

TV Console

Featured Piece of the Month – March 2023

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A few years ago, I started the process of replacing our living room furniture with pieces that I have made in the craftsman style. I've built two Morris chairs, one with an ottoman and a sofa table (thanks to Ken Zoller for the table plans). Now the time arrived when I needed to replace the TV cabinet that held our old 200 lb. tube TV with a console for a flat screen TV.



After much searching, my wife settled on a design found in my Woodsmith magazine, so I purchased the plans. Some features required developing some new skills and jigs to facilitate and safely complete the project which I will describe later.

The Woodsmith plan called for Ash and staining it, but I wanted to stay close to what I had already built for the room. So, for the unit top and bottom, I used cherry and curly maple for the rest. The curly maple has a flame birch look to it, which is nice. A cut list came with the plan and the overall size (75" W x 20" D x 28" H) fit my living room fine.

My first step was to acquire the wood needed for this. I went to Highland Hardwoods in Brentwood NH for the cherry and solid curly maple, and Boulter Plywood in Medford, MA for the plywood.

To begin, I started with the carcass which required both dado and rabbet joints. Cutting the dados on the table saw was not an option, so I had to use my router. I made a jig that enabled me to cut the dados to the exact width of the plywood. I found the plans for the jig on the [3x3 Custom](#) website. It is a simple jig, but it's going to be very handy for other future projects. You can adjust the width to the size dado you want.



Next, I built the base using cherry. It was relatively straightforward and has a ¼ inch reveal at the corners. I used pocket holes for the joinery. Once that was done, I attached it to the carcass and flipped the unit right side up. I then faced the carcass with solid curly maple, which I must say is challenging to hand plane. Each piece was cut to fit and glued in place separately. This ensured that it fit the frame exactly.



The doors were put together using a haunched mortise and stub tenon. The styles are slightly thicker so there is a reveal at the corners. They were attached using a European style hinge. For the door panels I tried something new, and etched the glass inserts on the doors. I taped the negative space using blue painters' tape, then applied glass etching cream (Armour Etch, from Joann Fabrics) with a foam brush. I left it on for about 5 minutes then rinsed it off with water. It turned out well though next time I'll use 3M 233 tape to get very tight seams.



The shelving is curly maple plywood, faced with hardwood. The shelves are adjustable via shelf pins. The drawer has a false front, the sides are cherry and the rest is curly maple. It was the first time I cut dovetails. It was enjoyable, challenging and I'm happy how they came out.



Once the carcass was assembled, I (my son and son-in-law) had to move it out of our basement to the garage so I could sand and apply finish. (I had to kick my wife's car out of the garage, but she took it in stride.)

After I had the carcass and base out of the basement, I moved on to making the top. Jointing the 75" boards for the top was a challenge since I only have a 6" jointer and the bed isn't very long (48"). It's made up of four 5" boards that I joined using biscuits and glue. I joined two boards first then ran them through my planer, then joined the two 10" sections and hand planed them to get a nice even flat surface.





For the finish, I used different methods depending on the type of wood. On the plywood, I applied mineral oil (this brought out the figuring nicely) then blond shellac. For the face frame and doors, I used amber trans tint then a coat of orange shellac then 3 coats of blond shellac. For the cherry bottom I applied blond shellac, then General Finishes burnt amber glaze then blond shellac. For the cherry top I applied blond shellac, then General Finishes burnt amber glaze then finished it with Waterlox. Everything was buffed with 0000 steel wool and then I applied Goddard's Cabinet Makers Wax Cleaning Spray.

The Berenson line hardware came from Spokane Hardware Supply - "The hardware hut". They have a nice line of hardware.

This was quite a learning experience. It was a first for me for making doors and dovetails and using different finishing techniques for one piece of furniture. I also learned that I can fit two 2x8 pieces of plywood in my SUV 😊. This was the largest piece I ever attempted, and most likely the last, but it was a fun project and looks good in our living room.

My next project is to make a Craftsman style coffee table and two end tables for the same room.