

# Laminated Jewelry Box



This project draws its inspiration from the English decorative woodworking technique known as Tunbridgeware. This ware is characterized by small items that give the appearance of being worked with delicate tessera inlay. The technique involves gluing colored sticks of wood together in bundles and then repeatedly slicing, repositioning and re-gluing.

With this little box, the slicing and laminating technique is used in conjunction with what has come to be called "band saw joinery."

## MAKING THE LAMINATED BOX

First and foremost, you have to understand that with this project there are several steps along the way where there is a high risk of the whole thing falling to pieces. This being so, we decided at the outset to work on two boxes at the same time, just in case of mistakes. Well, as you can see in the photographs, we got so far with one box and—Splap!—it came to grief.

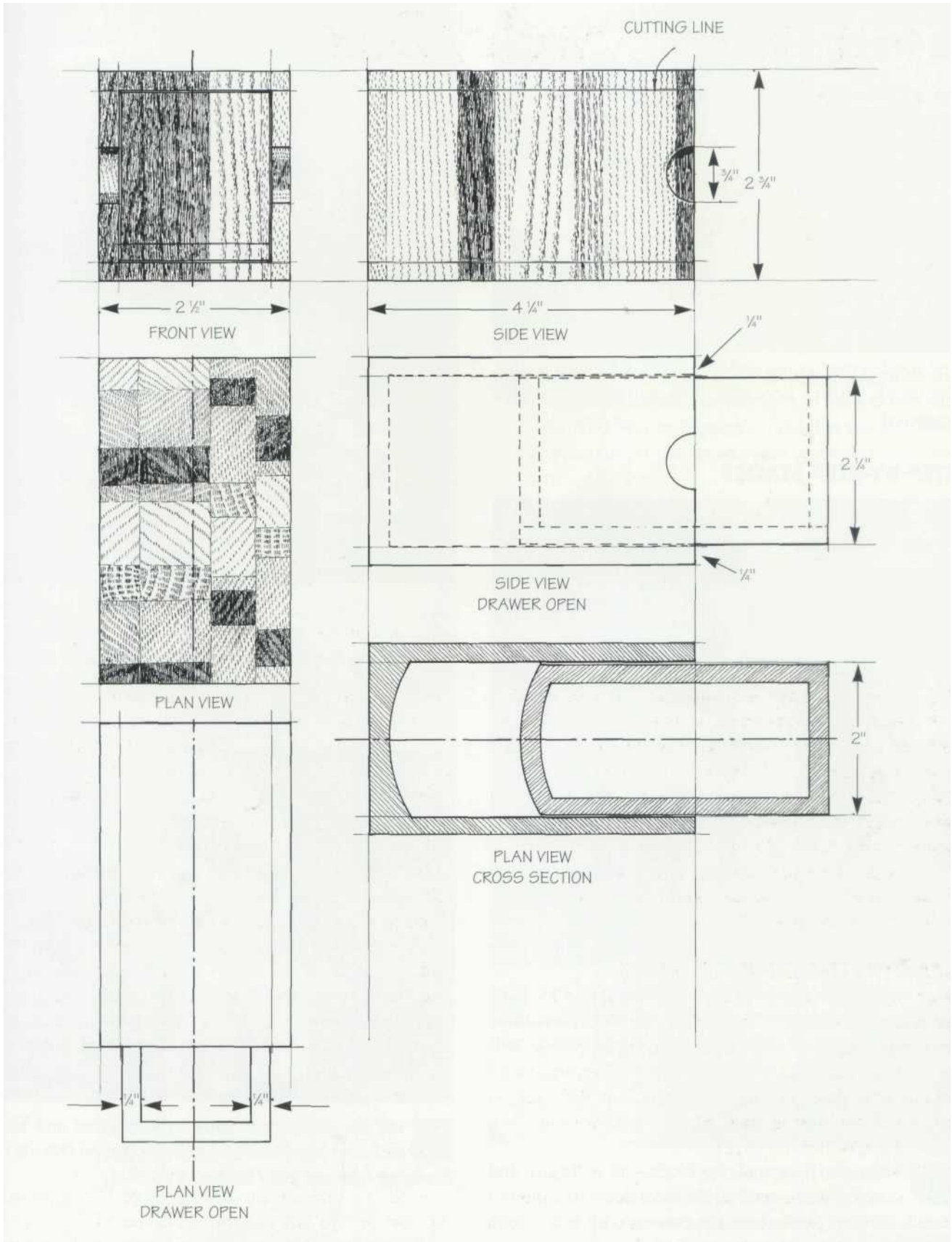
When you have studied the working drawings, gather your chosen offcuts, and plane them down to smooth-sided sections. Stick them together side by side, like a long fence. When the glue is dry, plane both sides of

the fence, cut it into short lengths, and then re-glue the resultant lengths into a layered sandwich. Continue slicing, planing, gluing and laminating, until you have what you consider an interesting multicolored brick. And of course, the more you slice and laminate, the smaller the design and the greater the complexity of the pattern.

