

GET A FREE ISSUE AND A FREE BOOK

SKIL workbench

Look at what you'll get...

- Free Preview of Workbench Magazine
- Free Storage Solutions Book
- Time and Money-Saving **Tips**
- Projects with **Step-by-Step** How-to's
- Your Home Improvement **Questions Answered**
- **Practical ideas** to Add Style & Value to Your Home
- Tools and Product **Advice**



www.WorkbenchMagazine.com



Offer subject to change





SERVICE WITH A STYLE

With a decorative glass panel highlighted by a black-fabric insert, this serving tray has a sophisticated style. If you prefer a more casual look, you can insert other fabrics, wallpaper, or dried flowers (*page 65*). Whatever you choose, this tray looks so good you may never put it away. But you could, thanks to a base that folds for storage.

TURN OUT THE SERVING TRAY

Building this serving tray is a straightforward process. Even if you're not an accomplished woodworker, you'll catch right on. And for tools, you'll only need a table saw, a drill, and a few clamps.

The *Construction View* shows that the tray starts out with a large wood frame. Then a glass bottom panel, a decorative insert, and a backer get inserted into rabbets cut in the inside edge of each frame piece. This "package" is held in place with narrow cleats attached to the frame.

You'll see, too, that the ends of the frame are thicker than the sides. But they're glued up from two pieces of stock so that the entire tray can be built from $\frac{3}{4}$ "-thick stock (maple in this case). Those ends then get attached to the sides with a simple tongue joint.

Make the Sides and Ends—To get started on the tray, first cut the sides (A) to size. Then set them aside for the moment.

Making the ends (B) is a two-step process. First, you need to cut four 2" x 12" blocks from the same $\frac{3}{4}$ " stock. Now glue pairs of the blocks together to make two $1\frac{1}{2}$ "-thick blanks. Be sure

to keep the edges aligned. Then cut the tray ends to length.

Create the Rabbets—Now it's time to cut the rabbets in the sides and ends. A table saw makes quick work of this in two passes.

Start by making a pass in each tray side, as shown in *Step 1*, below. Without changing the setup, cut the end pieces. But this time, the *edge* of each piece rides against the saw table.

To complete the rabbet, make a second cut in each piece (*Step 2*).

Cut the Tongues—Now you can cut the short tongues on each end piece that join them to the sides. You can use the same fence position. Just lower the blade to make a $\frac{1}{2}$ "-deep cut. Then cut the tongues as shown in *Steps 3 and 4*.

Assemble the Tray—With the tongues cut, you can glue the side and end pieces together. Then, to reinforce the joints and add a decorative touch, drill holes and insert dowels after the glue dries. See the *Box* on page 64.

Bring on the Insert—With the main tray complete, it's time to add the glass and decorative insert that give the serving tray its distinct style. When

installed, these will rest in the rabbets in the tray and be held in by cleats.

The first step is to cut the backer panel (C) to fit. Then you can have glass cut $\frac{1}{8}$ " smaller in width and length than the backer.

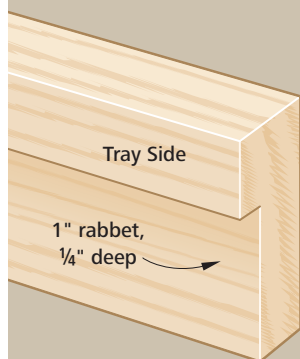
Now cut the cleats (D, E) that secure the glass and backer from $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick stock. That done, drill countersunk holes in the cleats for mounting screws.

After drilling those holes, turn the tray upside down, and lay the glass in place in the rabbets. Lay your decorative insert in next (*see page 65 for a few insert options*). Then add the backer. Now mark the location of screw holes in the tray, remove the insert "package," including the glass, and then drill the pilot holes. This is also a good time to drill countersunk mounting holes for the handles.

Finish & Assemble—Before going further, apply a polyurethane finish to the tray and cleats. Finally, secure the glass by bedding it in a thin bead of silicone. That seals the glass to prevent any spills from seeping under and ruining the decorative insert. After the silicone sets, reinstall the insert and backer, and then secure the cleats.

RABBETS IN TWO STEPS

Cutting the wide rabbets in the tray sides only requires your standard saw blade and two simple setups.

