

# WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL

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## 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.

## Contemporary Table



to an end table, just shorten the legs and lengthen the stretchers. By adjusting parts sizes, the same general construction theme can be used for a variety of table styles.

**The Top**  
Logically, with this project you'll want to start with the top. If that prized board you'd like to use for this project is slightly over or undersized, now—and not after the table is built—is the time to make adjustments. The table in the photo has a top that's cut from a single 16 1/4 in. wide board, which yields the most pleasing look. If necessary, you can cut the two halves of the top consecutively from a board that's about 9 in. wide. Just try to match the color and grain closely. The butterfly dovetail wedges (B) that join the two halves of the top are both a structural and a decorative element. They tie the two halves together while maintaining the 1/8 in. space between them. Here's how to cut the top from a single wide board. First, cut the board to the overall 16 1/4 in. width and 19 1/4 in. length. Draw a grid pattern on the board and transfer the profile. Then cut down the wavy middle line with a hand saw or jigsaw to get the two halves. Sand to eliminate the blade tooth marks and to smooth your cut line. Now, rip three strips of pine measuring 1/8 in. thick by 1/2 in. wide by about 20 in. long. Sandwich the three strips together and clamp the two halves

**Contemporary Table**  
Wedged through tenons and butterfly inlays yield an elegant look

**T**his elegant little end table, fashioned mainly of ash and walnut, is an ideal way to show off an especially fine board. The table, by Pennsylvania woodworker Tom Noone, has something of a sculptural look. The design intent is focused toward the top (A), which is the perfect spot to showcase a special board. That richly figured walnut crotch that you've been saving, or perhaps a handsome redwood burl or

some other prized board that's gathering dust in the corner, might just find a home with this design.

But there's more here than just the top. Butterfly inlays and wedged tenons are two other little details that add to the gemlike quality of this piece. Don't feel that you must be tied into the sizes listed in the Bill of Materials. If the board you'd like to showcase is four or five feet long, and you'd prefer a coffee table

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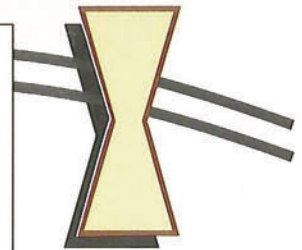
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### The Top

Logically, with this project you'll want to start with the top. If that prized board you'd like to use for this project is slightly over or undersized, now—and not after the table is built—is the time to make adjustments. The table in the photo has a top that's cut from a single  $16\frac{3}{4}$  in. wide board, which yields the most pleasing look. If necessary, you can cut the two halves of the top consecutively from a board that's about 9 in. wide. Just try to match the color and grain closely. The butterfly dovetail wedges (B) that join the two halves of the top are both a structural and a decorative element. They tie the two halves together while maintaining the  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. space between them.

Here's how to cut the top from a single wide board. First, cut the board to the overall  $16\frac{3}{4}$  in. width and  $19\frac{3}{4}$  in. length. Draw a grid pattern on the board and transfer the profile. Then cut down the wavy middle line with a band saw or jigsaw to get the two halves. Sand to eliminate the blade tooth marks and to smooth your cut line. Now, rip three strips of pine measuring  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. thick by  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. wide by about 20 in. long. Sandwich the three strips together and clamp the two halves