Plane your brick to size so that it is  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " X  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " in section and 4" long, with all six sides being smooth and at right angles to each other. Pencil label the various sides "top," "bottom," "back," "front," "left side" and "right side."

Use the band saw to cut a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " slice from the "top" and "bottom," label the slices and put them carefully to one side. This done, set the shape of the drawer out on the rough face of the block, and use either a fine-bladed band saw or a scroll saw to cut it out. Next, slice the bottom off the drawer, label it and put it to one side. Then use the scroll saw to clear away the waste from what will be the inside of the drawer. While the saw is handy, cut away the two finger holes and run a cut straight down back-center of the shell-like piece that wraps around the drawer.

When you have made all six component parts—the top and bottom slabs of the brick, the all-in-one-piece back and sides that has been cut into two halves, the



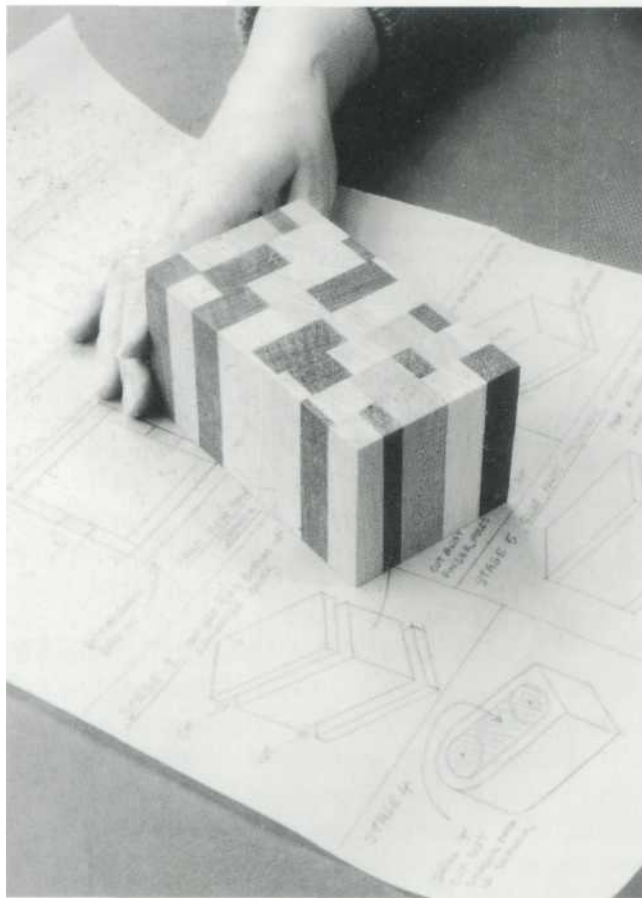
drawer with the inside cut away, and the bottom to the drawer—take the finest-grade sandpaper and rub all the sides and faces down to a smooth finish. Be careful that you don't blur the corners.

To put the little box together, start by gluing the base onto the drawer. Then smear glue on mating faces and reconstruct the block so that the drawer is nicely and closely contained. Finally, when the glue is dry, sand and finish the box.

### SPECIAL TIP

If you like the idea of this project and want to try something a little more complex, you could experiment with cross-laminating. For example, you could turn the slices around at the sandwiching steps so that all faces of the brick show end grain. Then again, you could try swapping and turning the bottom and side slices of the box so that the block pattern becomes even more complex and staggered.