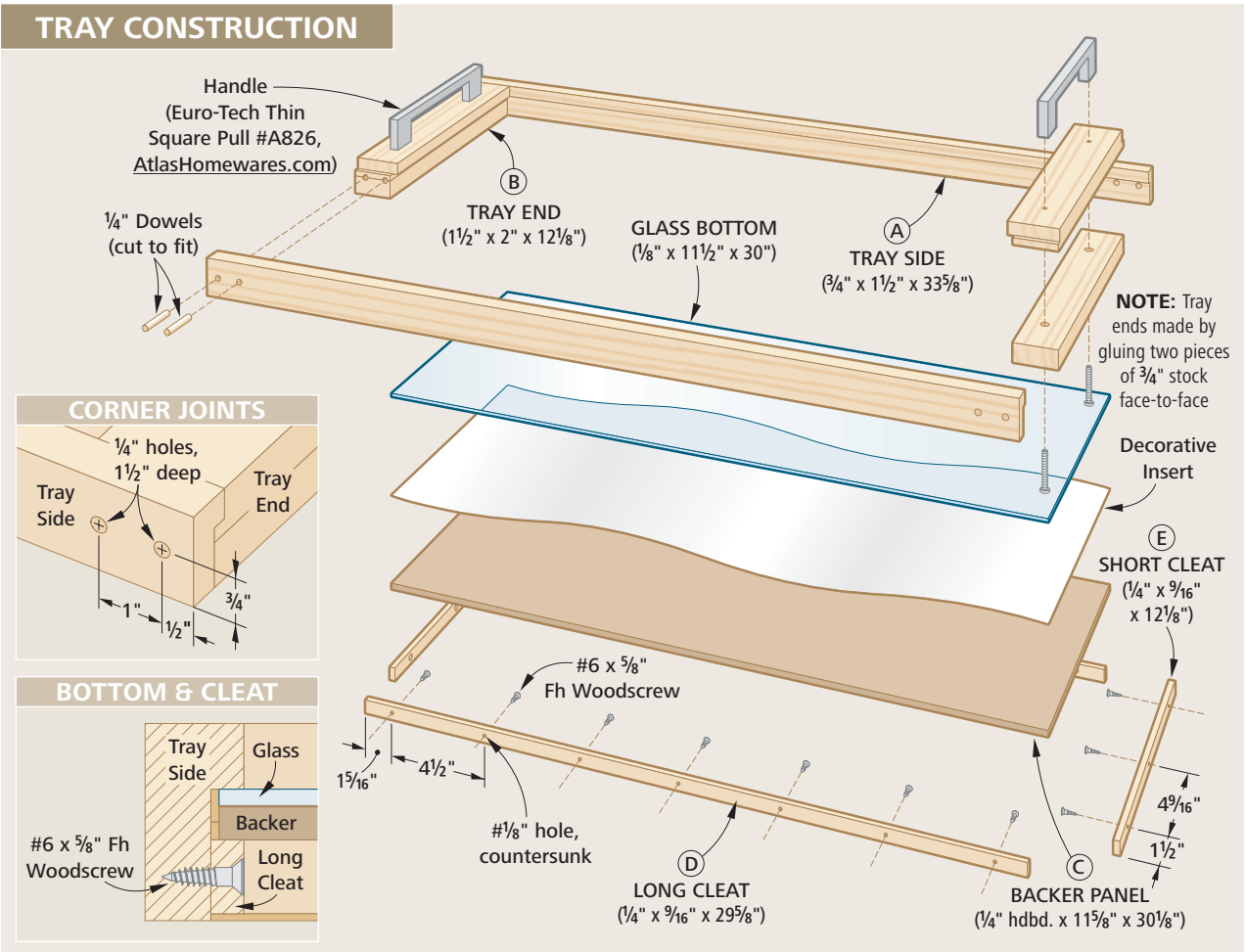


1] Position the fence with $\frac{1}{2}$ " between it and the blade. Then raise the blade $\frac{1}{4}$ ". One face rides on the saw table.



2] Reposition the fence $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the *outside* edge of the blade. Raise the blade, and cut to complete the rabbet.

TRAY CONSTRUCTION



SIMPLE TONGUE JOINTS

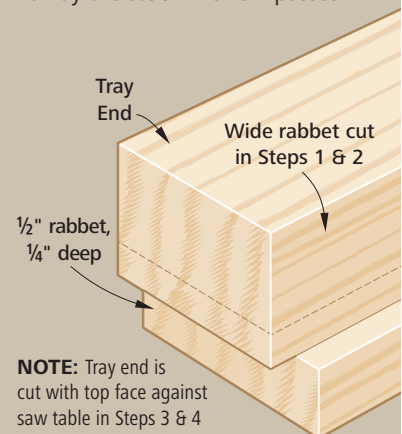


3] To cut the tongues in the tray ends, butt the piece against the fence. Then use the miter gauge to push the workpiece.

