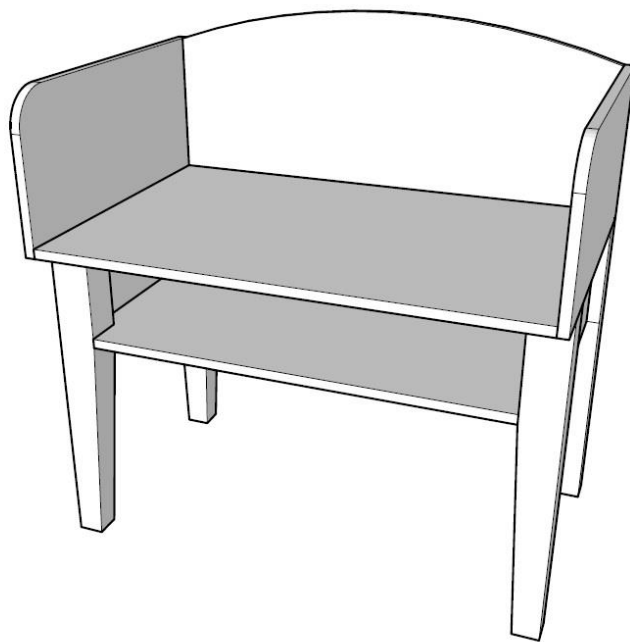


SIDE CAR BED

By BRWC Member Jim Landry

My wife asked if I could make a Side Car Bed for a friend of hers that was having a baby. My first response was, "What is a Side Car Bed?" Well, I did some research on the internet and found out that a Side Car Bed is a baby bed that stands beside the parent's bed like a side car to make it easier to watch over the baby and handle feeding in the middle of the night. So I looked at many variations of the bed and took things I liked from several and came up with my own design that I drew up in SketchUp.



I designed this bed for dual use. First as a side car bed and secondly, when the child is too old for the bed, you can shorten the legs and use it as a bench.

The wood I decided to use was sapele since I never used it before and wanted to try it. Also I liked the grain and color of the wood since it looks like mahogany.

The first step was to figure out the dimensions, so I visited my wife's friend and took lots of pictures and measurements of her bed. One of the criteria she asked for was that the sides needed to be at least 41" tall since she has a Great Dane dog and didn't want him to be able to look over the sides. I also needed my wife's friend to buy the mattress that she wanted to use since I needed to size it to fit around the mattress.

The next step was to figure out the joinery. I contacted Terry Landry to get his expert opinion and he suggested a haunch mortise and tenon to connect the sides to the legs, dovetail rails to attach the top to the base, and a rabbet and groove type joint for the shelves to the side.

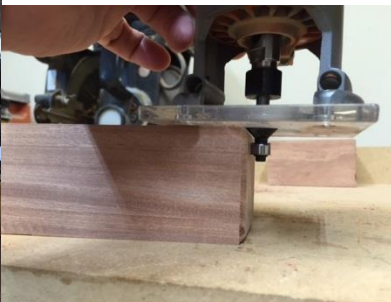
After cutting the wood to rough lengths and widths, I planed the wood down to $\frac{3}{4}$ ". I then glued up 3 boards to make each of the 4 legs. As the saying goes You can never have enough clamps!



I then took the legs and used Keith Bryan's mortising machine to put mortises on each leg.



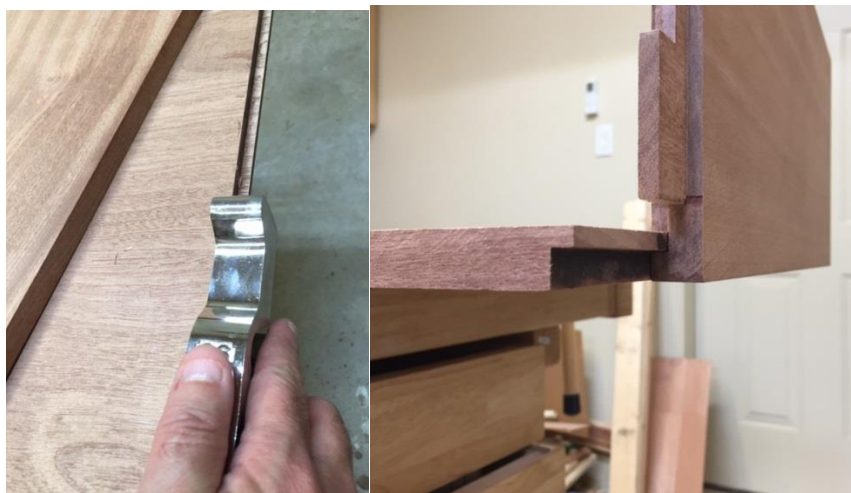
After doing the mortising, I then put a slight taper on the legs using a taper jig on the table saw. I then used a chamfering bit on a palm router and chamfered the bottom of each leg.



