

WOODWORKER'S WJOURNAL

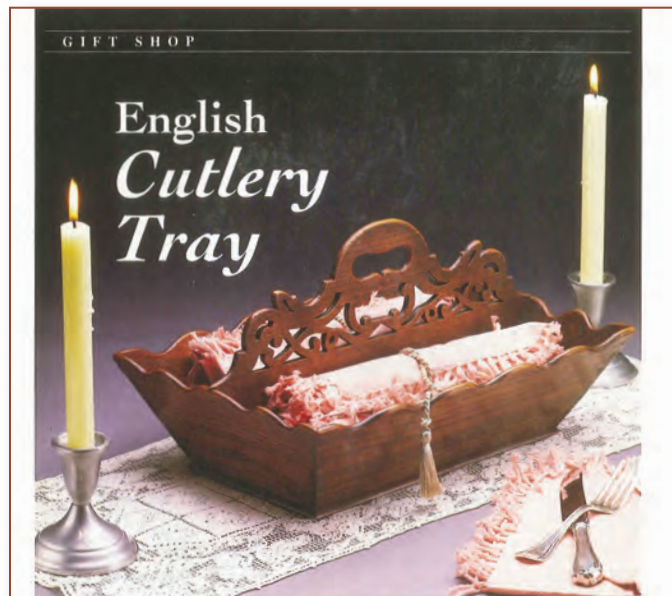
"America's leading woodworking authority"™

Classic Project

In this plan you'll find:

- Step-by-step construction instruction.
- A complete bill of materials.
- Construction drawings and related photos.
- Tips to help you complete the project and become a better woodworker.

English Cutlery Tray



According to antiques dealer Weston Thorn, of Weston Thorn Antiques in Bantam, Connecticut, this cutlery tray was built of roosewood about 200 years ago and is of English origin. Although the insides of the tray bear myriad point pricks from the knives that were kept within, the tray is in remarkable condition for its age. Roosewood makes a lovely tray, but less costly domestic woods such as white oak, ash, cherry or walnut are also good choices.

Most of the work making the cutlery tray is in cutting the compound angle dovetails. Refer to our Special Techniques article (page 20) for step-by-step instructions on cutting these dovetails. Note that the scalloping along the

upper edges on the sides (A) and ends (B), and the V-groove cuts on the inside faces of the ends, are made after the tray is assembled. You can use the router with a V-groove bit and a straightedge to cut the grooves, but since each groove is just 1/8 in. deep several passes with a sharp knife will work as well. Make your layout lines, cut one side of the V-groove, then complete the groove by cutting the opposite side. If you've made the tray from an exceptionally hard wood, you'll need a few more passes to achieve the full groove depth.

Next, lay out the scalloping from the full-size patterns, cut the profile with a coping saw and round the edges by hand. Leave the corners square for now; you'll

sand them after assembly.

Glue and assemble the sides and ends. When dry, cut the bottom (C) to size, round the edges and nail it in place. Use finish nails, and remember to pre-drill the nail holes. You can add a little epoxy to the nails to help anchor them. The nail heads should be set slightly; later you'll fill the holes with wood putty.

For the divider (D), try to select some quartersawn stock. Our antique cutlery tray used quartersawn stock for the divider, a sure sign that the maker was well aware of the characteristics of wood and the types of grain that are best for delicate parts. The advantage of using quartersawn stock is that it's unlikely to cup or warp, conditions that often occur on thin stock, especially boards that are