### STEP-BY-STEP STAGES

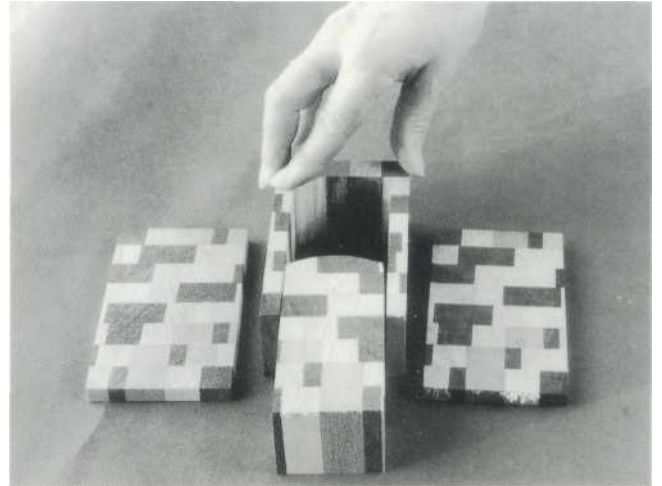


**1** When you have made the block—all well glued and sawed to size—sand all the faces down to a smooth finish. Do your best to keep the corners crisp and at right angles.

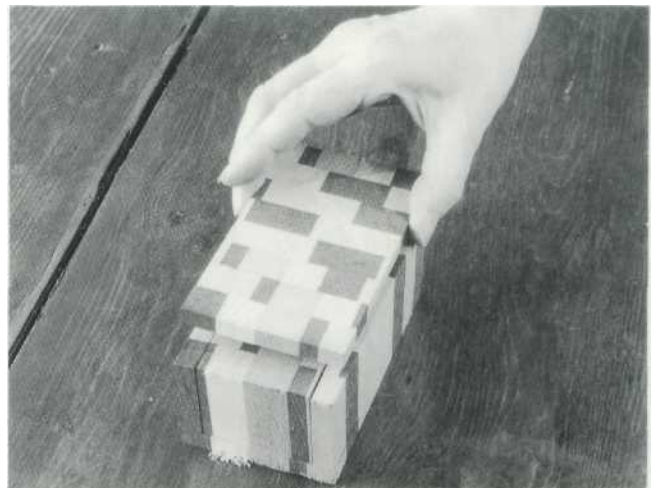
### MATERIALS LIST

Box

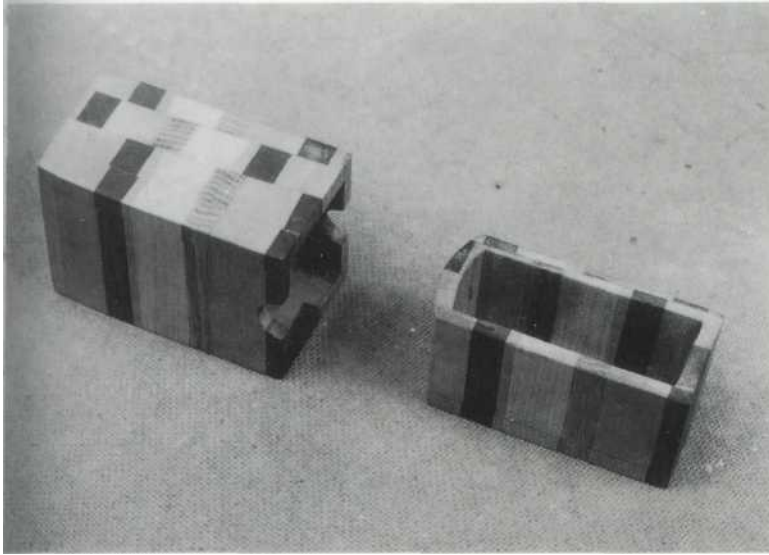
A selection of contrasting offcuts all sawed and planed—we used American walnut, oak, cherry and tulipwood—at about 1/2" thick and at various widths.



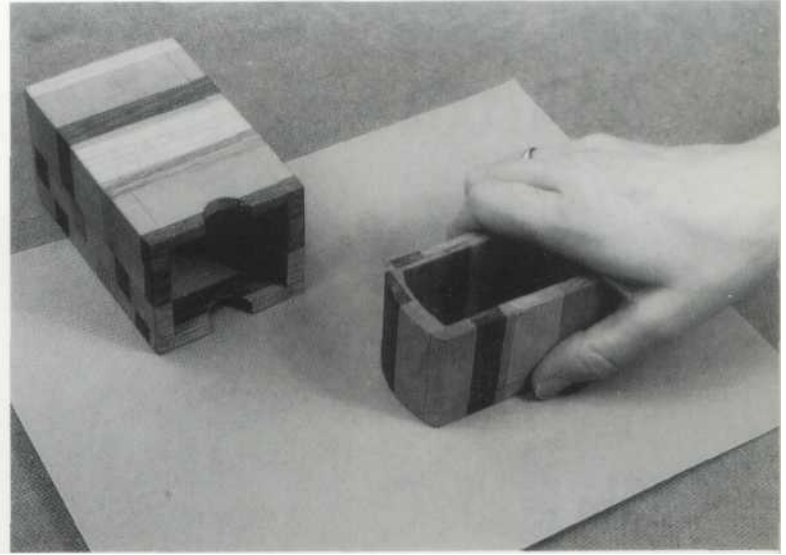
**2** Saw slices off the top and bottom of the block and cut out the shape that goes to make the drawer. Be mindful that the drawer surround—meaning the piece that you see me holding—is very fragile at this stage and liable to break apart at the corners.



