WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL
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Classic Project

In this plan you'll find:

- Step-by-step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Construction drawings
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

Sideboard Chest

An Early American Classic

Sideboard Chest

Major case construction typically isn't much different than working with smaller pieces, with a few notable exceptions. First, buying stock usually requires a three-figure check; second, unless your name is Jorgensen you can expect to run short of clamps; and, finally, at some point in the construction you'll probably wonder why you decided to undertake this project rather than buy that $129 printed paper-over-particleboard substitute from the department store. But then, once all the little problems have been muddled through, and you stand proudly before a piece made wholly through your own sweat and determination, can there be any doubt as to whether it was all worth the effort? Of course not!

While we may not all aspire to a career in woodworking, it's refreshing to know that there are people out there making a comfortable living doing what they love. This sideboard chest is from the workshop of Gene Cosloy in Wayland, Massachusetts. Although Gene was originally employed in Massachusetts' "Silicon Valley," some years back he gave up the high-tech world for the chance to make a living in his workshop—and the gamble paid off. Gene has recently expanded into a real shop from his basement, and together with wife and business partner Lois, continues to prove that there's a growing market for hand-made furniture that has good design and quality construction.

The chest shown is of eastern white pine, finished with a warm nut-brown stain. However, it would also look fine in cherry or walnut. You'll want to start construction by edge-gluing stock for the wide parts, which include the top and bottom (A), the ends (B), the center divider (C), the shelves (D), and the raised panels (V). If you are making the chest in pine,

