



Around the Shop

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FROM JOHN'S REPRODUCTION OF A LOUIS XV CHEST

Here are a couple of tips from John Borley, who has been responsible for the "Chronicles" articles since we began this publication. —Bob Van Dyke

DRILLING JIG

I recently had to drill 32 holes in a chest of drawers in advance of driving in some square pegs. Some of the smaller sub-assemblies could be done on a drill press. But some had to be done on the assembled case. To obtain clean holes, I took a scrap piece of wood, flattened the front and back, then drilled a hole in it to accept a metal guide from my doweling jig. I used an awl to mark the drill point in the carcass. Then I lined up the jig by pushing a brad point bit through and lining it up with the awl mark. A quick-grip clamp held the jig temporarily in place while I added an F-clamp to really make things secure. It was a bit cumbersome at first, but I quickly picked up speed. Every hole was clean, with no breakout around the edge. There are probably many other ways of doing this, but this worked well for me. **Tip:** Make sure the metal sleeve is flush with the back of the wooden jig. Too far out and it will mar the workpiece; not far enough and it won't support the wood around the edge of the hole.

Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, which holds the original piece that I reproduced, calls it "mature Louis XV or Rococo style." From the Montreal area, probably built in the mid- to late 1700s. Primary wood is butternut. The ROM calls this both a chest of drawers and a commode. "The breakfront or reverse arbalète front includes three block-carved drawer fronts. The Rococo front skirt has elaborate detailed openwork and floral carving, matched on each end skirt. The sides are serpentine-framed, each with a serpentine panel. The unusual precision of the carving indicates that the commode was probably finished by a specialized church sculpteur, separately contracted by the maker."

SLOT CUTTER JIG

Problem: How to cut a dado for drawer bottom in a serpentine drawer front

My solution: Use a Forstner bit to cut a hole in a piece of scrap-wood, wide and deep enough to take a slot-cutting bit. Bandsaw away a curve at the front, near the hole. Attach the jig to your fence. (My fence is a simple board, so just screwed on, avoiding the bit area!) Turn on router and push fence away, so bit cuts through jig. Clamp fence in place with bit exposed to desired depth. Push stock against jig. **Tips:** Cut should take place at dead center of jig; depth of cut is shallower at sides. Jig should be long enough (front to back) so workpiece doesn't hit fence as you rotate it through the cut. (Mine wasn't.) Bit may not cut to full depth on tight inside corners, but it's easy to chisel out these areas. Jigs don't need to be pretty, just functional. **Note:** My drawers are overlay, with a 1/4" lip, so the cutter had to be 1/4" higher than the setting for the drawer sides. This required some test cuts.

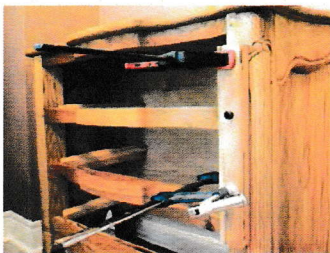
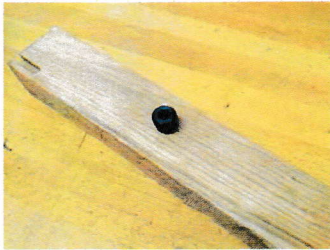
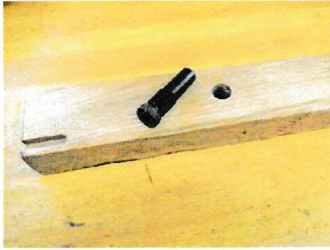
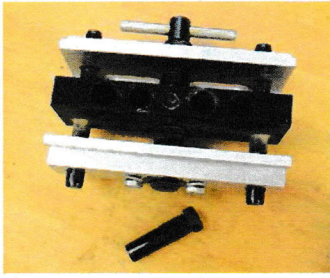
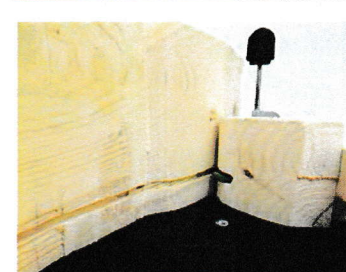
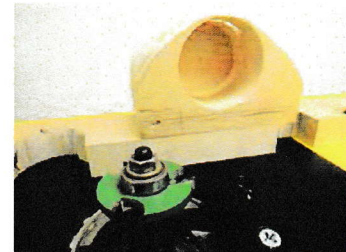
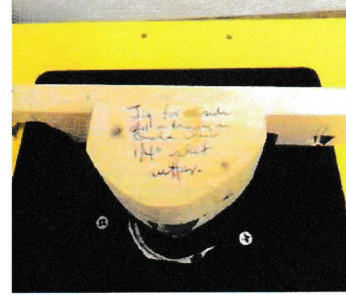
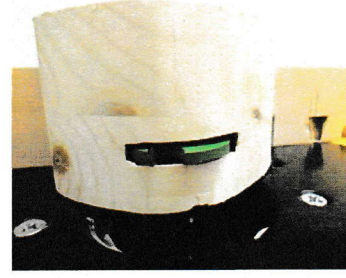


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Here's the finished piece that used both techniques.