

How I make a Cypress Knee Santa

Here I start out with a basic cypress knee from the swamps of Georgia. This knee is exactly 2 feet tall. In the photo below I have removed most of the bark and some of the skin. I have made some initial cuts to begin the nose and eyes.



When I obtain a cypress knee I always set it aside and study it for quite some time, looking at the grain, the flow of the wood, the imperfections, along with the humps and bumps. I do this because I want to try to incorporate any of these details into the carving I intend to do. Usually I can see the Santa in the knee before I start and then all I have to do is carve away everything else. In the photo below I have roughed out the nose, eyes and the top of the mustache.



In the photo below I have roughed out the eyebrows, located the bottom lip, and roughly outlined the flow of the beard. Here again I try to use the natural flow of the grain, swirling around knots, humps and bumps.



Below, I have carved most of the features and am fairly satisfied that Santa is going to be able to escape the knee. Now it's just a matter of carving some fine detail and finishing the beard.



Most of the carving is now done. But I still need to carve out the rest of the beard and put in some hair lines. I will also add some details to the face such as wrinkles, because he has been hidden in this knee for quite some time.



After a lot of smoothing I add some paint. I like to see the wood grain through the paint so I use only what I need to achieve that effect.



Lastly I sign the carving on the bottom and that completes the job. Merry Christmas!