WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL

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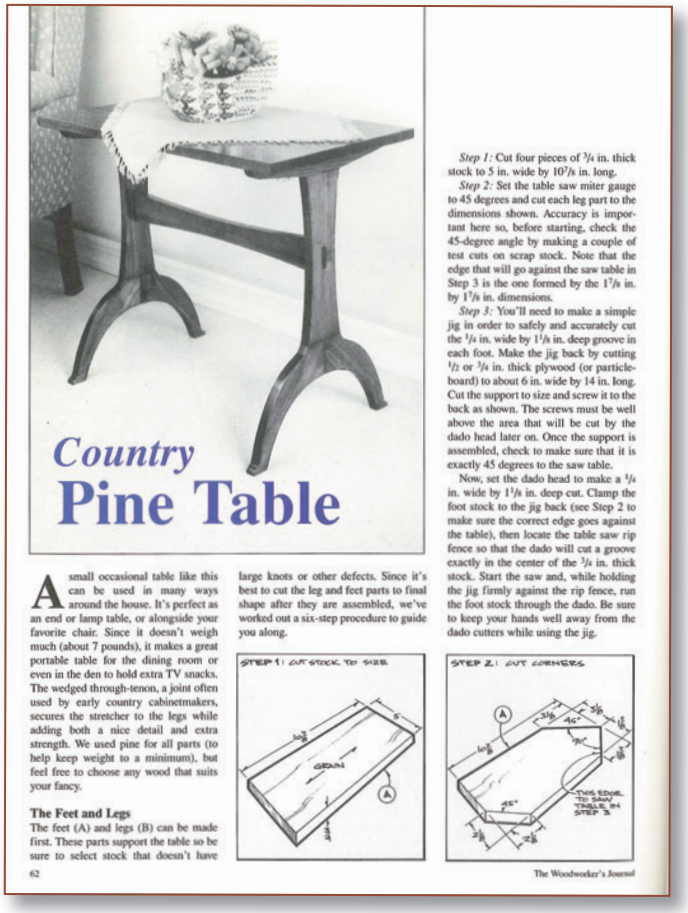
Classic Project

In this plan you'll find:

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

Country Pine Table



Country
Pine Table

A small occasional table like this can be used in many ways around the house. It's perfect as an end or lamp table, or alongside your favorite chair. Since it doesn't weigh much (about 7 pounds), it makes a great portable table for the dining room or even in the den to hold extra TV snacks. The wedged through-tenon, a joint often used by early country cabinetmakers, secures the stretcher to the legs while adding both a nice detail and extra strength. We used pine for all parts (to help keep weight to a minimum), but feel free to choose any wood that suits your fancy.

The Feet and Legs

The feet (A) and legs (B) can be made first. These parts support the table so be sure to select stock that doesn't have large knots or other defects. Since it's best to cut the leg and feet parts to final shape after they are assembled, we've worked out a six-step procedure to guide you along.

Step 1: Cut four pieces of ¾ in. thick stock to 5 in. wide by 10⅞ in. long.

Step 2: Set the table saw miter gauge to 45 degrees and cut each leg part to the dimensions shown. Accuracy is important here so, before starting, check the 45-degree angle by making a couple of test cuts on scrap stock. Note that the edge that will go against the saw table in Step 3 is the one formed by the 17⅞ in. by 17⅞ in. dimensions.

Step 3: You'll need to make a simple jig in order to safely and accurately cut the ¼ in. wide by 1⅛ in. deep groove in each foot. Make the jig back by cutting ½ or ¾ in. thick plywood (or particleboard) to about 6 in. wide by 14 in. long. Cut the support to size and screw it to the back as shown. The screws must be well above the area that will be cut by the dado head later on. Once the support is assembled, check to make sure that it is exactly 45 degrees to the saw table.

Now, set the dado head to make a ¼ in. wide by 1⅛ in. deep cut. Clamp the foot stock to the jig back (see Step 2 to make sure the correct edge goes against the table), then locate the table saw rip fence so that the dado will cut a groove exactly in the center of the ¾ in. thick stock. Start the saw and, while holding the jig firmly against the rip fence, run the foot stock through the dado. Be sure to keep your hands well away from the dado cutters while using the jig.

