

How to make The Woodcarvers Cabin Keepsake Chest

At The Woodcarver's Cabin I pride myself in keeping things simple and starting with the basics where possible. As mentioned in previous articles, I prefer to carve wood that I myself have cut and cured. Once a project is complete, I feel that I have created the entire piece, although more time consuming. The basswood I use looks something like this after I have sawn the logs into boards.



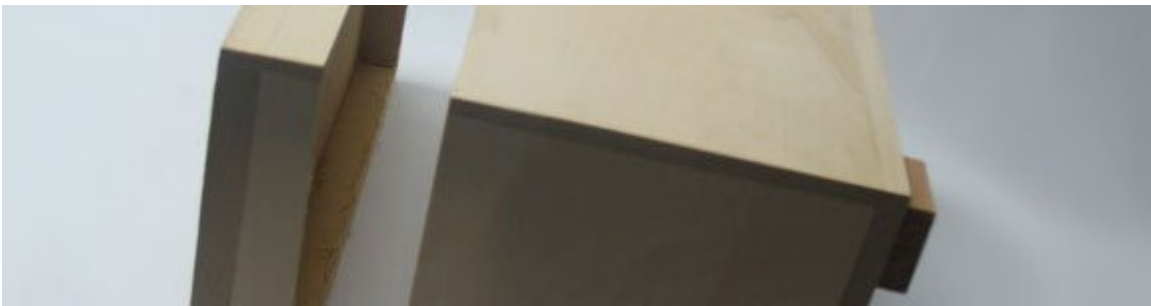
A plan must be made as to how the corners will be joined. I use different methods for this based on the strength needed and how I want the box to look when finished. The type of carving is also a factor especially if it is to be done on the front, sides or back. I saw the wood to the proper thickness and dimensions. All these photos show mitered corners. To see a chest made with "finger joints" [Click here](#) or on the link at the bottom of this page . It is possible to purchase ready-made boxes, but they are sometimes poorly constructed, and again this takes away from my ideal plan of doing the total job myself. This would be like buying a ready-made birthday cake at the bakery and adding only the icing yourself, then claiming credit for making the cake. It just doesn't seem quiet as fullfilling.



Here I have cut the wood to the proper thickness, length and mitered the corners. Glue is the only securement used in the corners. After making sure of proper fit and before gluing the parts together they will be sanded. The bottom and top will be fitted to the chest and it will be sanded again. The next photo shows that the bottom has been added.



After the top is added and the glue has dried for 24 hours the top is then separated from the box as shown in the next photo. The bottom corner feet are also added at this time. The chest will then again be fine sanded.



Sometimes I add a cedar bottom or line the entire chest with cedar. This gives the inside of the box a very aromatic scent. The box below has a cedar bottom. Another touch I sometimes add is laminating several layers of slightly different color shades of wood together to make the sides and ends. I only add carving to the lid of a chest such as this.



Notice that the lid of the chest below is beveled. This is another distinctive touch that can be added. The next step is to decide what I will carve on the chest. This varies as to the purpose for which or for who the chest is done. Sometimes I receive special requests for certain types of carvings. I get more satisfaction from the job when I develop my own designs. After the carving is done I normally use oil based stains and laquer I finish my chests. After adding the hinges and latch the boxes will be complete.

