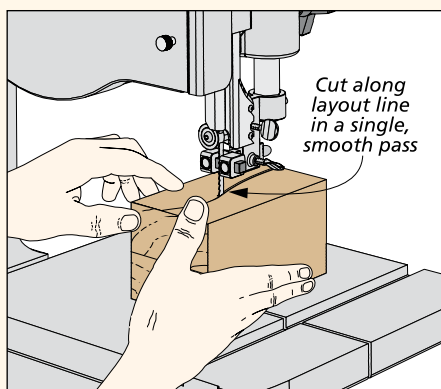


▲ If drawing curves freehand isn't your style, you can use drafting tools like the ones shown above to help lay out the curves for the accent strips.

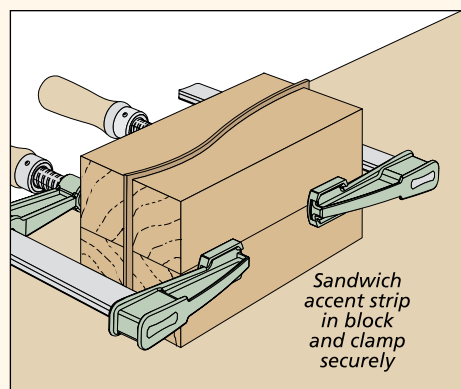
After lightly sanding the inside faces of the block, you can glue the accent strip in place (Step Three). Next, trim away any excess and sand the edges flush (Step Four). To add more strips, simply repeat the process, as in Step Five. Finally, trim the block to final size (Step Six).



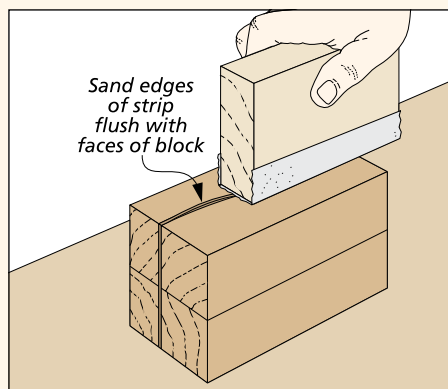
**1 Lay Out the Curve.** Starting the design process is just a matter of tracing a smooth curve on one face of the candle holder block.



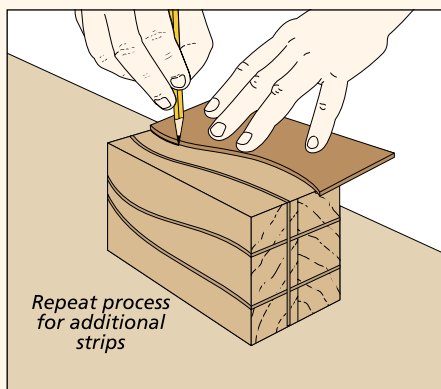
**2 Slice Block.** To separate the block for the accent strip, follow the layout line with the band saw blade in a single, smooth pass.



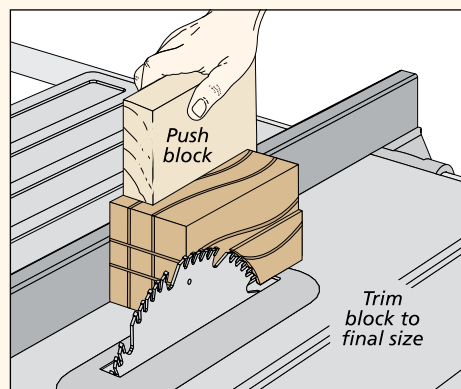
**3 Glue it Up.** After applying glue, sandwich the accent strip between the two pieces of the block and clamp it securely in place.



**4 Clean Up Veneer.** Once the glue dries, remove the excess veneer by sanding the edges of the accent strip flush with the faces of the block.



**5 Repeat the Layout.** Then, to add each additional accent strip, all you'll need to do is simply repeat Steps One through Four.



**6 Size Block.** Once all the accent strips have been glued in place, you can trim the block to final size on the table saw.