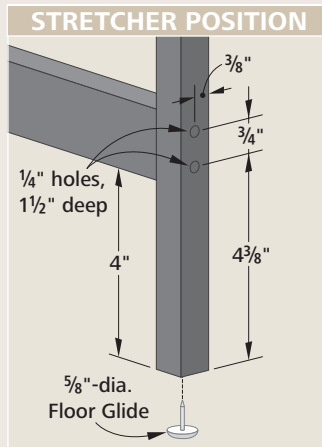
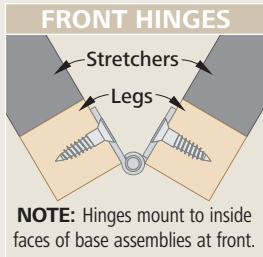
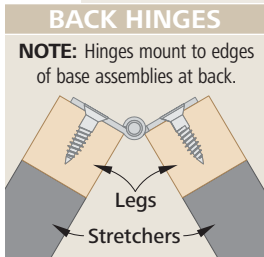
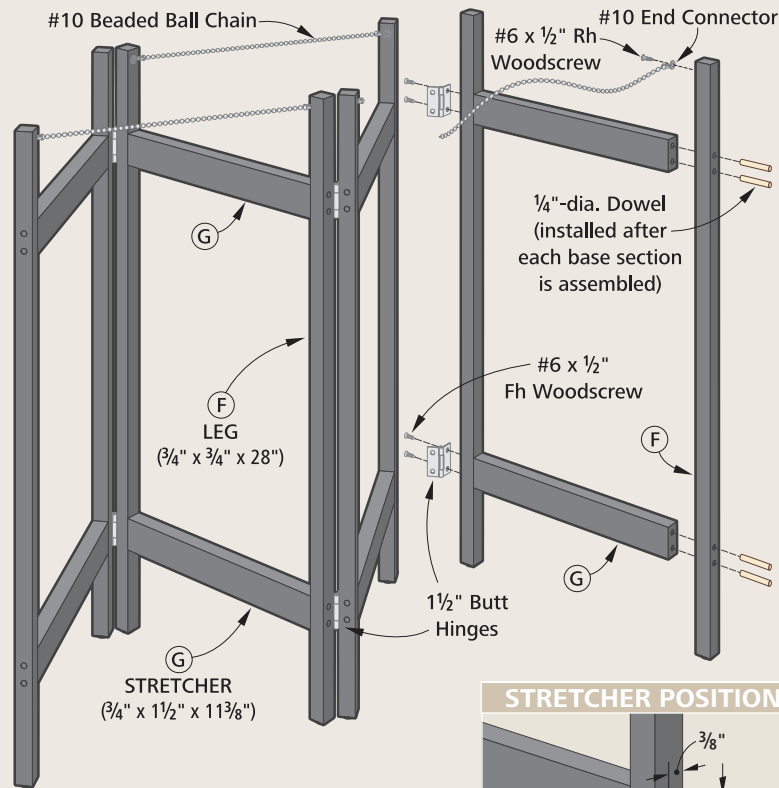


4] Complete the tongue by sliding the end piece away from the fence and making a couple more passes over the blade.

Cutting the tongues is straightforward, too. Use a miter gauge and the fence as you "nibble" away the stock in a few passes.



BASE CONSTRUCTION



DOWELS REINFORCE THE JOINTS

Adding dowels reinforces the joints on the serving tray and adds a bit of decoration. Just drill holes through the tray sides and into the ends. Then glue in the dowels. Now cut and sand the dowels flush. Reinforce the joints in the base, as well.

ADD A FOLDING BASE

The base provides a place to set the serving tray when you're using it, but it folds up for compact storage.

Like the serving tray, the base has a unique style thanks to its satin-black finish. That finish is easy: Just spray on flat black paint, and then buff it with a paper towel to build the sheen. Though it's painted, the wood grain still shows. That's because the base is built from oak, which has open pores that don't get completely filled with the paint.

As you can see in the *Base Construction*, the base is easy to build. It's made up of four identical assemblies: two legs joined by a pair of stretchers. These pieces are assembled with simple butt joints. Then the joints get reinforced with dowels (*Box, below*).

Cut and Glue the Parts—The first step is to cut eight legs (F) and eight stretchers (G) to size from $\frac{3}{4}$ " oak.

Then glue and clamp each base assembly together. The stretchers are positioned the same distance from the ends of the legs (*Stretcher Position*), so you don't have to worry about messing up the orientation of any parts.

Add the Hardware—With the dowels in, it's time to add the hardware.

You'll see in the *Details* at left that the hinges are mounted differently at the front and back of the base. That way, none of them show from the front.

Mount the front hinges first. Just lay two base assemblies side by side with a $\frac{1}{8}$ " gap between them. Then mount hinges to the *face* of these pieces.

For the back hinges, stack all four base assemblies with the hinged pair in the middle. Again, use $\frac{1}{8}$ " spacers between them. Then mount hinges to the *edges* of the outer two assemblies.

To ensure that the base opens to the same width each time, ball chains connect the base assemblies. Just set the base up with the tray on top, then cut the chains to length. Fit ends to the chains, and then screw them to the base.

With the hardware mounted, you can paint the base—hardware and all. 🛠️

—Written by David Stone, illustrated by Matt Scott, project designed by James R. Downing

insert the
style that
suits you



From the outset, this tray was designed to be as stylish as it is functional. And we know “stylish” means different things to different people.

The tray shown above was built from poplar, and then spray-painted white. With bamboo-wrapped handles, it takes on a casual appearance. Wallpaper printed with cupcakes adds a playful touch.

You can personalize your tray by putting almost anything thin, such as decorative paper, wallpaper, or even dried flowers, under the glass. If you want a change, just pull out the backer and slip in a new insert.