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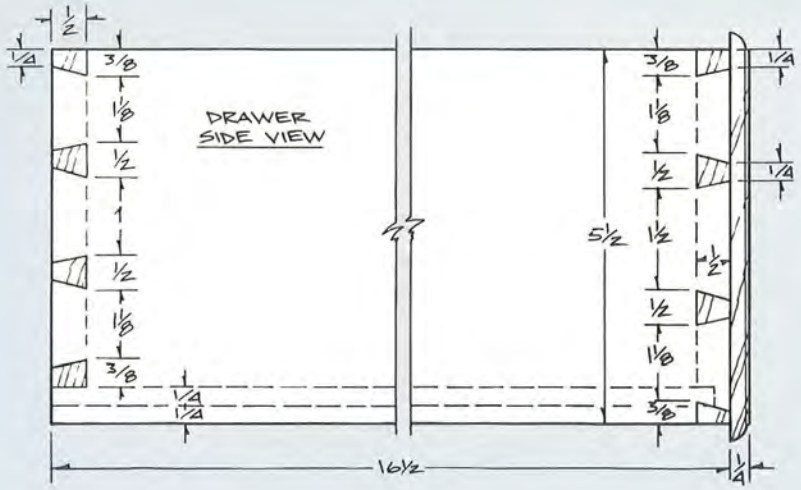
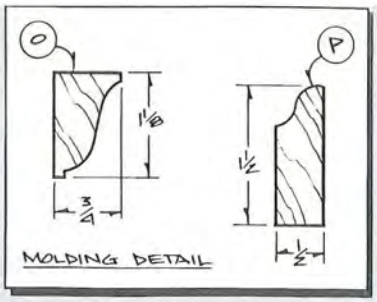
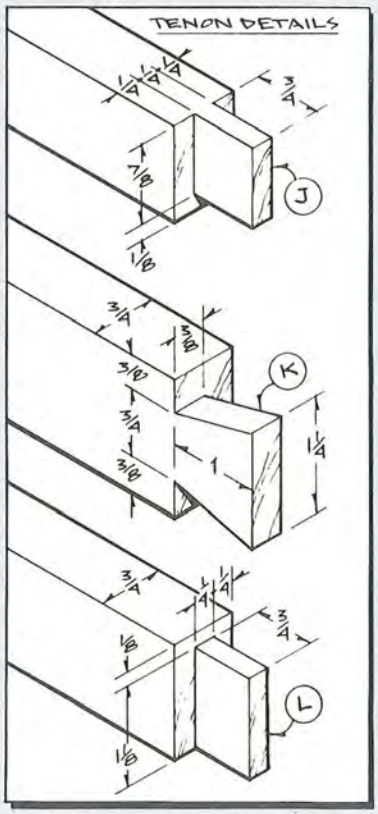
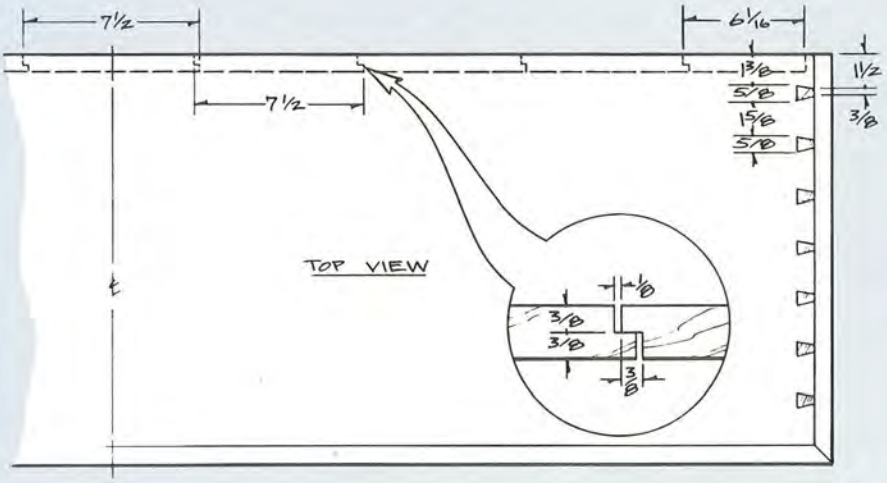
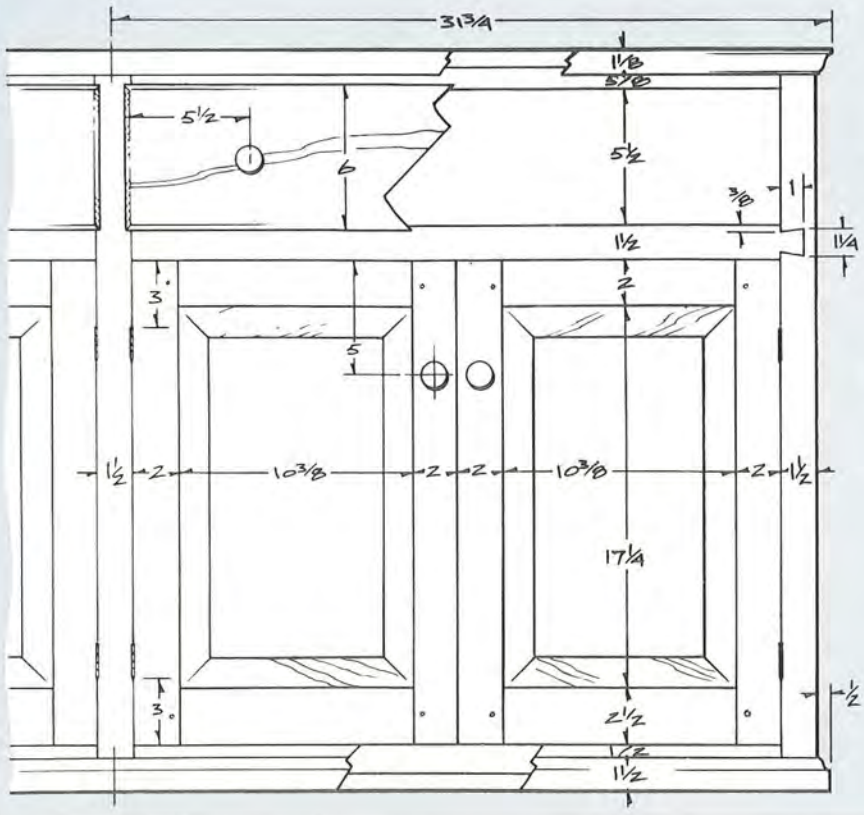
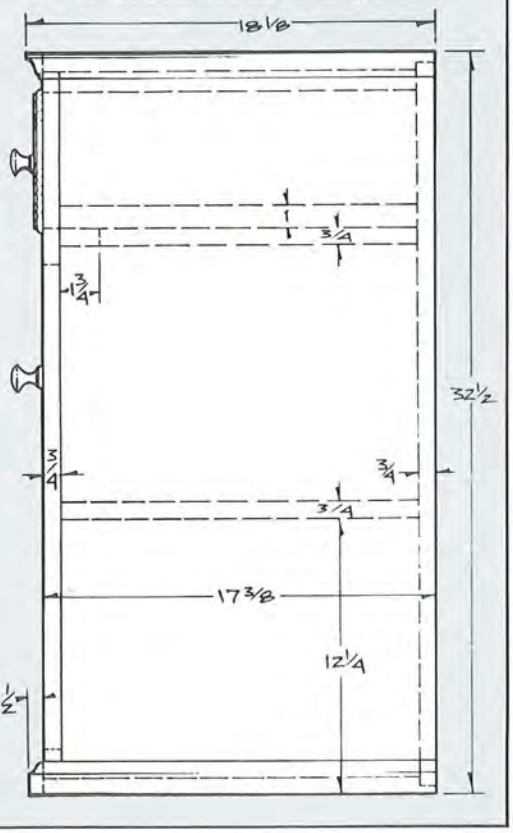