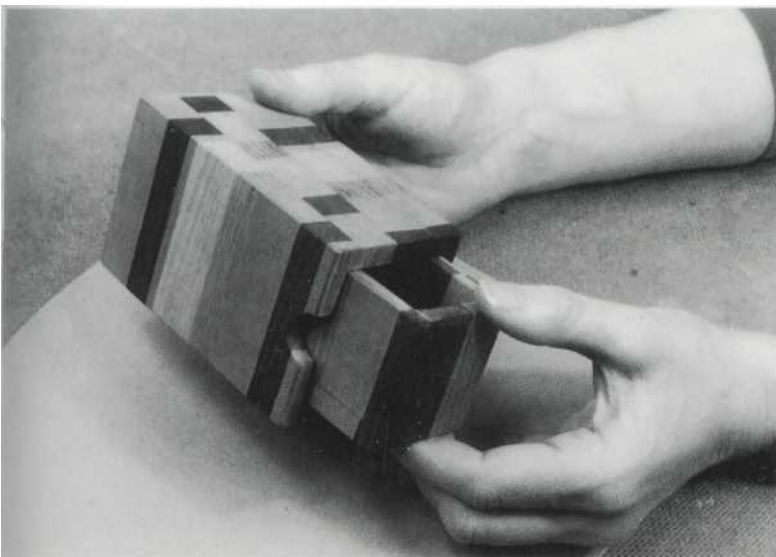
**3** Put the component parts back together and label each and every face and mating edge, so there is no doubting how the parts fit one to another.



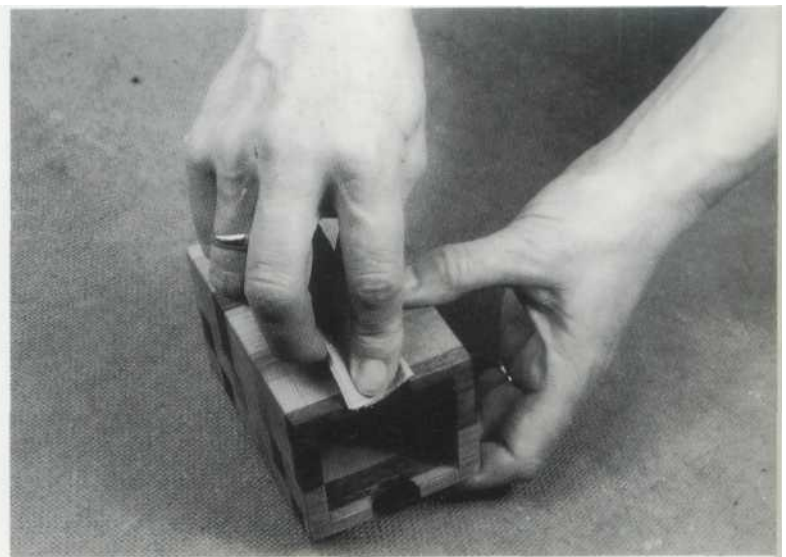
4 Having sliced off the bottom of the drawer block, saw out the inside-drawer waste and then glue the base back on the drawer. And just in case you have noticed that this photograph shows another block, the sad truth is the original block fell to bits when I was cutting the drawer. I think the problem was that I was a bit anxious and heavy-handed, and the glue hadn't quite cured.



Sanding the various faces is a very slow business for the simple reason that you have to work slowly and with care. You have to be most careful that you don't put undue pressure on the drawer—no squeezing the sides together.



6 If you find that the drawer is a somewhat loose fit, it's a good idea to give the inside of the box a couple of coats of sealer and then sand back to a nice push fit. The best procedure is to sand a little and test the fit, then sand some more, and so on until you are satisfied.



Sand the finger holes to a rounded finish. You have a choice at this stage . . . do you want to round and blur all the corners, or do you want to keep them sharp?