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Taboret Table

In this plan you will be getting:

- Step by Step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Exploded view and elevation drawings.
- How-to photos with instructive captions.
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

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Taboret Table

Fine woodworking doesn't have to take forever. This project will help sharpen your stock preparation and joinery skills without keeping you in the shop for a month of Sundays. In the end, you get a classic Arts & Crafts reproduction for your efforts.

This little Arts & Crafts taboret is an adaptation of an original Stickley piece. It's a great introduction to building Arts & Crafts furniture and is easily completed in just a couple of weekends.

We made this table from quartersawn red oak, but a more traditional choice would be quartersawn white oak. It requires small amounts of 4/4, 6/4, and 8/4 material. Select stock with a nice, but not too wide, decorative flake pattern. You could also make the table from mahogany or even cherry, but the flake pattern of quartersawn oak shows off particularly well on this simple design.

Beginning the Milling Routine

The first step in any construction process is to lay out and rough-cut your pieces. First, crosscut the parts in the *Material List* (see page 112) about 1" long, then joint, rip, and plane everything 1/4" oversized in width and height and 1" in length. Finally (and this can actually be the hardest part if you're itching to do some woodworking!), leave the milled pieces in the shop for a week before continuing. Then you can mill the workpieces to final dimension. This routine will save you the headache of watching pieces change shape when they are milled to final dimensions immediately. It's important to give the wood a chance to do what it's ultimately going to do anyway.

Three Steps to Achieving Stable Stock:
1. Crosscut all the pieces 1" oversized.
2. Joint, rip and plane them 1/2" oversized.
3. Store the prepared pieces for one week in your shop before continuing.

Making the Top

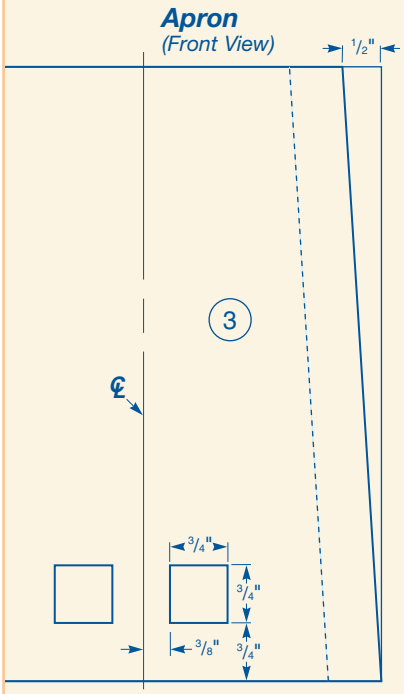
The top (piece 1) is made of two or three pieces of 3/4" stock. Try to pick pieces that have very complementary grain—possibly out of the same board. Trim these pieces so you only have about 1/4" to remove after glue-up. No need to worry about clamp dents this way. Reinforce and align these joints with three biscuits each, and glue up with Titebond® II or epoxy. (Regular Titebond will end up looking like a dark line after you apply the water-based aniline dye finish—if that's the route you decide to take for finishing.)

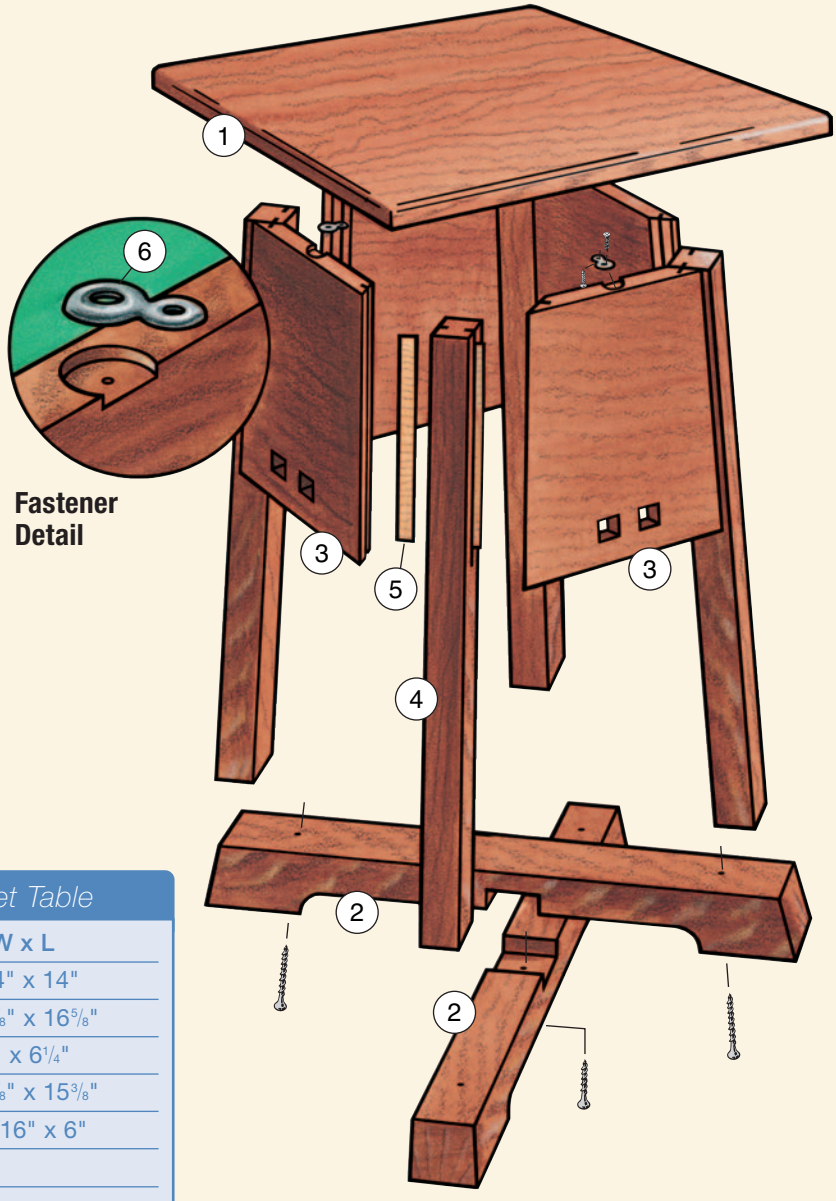
After the glue-up, trim the top to final size, sand, rout the edges with a 1/4" roundover and set it aside.