# CANDLE HOLDERS

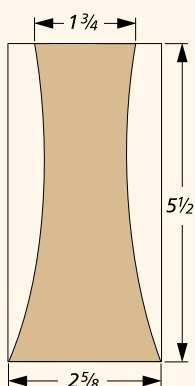
*Create two different candle holders using contrasting accent strips and the same band saw technique.*

Sometimes, projects that look quite challenging at first glance are really the simplest of projects when it comes right down to actually building them. And that's the case with the two sets of candle holders shown on these pages.

Each of the candle holders you see starts out as a square block of hardwood that's been cut to rough size. Then to create the unique look, you make curved cuts on the band saw and glue in the accent strips. I used mahogany strips to provide a contrast to the maple that makes up the body of each holder.



CANDLE  
TEMPLATE



## CURVED CANDLE HOLDERS

The first set of candle holders I worked on were the tall curved ones you see in the photo at right.

**MAKING THE BLANKS.** To start, you'll need a pair of 3"-square blanks about 5 1/2" long. I made mine by gluing up thinner workpieces and then trimming them to size.

Once you have the blanks glued up, the next step is to add the accent strips. You can find out exactly how to do this by referring back to page 1. The only thing to keep in mind as you add the accent

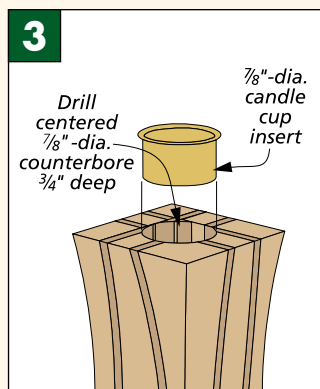
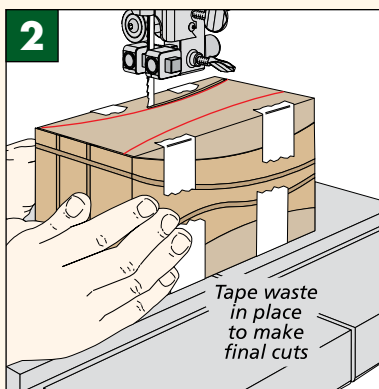
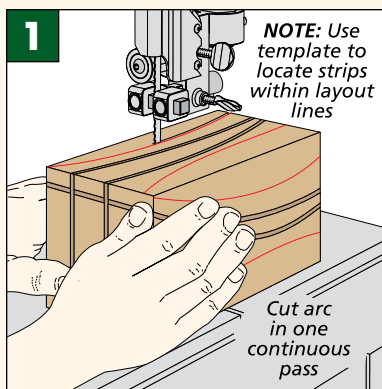
strips is to locate them so they're within the boundaries of the shape you'll be cutting out. You can see

the shape I used in the margin drawing at left.

**SHAPE THE BLANKS.** After adding the

accent strips, all that's left to do is shape each blank and then drill a hole in the top for the candle holder cup.

As you can see in Fig. 1, a band saw makes quick work of shaping the blank. To make the final shaping cuts (Fig. 2), you'll need to tape the waste pieces back in place.



**FINAL DETAILS.** Once the shaping is complete, you can sand the curves smooth. Then drill a  $\frac{7}{8}$ "-dia. hole in the top of each holder for the brass insert that will securely hold a slim taper candle, as in Fig. 3 on page 3.

All that's left to do at this point is apply a finish. I rubbed in a few coats of oil. And when the oil was dry, I glued a felt pad to the bottom of each candle holder.

## SQUARE HOLDERS

The curved candle holders provide an elegant look. For something a little different, take a look at the set of square candle holders at right.

The process for making this set of candle holders isn't all that different from the curved holders. It's a bit easier since you don't have to make any final shaping cuts on the band saw. But that's not to say there aren't some interesting challenges in making the square candle holders. You can see what I'm talking about by looking closely at the photo and drawings at right.

**CROSSGRAIN & THROUGH CUTS.** For starters, instead of working with the grain as before, I made all the cuts across the grain. As I did this, I made sure to do three things.

The first was to rotate the blank between each cut. This alternates the curve from face to face. Second, as I glued in each accent strip, I made sure the edge grain followed the curve of the cut. And finally, I made a couple of the cuts through the accent strips that had already been glued in place.