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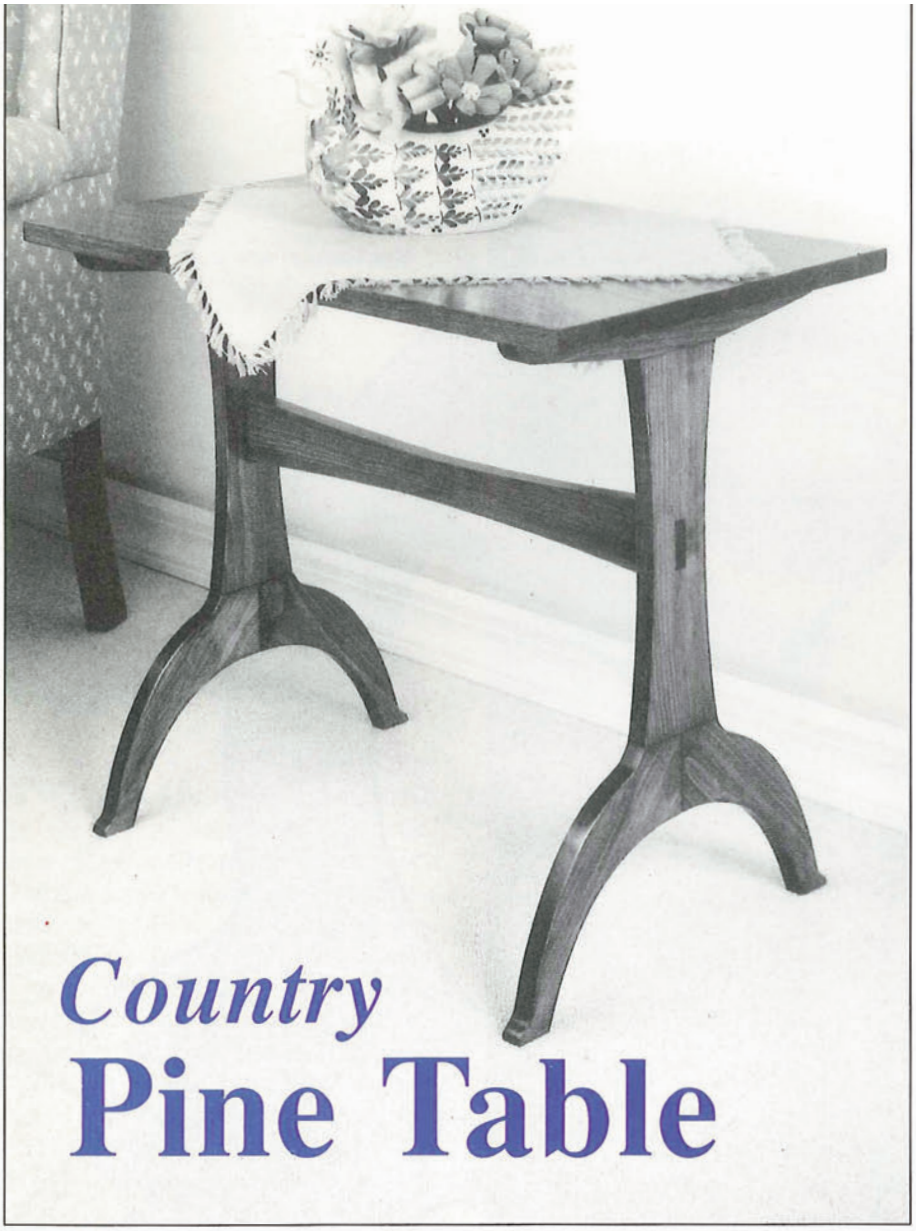