DRAWER
SIDE VIEW
16½


O
P
MOLDING DETAIL


TENON DETAILS
J
K
L


TOP VIEW


31¾
10⅜
17¼


18⅛
32½
17⅜
12¼

try to buy boards that are as close as possible to the final required size. This will help minimize waste.

The Case

This piece, like much similar work, uses dovetails for the case and drawer construction. You could cut the dovetails by hand, but the best tool for the job is the router and an adjustable dovetail jig, such as the Leigh dovetail system. Cut the top, bottom, ends, center divider and shelves to length and width, then lay out the various dadoes. Because the size of these pieces makes them a little awkward to handle on most small table saws, use a router and a T-square edge guide to establish the dadoes.

Next, get to work on the dovetails. Use our suggested dovetail spacing, or come up with your own. Note, though that the top and bottom overhang the ends at the front by the thickness of the face frame, so the dovetails must start back a bit from the front edge. Also, don't forget to position the center divider and shelves 3/4 in. inset from the back edge, to allow for the back (Q, R). After test fitting, glue and assemble the case. Be sure to check the diagonals to make certain the chest is square.

Once the case is dry and out of clamps, you can cut the rabbet for the back. You'll need to square the corners of the rabbet with the chisel. If you use a bearing guided bit, the bearing will be in the way where the center divider meets the top and bottom, and where the shelves meet the sides. Switch to a straight cutter and use the edge guide to complete the rabbet in these areas. Then cut the back parts to size and mount them. Note that the back sections are sized to leave a 1/8 in. space between each piece, to allow for wood movement.

Now make the stretchers (E), runners (F), and the center, side and top guides (G, H, I). Note that the thickness of the center guides is 3/8 in., while the side guide thickness is 3/4 in. Glue the front stretchers in place, then mount the runners and guides. The runners are glued and screwed to their respective guides, and a screw is also inserted up through the stretcher into the side and center guides. The side, center and top guides are then screwed into the sides and center divider respectively, with the back holes being slotted to direct any wood movement in the wide parts toward the back.

The Face Frame and Moldings

Next up is the face frame, consisting of the top, center and bottom rails (J, K, L) and the end and center stiles (M, N). Tenons join the top and bottom rails to the end stiles, while a dovetail anchors the center rail to these same parts. The center stile is joined to the three rails with simple half-lap joinery. Assemble and mount the face frame directly to the case. The fact that the case is square should serve to square up the face frame.