To download these plans, you will need Adobe

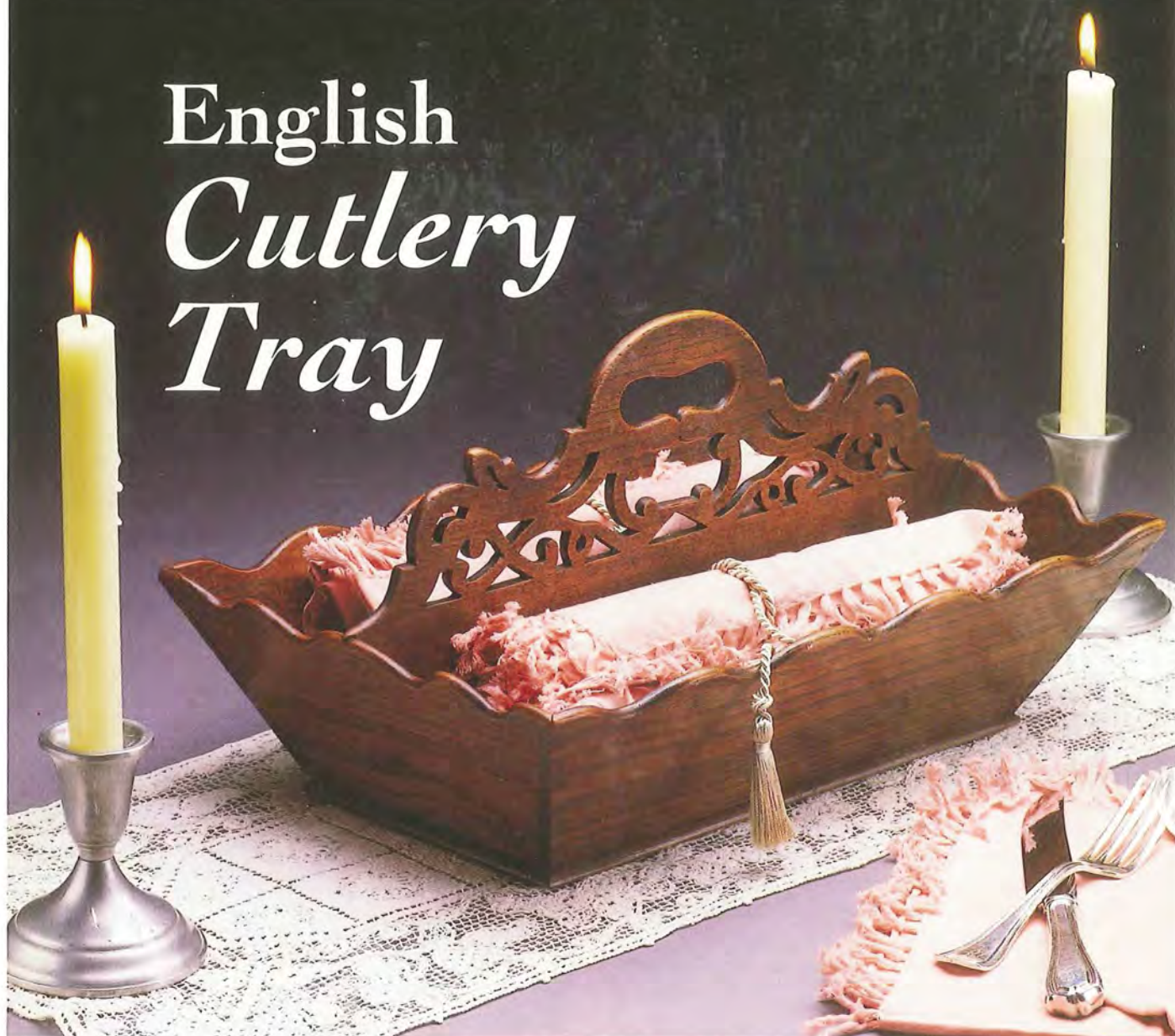
Reader installed on your computer. If you want to get a free copy, visit:

<http://adobe.com/reader>.

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English Cutlery Tray



According to antiques dealer Weston Thorn, of Weston Thorn Antiques in Bantam, Connecticut, this cutlery tray was built of rosewood about 200 years ago and is of English origin. Although the insides of the tray bear myriad point pricks from the knives that were kept within, the tray is in remarkable condition for its age. Rosewood makes a lovely tray, but less costly domestic woods such as white oak, ash, cherry or walnut are also good choices.

Most of the work making the cutlery tray is in cutting the compound angle dovetails.

upper edges on the sides (A) and ends (B), and the V-groove cuts on the inside faces of the ends, are made after the dovetails are cut but before the tray is assembled. You can use the router with a V-groove bit and a straightedge to cut the grooves, but since each groove is just $\frac{1}{8}$ in. deep several passes with a sharp knife will work as well. Make your layout lines, cut one side of the V-groove, then complete the groove by cutting the opposite side. If you've made the tray from an exceptionally hard wood, you'll need a few more passes to achieve the full groove depth.