Proceeding with the Feet

The crossed feet (pieces 2) come next. See the *Elevation Drawings* on page 112. First make a 1/4"-thick arch template from hardboard that you can

Taboret Table Exploded View

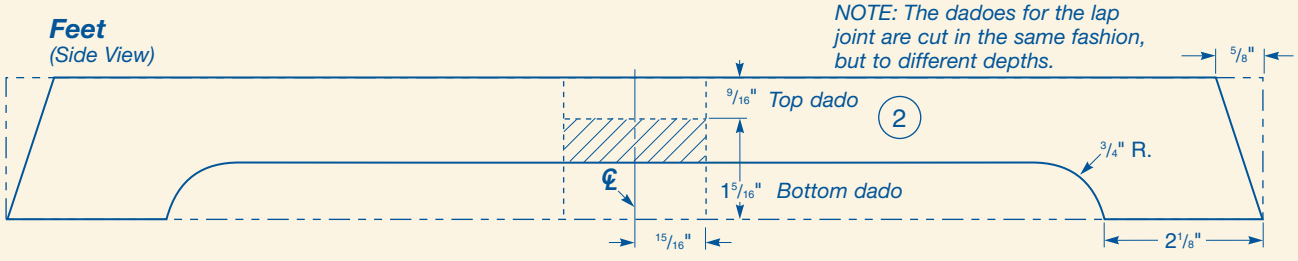




MATERIAL LIST – *Taboret Table*

		T x W x L
1	Top (1)	3/4" x 14" x 14"
2	Feet (2)	1 7/8" x 1 7/8" x 16 5/8"
3	Aprons* (4)	3/4" x 8" x 6 1/4"
4	Legs (4)	1 3/8" x 1 3/8" x 15 3/8"
5	Splines (8)	1/8" x 7/16" x 6"
6	Tabletop Fasteners (4)	Steel

* Length is 1/16" oversized for machining.

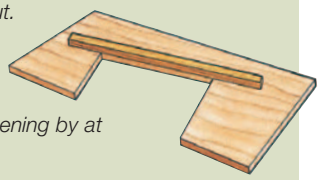


CUTTING THE APRON ANGLES

Because of their trapezoidal shape and mitered edges, the aprons are the hardest pieces to mill on this table. A couple of easy-to-use jigs help simplify the process. Make them out of 3/4" plywood (see *drawings*, below). Be sure to mark the inside and outside of the aprons before cutting their edges.

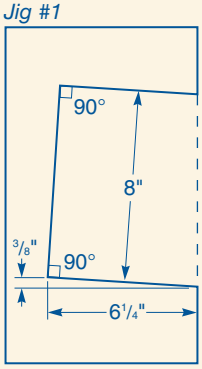
Tilt your blade 45° away from the rip fence and use Jig #1 to cut the right side of each apron first.

Keep your blade and rip fence in position and switch to Jig #2 to cut the left side of each apron. The scab piece on top keeps the newly mitered edge from riding up during the cut.