To finish the case work, just miter and add the top and base moldings (O, P). Both moldings are common lumberyard moldings. The top molding is sold as a solid crown molding, and the base is usually called a door stop molding. Similar moldings can be shopmade, but with the low-cost of the lumberyard moldings, they seem the obvious choice. You may need to rip a little stock from the lumberyard moldings you buy to achieve the dimensions shown.

Bill of Materials
(all dimensions actual)

Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Top/Bottom	3/4 x 17 3/8 x 62	2
B	End	3/4 x 16 5/8 x 32 1/2	2
C	Center Divider	3/4 x 15 7/8 x 31 1/4	1
D	Shelf	3/4 x 15 7/8 x 30 1/8	2
E	Stretcher	3/4 x 1 3/4 x 30 1/8	2
F	Runner	3/4 x 1 3/4 x 14*	4
G	Center Guide	3/8 x 1 x 15 3/4*	2
H	Side Guide	3/4 x 1 x 15 3/4*	2
I	Top Guide	3/4 x 1 3/4 x 15 3/4*	4
J	Top Rail	3/4 x 1 x 60 1/2**	1
K	Center Rail	3/4 x 1 1/2 x 61	1
L	Bottom Rail	3/4 x 1 1/4 x 60 1/2**	1
M	End Stile	3/4 x 1 1/2 x 31	2
N	Center Stile	3/4 x 1 1/2 x 31	1
O	Top Molding	3/4 x 1 1/8	about 9 ft.
P	Base Molding	1/2 x 1 1/2	about 9 ft.
Q	Back Center Section	3/4 x 7 1/2 x 31 3/4	7
R	Back End Section	3/4 x 6 1/16 x 31 3/4	2
	Doors		
S	Stile	3/4 x 2 x 21 3/4	8
T	Top Rail	3/4 x 2 x 14 3/8**	4
U	Bottom Rail	3/4 x 2 1/2 x 14 3/8**	4
V	Raised Panel	1/2 x 10 5/8 x 17 3/4***	4
	Drawers		
W	Front	3/4 x 6 x 29 1/4	2
X	Back	1/2 x 5 x 28 3/4	2
Y	Side	1/2 x 5 1/2 x 16 1/2*	4
Z	Bottom	1/4 x 16 1/4 x 28 1/4	2
AA	Knob****	1 1/4 dia.	8
	Hardware		
BB	Hinge****	2 x 1 1/4	8
CC	Bullet Catch****	7/16 dia.	4
DD	Foot	1 1/4 dia.	4

* Length allows 1/8 in. space between part and case back, as for a piece built during the driest time of year. Allow at least 1/4 in. space if building during times of high humidity, to allow for shrinkage in the top/bottom and sides.

** Length includes tenon(s).

*** Raised panels as dimensioned allow 1/4 in. across width for expansion, as would be appropriate when building during the driest time of year. If building during times of high humidity, panel width should be nearly the full groove-to-groove distance, to allow for expected shrinkage.