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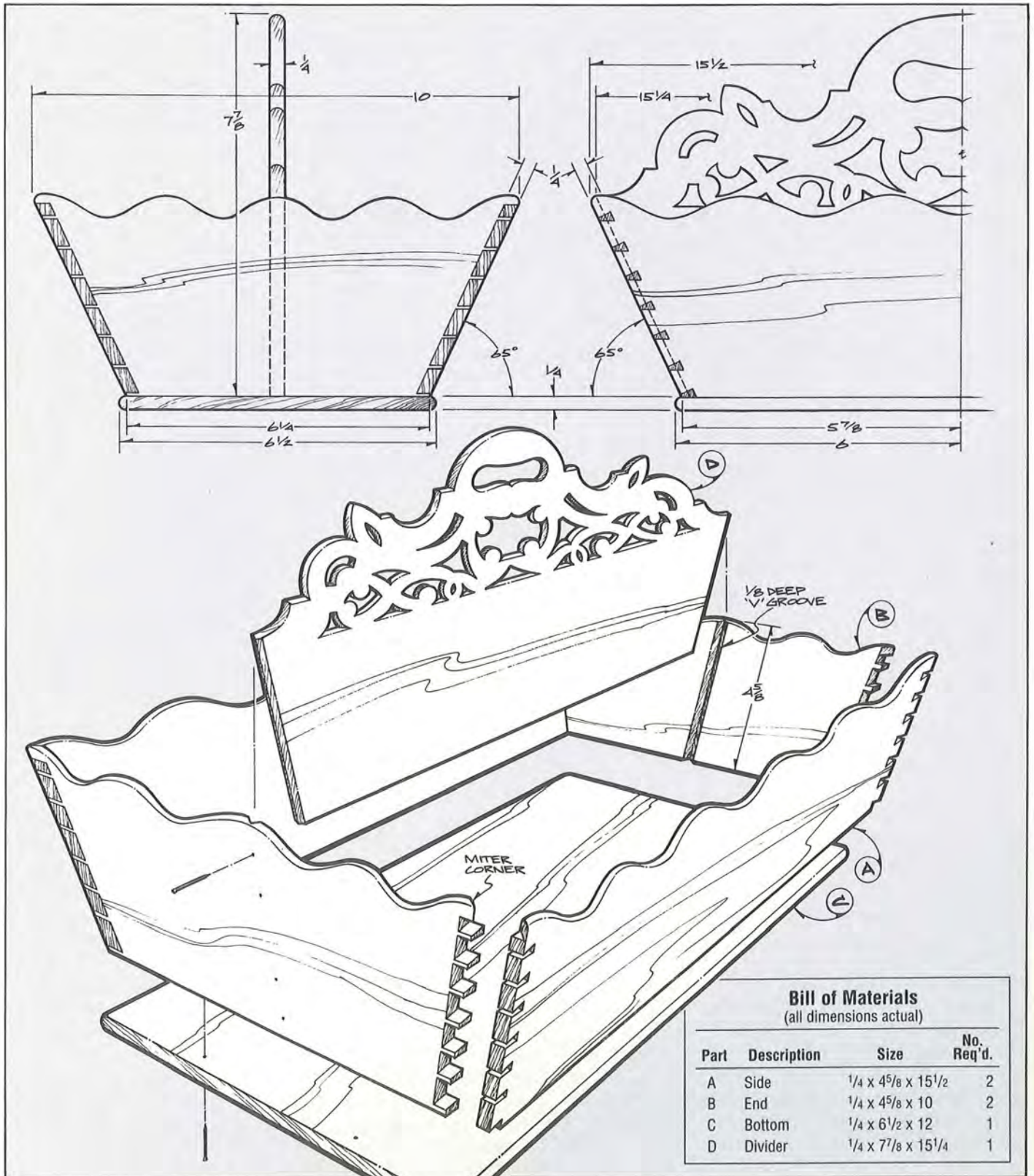
elaborately cut out or carved.