I then started working on the sides and shelf for the base. I edge glued several 5-6" wide boards to make up the panels. I took the side panels and cut them to size and cut the tenons using my table saw by gradually nibbling away and testing the joint until I got the fit that I wanted. I then used the band saw to cut the haunch.



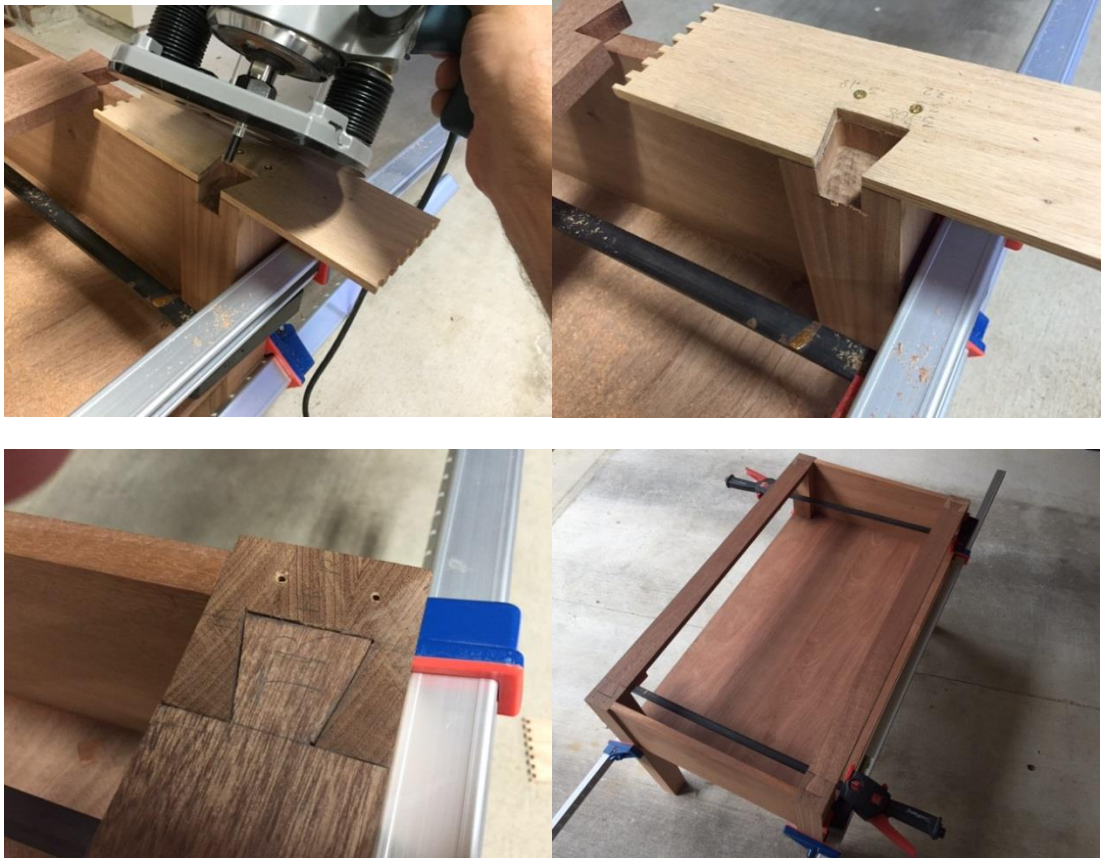
I cut a groove on the sides using a dado blade on the table saw for the shelf to sit in. I cut the shelf panel to final size and cut a rabbet on the shelf to fit into the groove on the sides. I had to do a little fine tuning of the joint by using my Stanley 93 shoulder plane. I'm more and more appreciating how sometimes using a hand tool is much quicker and precise than using a power tool.



So I dry assembled what I had so far to see how it looked and fitted.



I then started working on dovetailing the mounting rails to be used to attach the top to the base unit. I initially thought I would use a chisel to cut out the dovetail slots on top of the legs but soon realized I didn't have sharp chisels and, not being very good at sharpening, I decided to go with the router. So I made a little jig that I used with a pattern following bushing on the router base to cut the dovetail slots and it worked great. I also used the jig to mark out the tails on the rails.



I then glued it all up and started working on the top. For the top, I again took 5-6" wide boards and edge glued them to make all the panels for the top unit. I cut each panel to final size and then used a piece of Plexiglas that I bent to draw out the curves I wanted for the sides and rear panels of the top unit. I used the band saw to cut these curves and used the spindle sander to smooth out the curves. I assembled the top unit using biscuits. I mounted the top unit to the base unit with screws by drilling out slotted holes on the rails to allow for expansion. I also used some homemade expansion clips to attach the shelf to the sides and allow for expansion.



So here are pictures of the completed side car bed without any finish. My wife's friend tried several different wood stains on a scrap piece of sapele but decided she liked the natural look without stain so she just applied several coats of a clear finish.



And here it is in operation!