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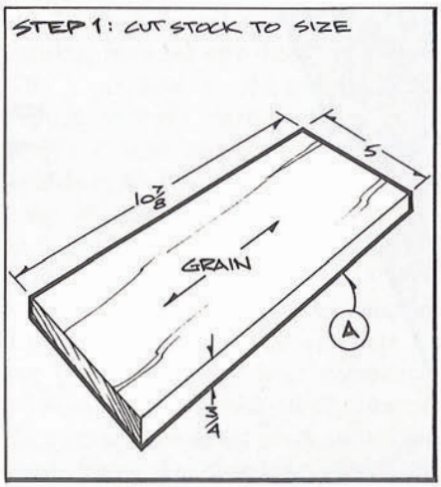
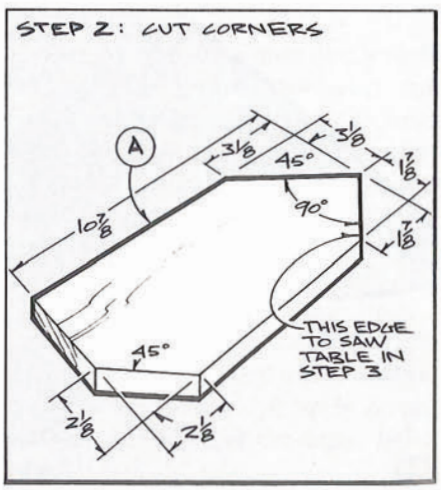


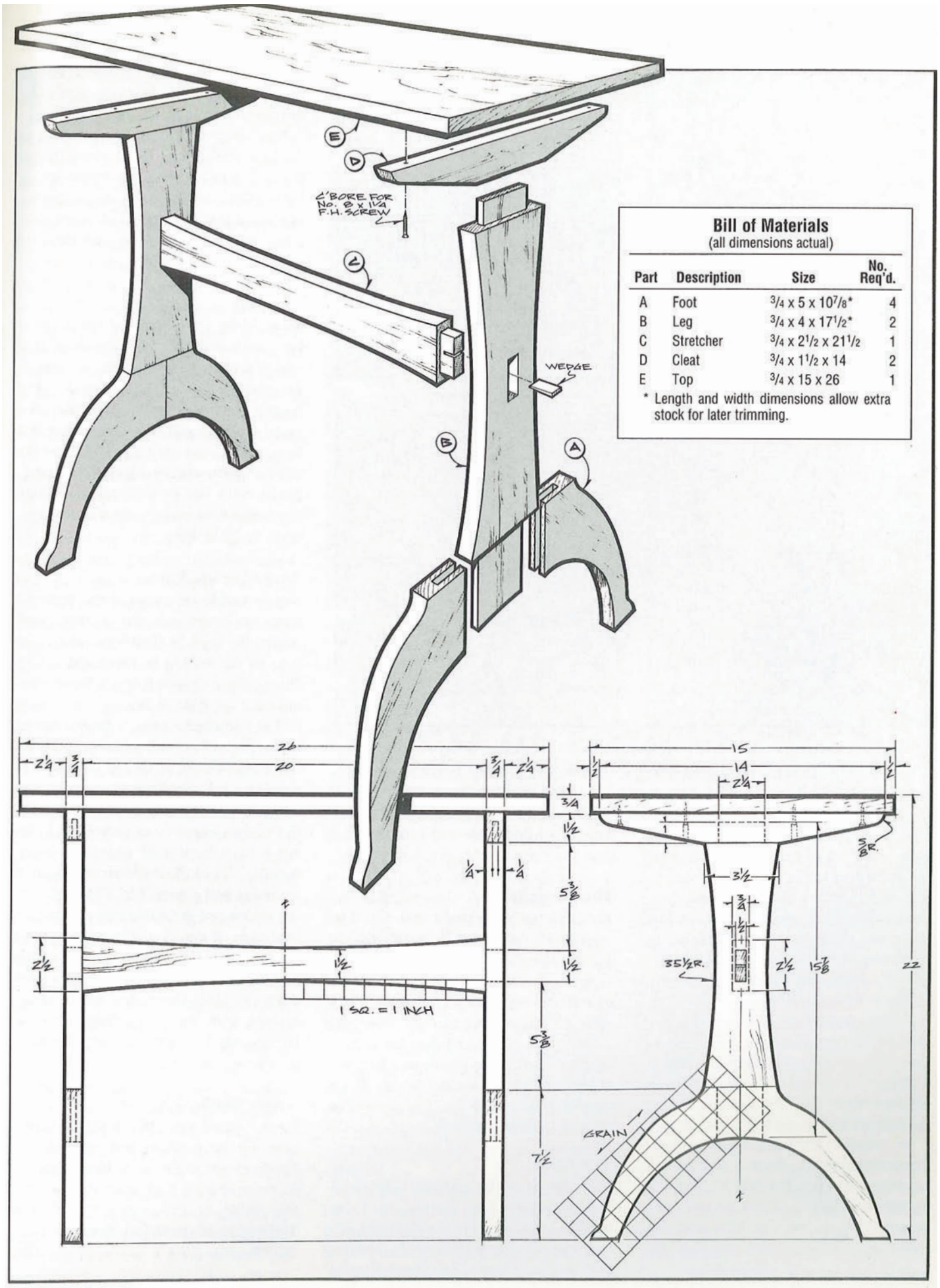
Step 1: Cut four pieces of 3/4 in. thick stock to 5 in. wide by 10 7/8 in. long.