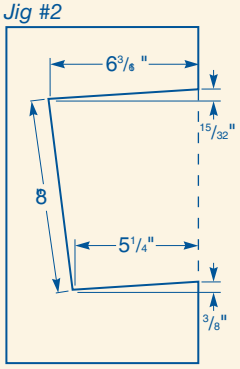


Cleat must overhang opening by at least 1/16".

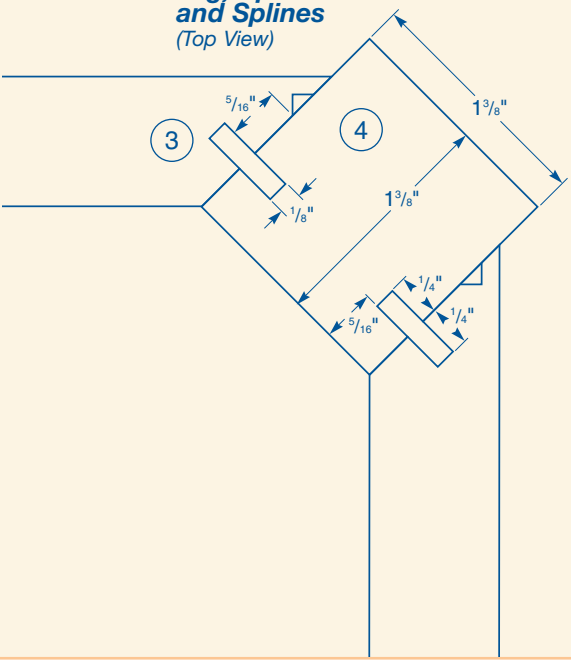
Jig #1



Jig #2



Leg, Aprons and Splines
(Top View)

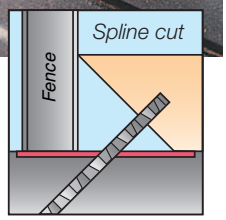


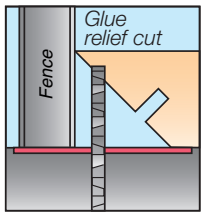
use to both mark and template-rout the arch's shape. Trace the arch on your feet workpieces, but before cutting them out, make the crossed lap joint while the parts are still flat-edged. The lap joint is deceptively simple looking. The keys to this joint are accurate lay-out and to creep up slowly on the final fit. As can be seen in the *drawings*, each foot is dadoed halfway through. Do this milling work in a series of passes on the table saw, with the very tip of the teeth reaching the halfway layout mark (see top *photo*, page 115). This will leave you with a corrugated dado bottom that is easy to pare to a final, flush fit with a chisel.

Now it's time to form the arched underside, and it is best done with a combination of band-sawing and template routing. Saw the arch about 1/16" outside the layout line (see center *photo*, page 115), then use double-stick tape to mount the template you made previously to the foot workpiece, and template-rout it to its final shape with a piloted flush-trimming bit. When you are done, form the angles on the ends of the feet at your miter saw.

Next comes the hardest part—the aprons (pieces 3). They're hard because they not only tilt inward, but also are tapered vertically and meet the legs in a miter. Because of their inward lean, the mitered edges are not 45° but instead are just strong. Start machining these pieces by cutting the top and bottom edges square and to size. Next, lay out and cut the square decorative mortises. It's much easier to lay these out and cut them now than after the panels are tapered. You can drill out most of the mortise waste with a Forstner bit and then clean it up with a sharp chisel, as shown in the *photo* on page 110, or use a mortising machine and make them in four overlapping passes instead.

Tapering the aprons requires the use of two fairly simple jigs (see the *sidebar*, above), one for each edge. The





After the aprons are cut to size, remove the jigs and reset the blade to make the 1/4"-deep cuts for the spines, as shown at right. Next, straighten the blade and reset it to nick the apron between the spline groove and outside edge: it makes a relief groove to catch glue squeeze-out.

only trick to remember here is that the jigs must be perfectly complementary or the aprons will end up asymmetrical.

The last step on the aprons is to cut the spline and glue relief grooves (see *photo* and *illustrations* at left). Tip your table saw blade to 45° for the spline cuts, then reset it to square for the glue relief cuts.

The final parts to make are the legs (pieces 4), which have a slight 5° miter cut on each end and stopped spline grooves to accommodate the aprons. Clamp a stop block to your table saw's rip fence to prevent cutting the spline grooves overly long (see bottom *photo*, next page).

Prior to dry-assembling the table, cut some oak splines (pieces 5) to fit snugly into the apron and leg grooves.

