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Furniture Making Courses

Courses

Course Structure

This page contains a brief overview of the Course Structure. For a more detailed look,

The Tools

We will buy tools together at Axminster. This is of course a frightening expense but a very exciting time acquiring those beautiful planes. A lot of it is mundane stuff but you need my guidance to avoid wasting money. It is also a useful chance to see one of the country's largest tool suppliers and to have a preliminary glance at machines.

The Bench

You will make a bench. Mortise and tenon joints, bridle joints, butt jointing long planks by hand, hand planing and much machine work will all be covered during this period. This bench can be seen in a photograph. This is a very solid and versatile but simple to use bench, far more practical for the serious maker than the "swedish" bench .

The work involved in this piece is a massive learn and very fast. The quick mastery and understanding of the hand plane and its abilities, the sharpening of blades, the introduction to circular saw, planer and thicknesser, procedure for butt joining large boards (the bench top), the glue up and all this in the first six days ! And with no rush.

The Cabinet

Then, after six weeks, we start the cabinet. In the making of this piece you will learn how to create all the standard cabinet joints. Six types of dovetail joint practised for several weeks, butt jointed thin edges, dovetail housings, trenching, frame and panel mortise and tenon joints, raised fielding and plain field, router work, and lastly drawer making and fitting. Around all of this is the constant steep learning curve of how to get the best out of your plane and how to understand the behaviour of timber.

The cabinet can be simple or elaborate. The simpler they



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The Two Drawer Table or the two drawer Stand for the cabinet

The next piece will either be a table with two drawers or a stand for your cabinet with two drawers. Either piece gives you the required knowledge for making limbed pieces with drawers. Both the cabinet and the table (or stand) require you to gain an understanding of how timber moves and behaves. With the knowledge gained from making these first three pieces, bench, cabinet, table, most pieces of furniture are within your range. All except curved member construction. This comes next.

The Jointed Chair. The jointed chair is made with mortise and tenon joints rather than turned spindles into round bored holes. These joints will last for centuries whereas the so called "Bodged" chair, beautiful though they often are and this is not a derogatory term, has a relatively short lifespan.

This piece not only enables you to understand the process of chair making, with its compound angles and twisted faces but also the whole principle of making pieces with curved members using templates. This then means the ability to break away from rightangles into whatever structure interests you and we are talking about any structure in wood, not just chairs. People are often nervous at the thought of the chair, but , as usual, we break it carefully down into stages and all is not only revealed but made relatively painless to understand. So you can see that this completes a very comprehensive and thorough grounding in construction techniques which can be expanded in the privacy of your own workshop in whatever particular direction your personality draws you. I shall never forget the romance of those first few years, the comparison with a nine to five job when now the clock was always ahead of your expectations and people admired your work. Something solid that would give so much pleasure to own and to use. Then it gets harder as clients want bigger and better. But that's more fun too. So yes, I'm just reminding you of what a wonderful thing it is to do with your life. And it improves this planet of our's too.



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