

Yellow Pine Desks

Featured Piece of the Month – October 2021

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I have a boy in college and another in grad school in Boston and both are moving to new apartments in September and both also announced they needed new desks.

So, I went to Longleaf Lumber, picked up some reclaimed southern yellow pine which was advertised to me as old growth and heart wood. As it was cheaper than the American Chestnut they had (I regret not getting some of that actually.). I picked up several boards that were ~72" long, ~9/4 thick, and ~4" wide. I ripped the boards down the thickness and then created a tabletop, rails/skirts, and laminated pieces for legs.



I cheated on the rip as I used a power table saw. I also used a power planer to thickness the tabletop boards. For the rest, I used hand planes to prepare the stock, edge planed boards for the top, and, cut mortises with a chisel/hammer (Paul Sellers style) and the tenons with a saw, chisel and hand router. I also smoothed and flattened the top with various planes (#4, Jack, and #7).



I can't verify the Longleaf story on this wood, but I can say it's very hard for a softwood and I had to sharpen several times during the process, more than I've had to with hardwoods. Working the wood releases a rather strong turpentine smell and some of the boards feel "wet" and buttery after being planed or chiseling tenons.

I'm finishing it with boiled linseed oil. It's still a bit shiny.

I ended up with enough wood for 2 desktops; 1 is 60x30", the other 60x22"; and one set of legs/skirts.