Step 2: Set the table saw miter gauge to 45 degrees and cut each leg part to the dimensions shown. Accuracy is important here so, before starting, check the 45-degree angle by making a couple of test cuts on scrap stock. Note that the edge that will go against the saw table in Step 3 is the one formed by the 1 7/8 in. by 1 7/8 in. dimensions.

Step 3: You'll need to make a simple jig in order to safely and accurately cut the 1/4 in. wide by 1 1/8 in. deep groove in each foot. Make the jig back by cutting 1/2 or 3/4 in. thick plywood (or particleboard) to about 6 in. wide by 14 in. long. Cut the support to size and screw it to the back as shown. The screws must be well above the area that will be cut by the dado head later on. Once the support is assembled, check to make sure that it is exactly 45 degrees to the saw table.

Now, set the dado head to make a 1/4 in. wide by 1 1/8 in. deep cut. Clamp the foot stock to the jig back (see Step 2 to make sure the correct edge goes against the table), then locate the table saw rip fence so that the dado will cut a groove exactly in the center of the 3/4 in. thick stock. Start the saw and, while holding the jig firmly against the rip fence, run the foot stock through the dado. Be sure to keep your hands well away from the dado cutters while using the jig.

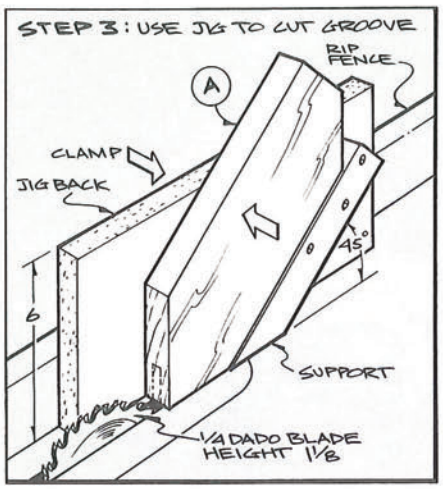


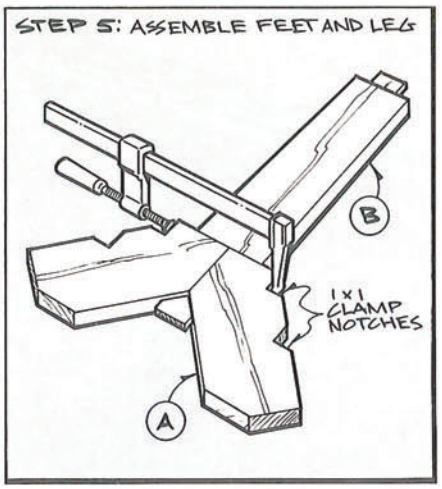


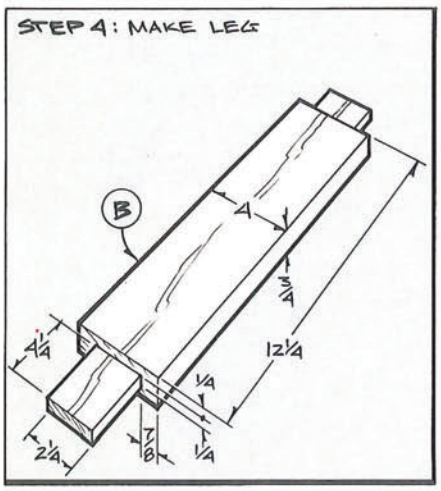
Bill of Materials
(all dimensions actual)