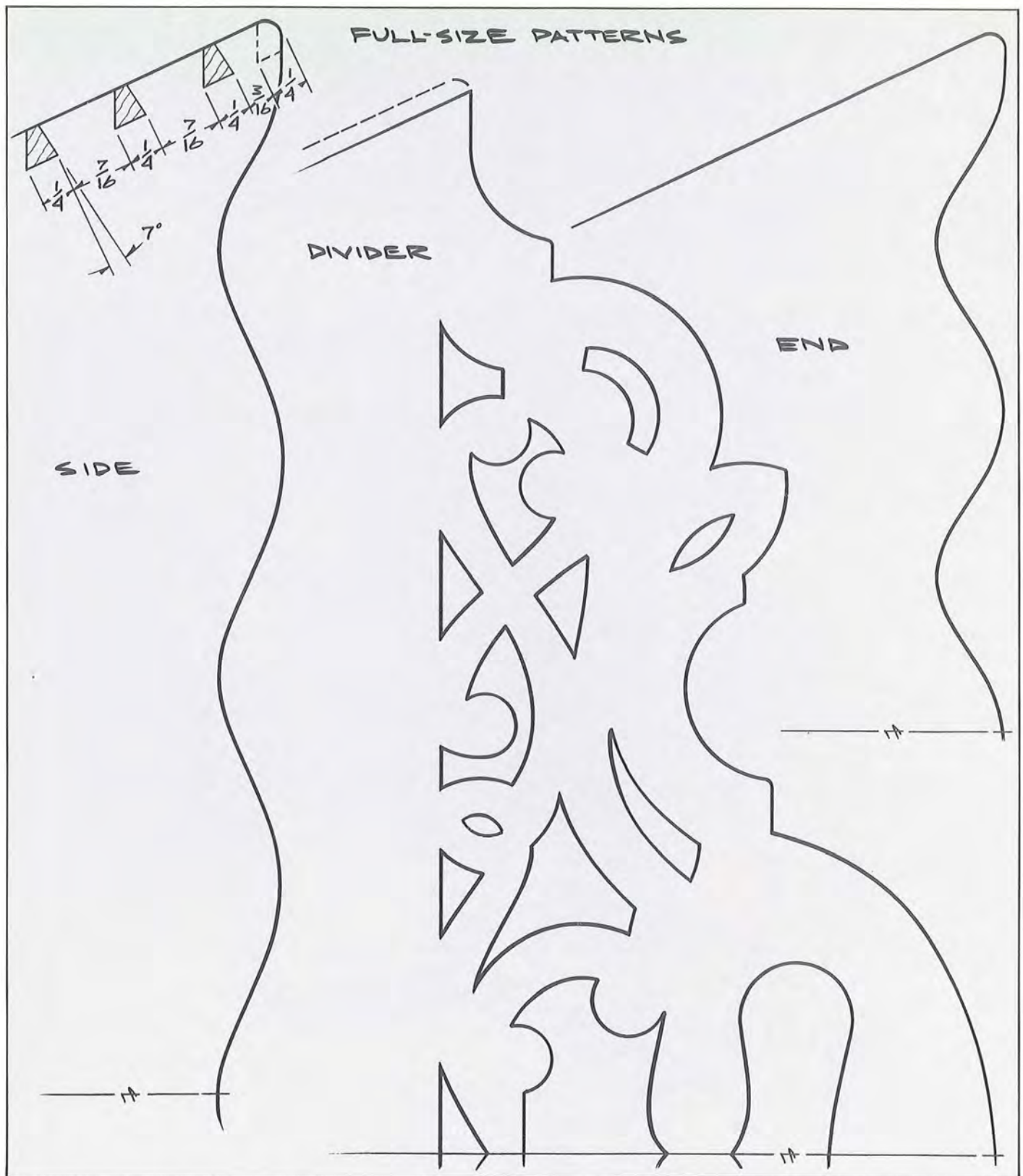
Start with a board that's a little wider than the final desired size. Crosscut a 25-degree angle on each end, then establish the V-point along the length of the angle. The cuts to establish the V-point can be made on the table saw,

but it's much easier and a lot less fuss to use a block plane. Make the layout lines for the V, clamp the divider securely in the vise, and use a sharp knife to back-cut the V at the edges. This prevents chip out. Several passes with the block plane should quickly form the

two faces of each V. Test-fit the divider inside the tray and trim back the bottom edge as needed until the fit is right.

Now transfer the scroll pattern to the divider using our full-size half pattern (both sides of the pattern are identical) and cut it out with a fretsaw or scroll





saw. Drill starter holes for each of the inside cuts. A set of needle files is handy for cleaning up the blade marks that are left by the saw.

After final sanding, mount the divider. Use glue at the bottom edge of the divider where it meets the tray bottom, and finishing nails through the ends at the V-groove joint and up through the

bottom into the divider. Pre-drill for the nails, add a dab of epoxy and set them as before.

Apply a little colored wood filler or putty to fill the nail holes and any gaps at the dovetailed corners. Sand lightly, then wipe on at least three coats of Watco Danish Oil. Flood on the first coat, wait about 15 minutes, then apply

a generous second coat, adding extra finish to end grain and areas that are absorbing quickly. Once the wood seems saturated, wipe off the excess with a clean rag and let dry overnight. Lightly sand the surface with 360-grit wet-or-dry sandpaper, apply the third coat and buff with 0000 steel wool when dry.