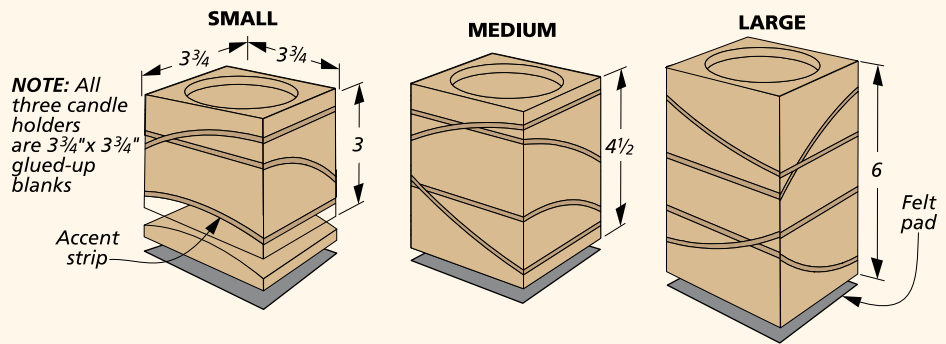
**HOLDING THE CANDLE.** Once all the accent strips are in place and sanded flush, you can trim the blank to final size and then complete a couple final details.

Since the large candles for these holders don't need an insert to hold them in place, I simply routed a counterbore in the top of each holder (see the box below).

Finally, all that's left to do is apply a finish and then glue a felt pad to the bottom of each holder.



▲ Varying the heights and adding intersecting accent strips across the grain provides a different look for the square candle holders shown above.

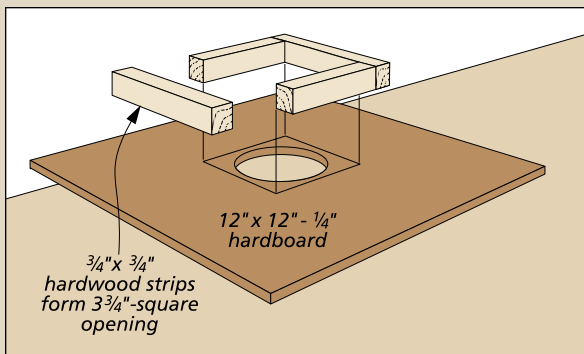


## ROUTING A HOLE FOR A CANDLE

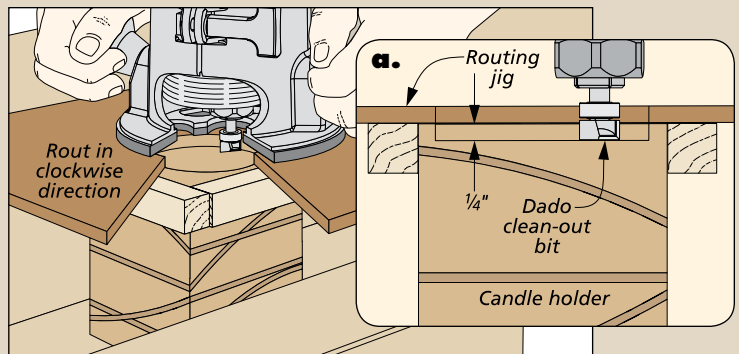
To hold the candles in place, you'll need to add a large counterbore in the top of each holder. To do this, I used a hand-held router, a routing jig, and a dado clean-out bit.

The jig is a scrap of hardboard with a  $\frac{3}{8}$ "-dia. hole cut in it. To position the jig, there's a hardwood frame (left drawing, below). Routing the hole is just a matter of

setting the jig in place and making a  $\frac{1}{4}$ "-deep cut with a dado clean-out bit. After routing around the edge of the hole, nibble away at the remaining waste.



**Routing Jig.** The routing jig starts out as a piece of hardboard with a hole in it. Hardwood strips glued to the jig form a frame to center the jig over the candle holder.



**Rout Hole.** Now set the jig in place and adjust the bit for the depth of cut (detail 'a'). After routing clockwise around the hole in the jig, you can then clean out the remaining waste.