Time for Dry Assembly

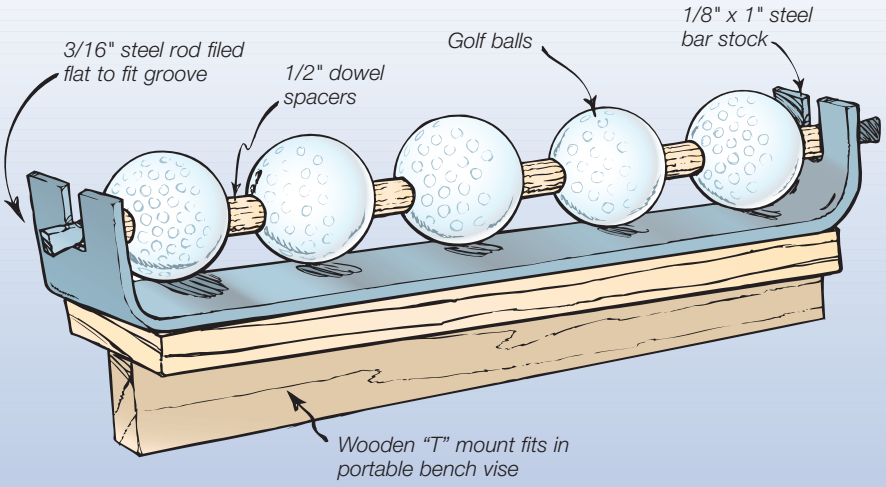
As with proper milling techniques, dry assembly is a critical step that you shouldn't skip. For this project, it involves assembling the legs and aprons with the splines and a couple of band clamps, assembling the feet and screwing them together from the bottom side of the lap joint, marking the landing points of the legs onto the feet, drilling holes and pilot holes and screwing them together from underneath.

At this point, take a small Forstner bit and drill a pocket on top of each apron for the tabletop fasteners (pieces 6). Screw the fasteners in place and attach the top with them. If everything fits well, disassemble all the pieces to prepare for finishing.

QuickTip

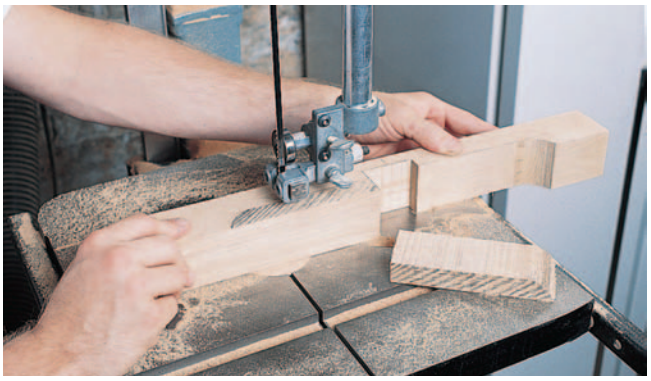
Gold Ball Outfeed Rollers

Outfeed rollers are essential for supporting long stock or wide panels as they leave a table saw. You can make an adjustable outfeed roller easily with a piece of 1/4" steel rod, a length of bar stock, five golf balls and and some odds and ends from the scrap bin. Assemble the outfeed roller as shown here. Make the wooden "T" long enough so you can clamp it to a Workmate®. That way, you can adjust the roller to the height of your saw.



The lap joint is deceptively simple looking. The keys to forming this joint are accurate layout and creeping up slowly on the final fit.

The lap joint dadoes on the feet are cut first. Clearly mark your stock, and remember to reset the blade height for the second foot.



Once the dadoes are cut, move to the band saw to remove the waste at the bottom of each foot. Then template-rout the final shape.

With a stop block in place to create a 7" spline groove, cut the right side of each leg, then reset the fence to cut the opposite sides.

Adding Dye Stain and Topcoat

Water-based aniline dye makes an attractive finish for Arts & Crafts projects because it colors the wood evenly without darkening the large open pores of the oak. The first step is to raise all the grain with a damp rag, wait for it to dry and sand everything smooth with 120-grit paper. Take care not to sand so much that the lap joint gets loose. With everything sanded and the edges broken, wipe stain on all the parts. If it's warm in your shop, remember to keep your head out of the line of fire. You don't want a big bead of sweat landing on your just dyed piece, or it will leave a stain.

When the parts dry thoroughly, burnish them lightly with a fine Scotchbrite™ pad to take off any minute fuzz. Assemble the pieces while wearing rubber gloves to prevent any sweat on your hands from marking the stained surfaces. The assembly follows exactly the same process as the dry assembly except now you should glue the aprons and splines and use soft rags to pad the band clamps so they don't scar the finish. Leave the top off for the time being.

We sprayed three coats of catalyzed lacquer as our topcoat, but most any finish will do as long as it isn't water-based, which would cause the stain to smear. Varnish or a wipe-on oil finish would be other good choices here.

The final step is to attach the top with four screws through the tabletop fasteners. The table is now complete.

This is a great project for someone looking to advance their skills without spending weeks in the shop to complete it. Set this taboret in a prominent spot, find a healthy plant to top it off and step back to admire your handiwork.