

Ingenuity in woodworking

I recently had occasion to refer to the dictionary definition for “woodworking.” What I found was a disappointing snooze: Merriam-Webster’s defines woodworking as “the act, process, or occupation of working wood into a useful or desired form.” Well, true enough. But that doesn’t begin to hint at the elaborate, complex heart of our craft. The beautiful stuff we’ve chosen to work with can also be pretty troublesome and idiosyncratic. Success at executing joinery, managing seasonal movement, wrangling countless cutting tools, applying finishes, and a million other challenges require patience, understanding, and perseverance. And that’s just for starters.

As I leaf through this issue of *Woodcraft Magazine*, I realize that there’s another intrinsic element to good woodworking: Ingenuity. Webster’s defines the word as meaning “Skill or cleverness in devising or combining; inventiveness; aptness of design or contrivance.” Now we’re talking woodworking!

Take the breadboard end joint on p. 46, for example. This brilliant engineering solution prevents a panel from cupping, while allowing for the wood’s natural seasonal expansion and contraction. That’s no small design feat. And, as you’ll read, it has plenty of applications for your own work. As for clever tooling solu-

tions, flip to p. 23 to learn a creative inlay technique, and see p. 52 for an inventive jig designed to cut discs at the band-saw. On p. 30, we tip our hat to three contemporary craftsmen’s use of CNC machines, one of the more innovative developments in modern woodworking.

All that said, my vote for the “Ingenious Award” this issue goes to Pennsylvania woodworking instructor Larissa Huff, who designed and built the “Top Secret Table” on p. 34. This lovely, tricky little piece incorporates a number of covert compartments, created by clever use of commonly available hardware. Ingenious indeed. Even if you don’t build the table yourself, the article is a mini-course in designing secret spaces for your own projects.

So tap into your own inner genius, and adapt the bright ideas presented here to your own way of working wood. We know you will. You’re a woodworker. Keep the ideas flowing, and be sure to share them with us; we’re all in this together.

P.S. Put your ingenuity to work for *Woodcraft Magazine*. We’re seeking a full-time staff editor to join our ranks. See the ad on p. 10 for further information.



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