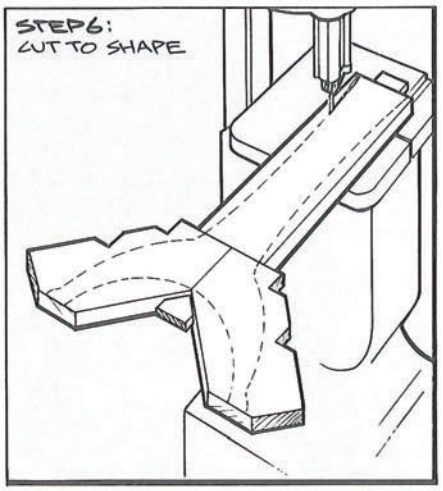
Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Foot	¾ x 5 x 10⅞*	4
B	Leg	¾ x 4 x 17½*	2
C	Stretcher	¾ x 2½ x 21½	1
D	Cleat	¾ x 1½ x 14	2
E	Top	¾ x 15 x 26	1

* Length and width dimensions allow extra stock for later trimming.









Step 4: Rip stock for the leg to 4 in. wide by 17 1/2 in. long. Use the dado to cut the tenons on each end as shown. Note that the bottom tenon is cut extra long (4 1/4 in.) to allow for trimming later when the feet are added.

Step 5: Use the band or saber saw to cut a pair of clamp notches on each foot as shown. Add glue to the bottom leg tenon and the foot grooves, then assemble and clamp with a pair of bar clamps. Allow to dry overnight.

Step 6: Referring to the end view (pg. 63), transfer the grid pattern for the foot from the drawing to a paper template. Using the template, trace the profile on the foot stock as shown. Also, scribe the 35 1/2 in. radius on both sides of the leg.

A wooden yardstick can be easily converted into a giant compass for scribing the radius. On one end bore a 1/8 in. diameter hole to accept the point of a pencil. Then measure 35 1/2 in. from this point and drive a brad through the yardstick to serve as a pivot point.

Once the profiles have been traced, use a band or saber saw to cut them out. Make the cuts slightly on the outside of the marked line, then sand exactly to the line.

The Stretcher

The stretcher (C) is made next. Cut it to length and width from 3/4 in. thick stock and use the dado head to cut the 3/4 in. long through-tenons on each end. Now, transfer the grid pattern to the stretcher and cut it out with the band or saber saw.

Next, using the stretcher tenon as a template, lay out and mark the location of the mating mortise on the leg. Once marked, a sharp chisel will chop out the mortise in short order.

The Cleats

Make the cleats (D) as shown in the front and end views. Lay out and mark the mortise location using the leg tenon as a template. Once marked, cut the mortise with a sharp chisel. Use a hand plane to cut the tapers. The 5/8 in. radius on the end of the tapers can be made with a file or rasp.

Note that each stretcher is counterbored to accept four 1 1/4 in. long by no. 8 wood screws. Make the screw shank holes slightly oversized. Later, when the top is added, the oversized holes will allow the top to expand and contract with changes in humidity.

The Top

Since 15 in. wide stock is hard to come by, you'll probably need to edge-glue two or three narrower boards in order to get enough width for the top (E). It's best to cut the boards so that the glued-up stock will be slightly wider and longer than necessary. Apply a thin coat of glue to the mating edges, then clamp firmly with bar or pipe clamps. Once dry, remove the clamps and trim to 15 in. wide by 26 in. long.

Assemble the Parts

Dry assemble the cleats to the legs and check to make sure the mortises and tenons fit properly. If all looks okay, add glue to the mating surfaces and clamp firmly. Once clamped, check for squareness and set aside to dry.

The stretchers can now be assembled to the legs. The wedged tenon adds an interesting detail as well as some extra strength. A 1/2 in. deep saw kerf in the tenon serves as a slot for the wedge. Cut the wedges long so they protrude a little. Apply a thin coat of glue to the leg mortise and to the stretcher tenon, then assemble and clamp. Add a little glue to the wedge and drive it in place, but do so with care. If you drive the wedge in too far, it could split the tenon. Next, check for squareness and if all looks okay, set aside to dry. Once dry, remove the clamps, trim the wedge flush with the leg and sand smooth. The top can now be screwed in place.

Apply the Finish

Final sand all parts, taking care to round over all sharp edges and corners. We finished our table with two coats of Minwax Puritan Pine stain followed by two coats of their Antique Oil. An application of paste wax completed the project.

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Matt Becker
Internet Production Coordinator