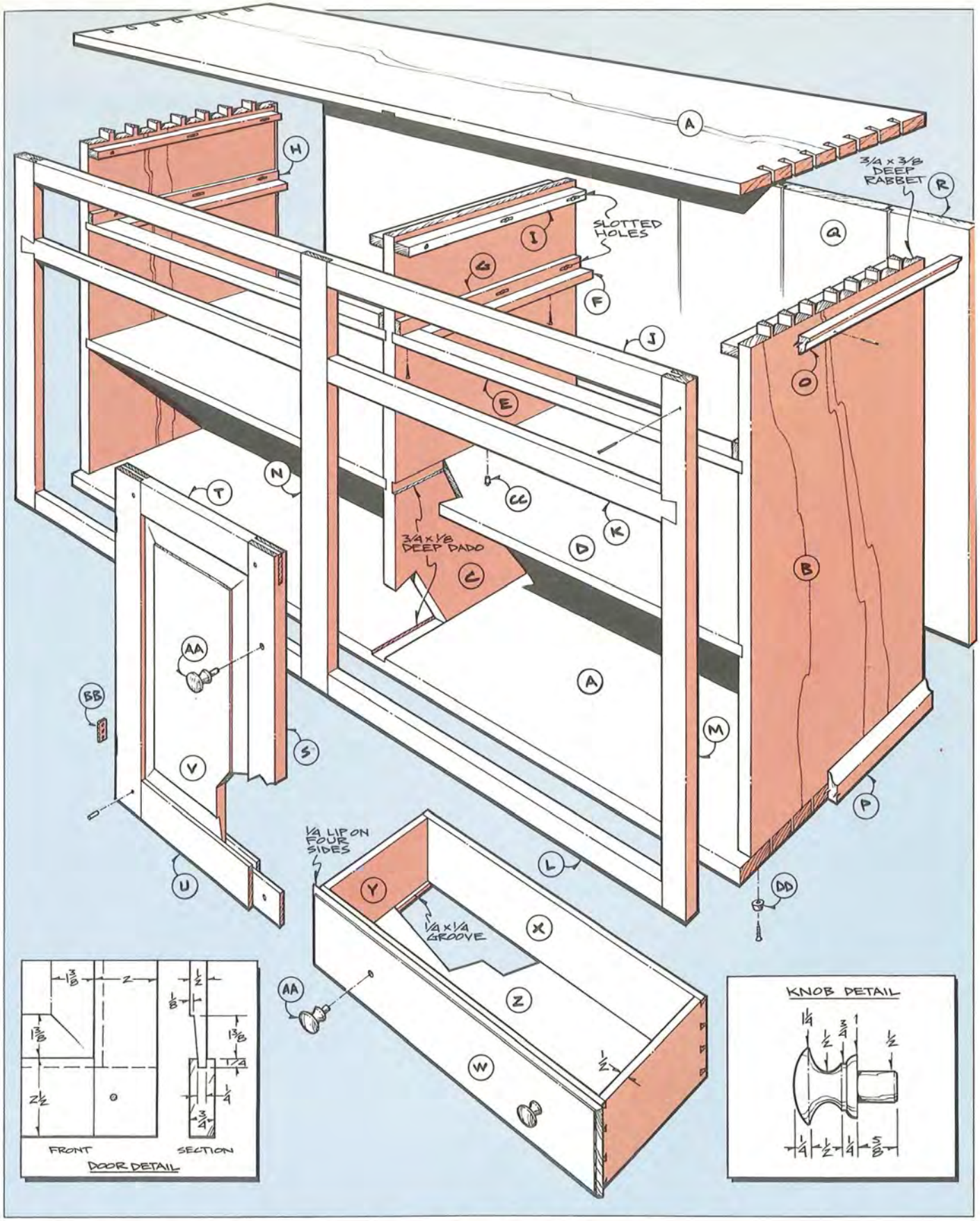
**** The originally printed source for these materials is no longer available. Please explore other options via the internet or call 1-800-610-0883 for more information.

The Doors

The doors use a simple slip-joint to join the stiles (S) with the top and bottom rails (T, U). The raised panel (V) is housed in a 1/4 in. deep by 1/4 in. wide groove. As shown in the door detail, the slip joint is cut so the groove bottom is on the same plane with the inside edge of the rail tenons. As illustrated, the raised panel is cut on the table saw, but the router table and a panel raising bit would be a better choice.

The Drawers

The drawers use traditional half-blind dovetails to join the



drawer front (W) and sides (Y), with through dovetails at the back (X). The bottom (Z) is 1/4 in. thick plywood, though if you are a stickler for authenticity, bevel-edged solid stock drawer bottoms could also be employed. The drawer knobs (AA) are lathe turned,

The Hardware

Hardware consists of hinges (BB), bullet catches (CC) to hold the doors closed, and feet (DD) at the four corners to raise the chest slightly off the floor.