# Contemporary Table

Wedged through tenons and butterfly inlays yield an elegant look

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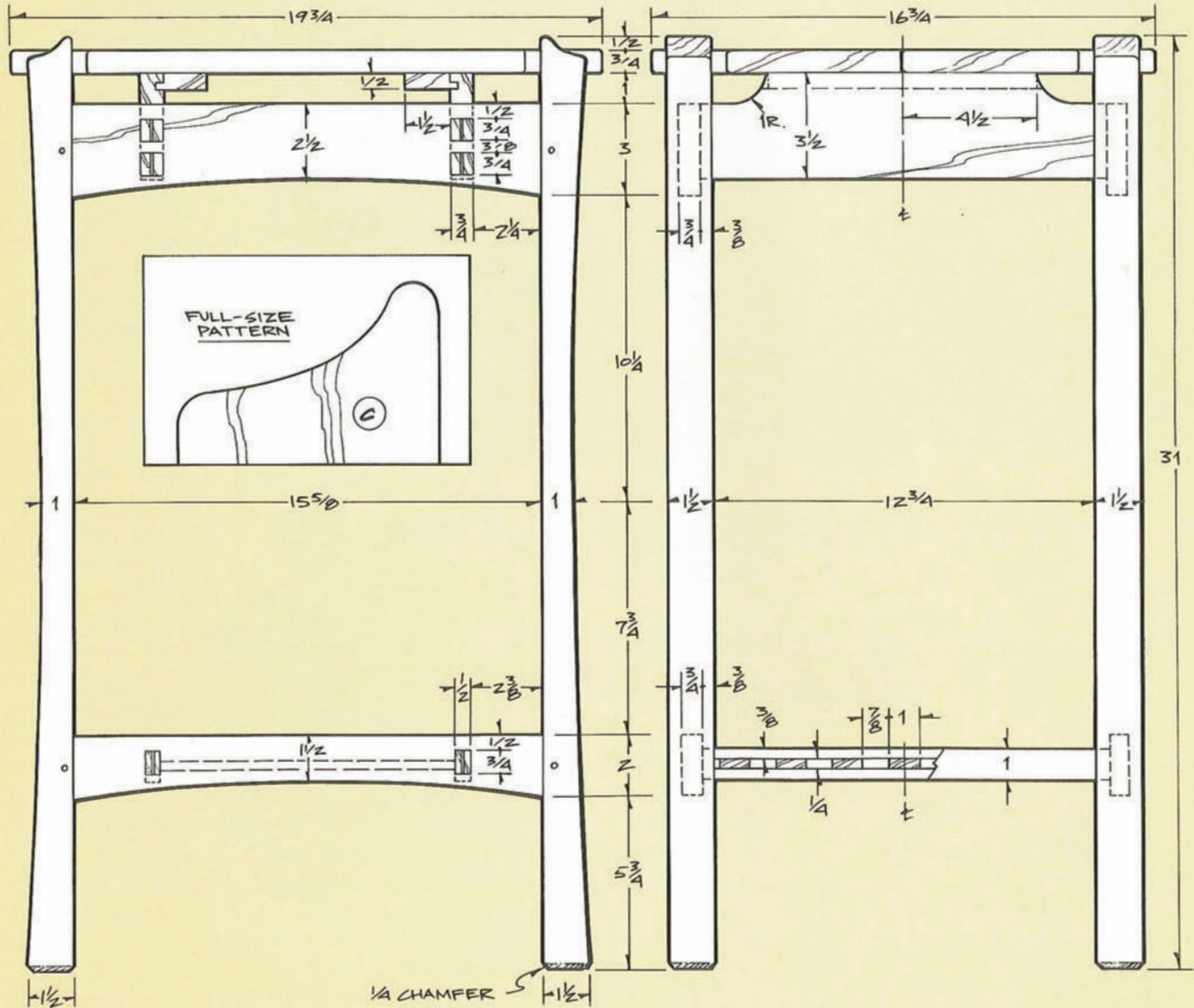
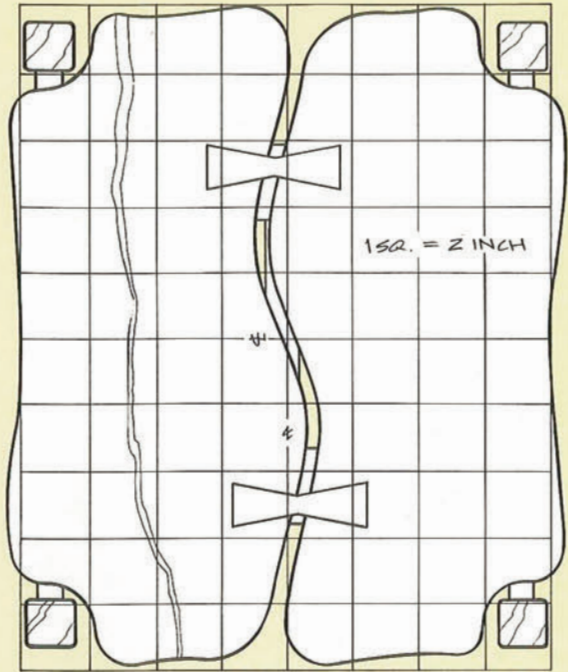
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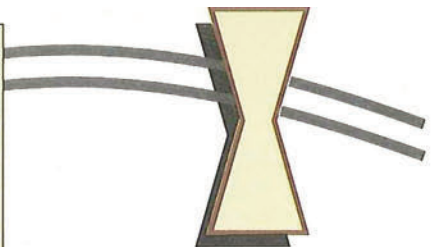
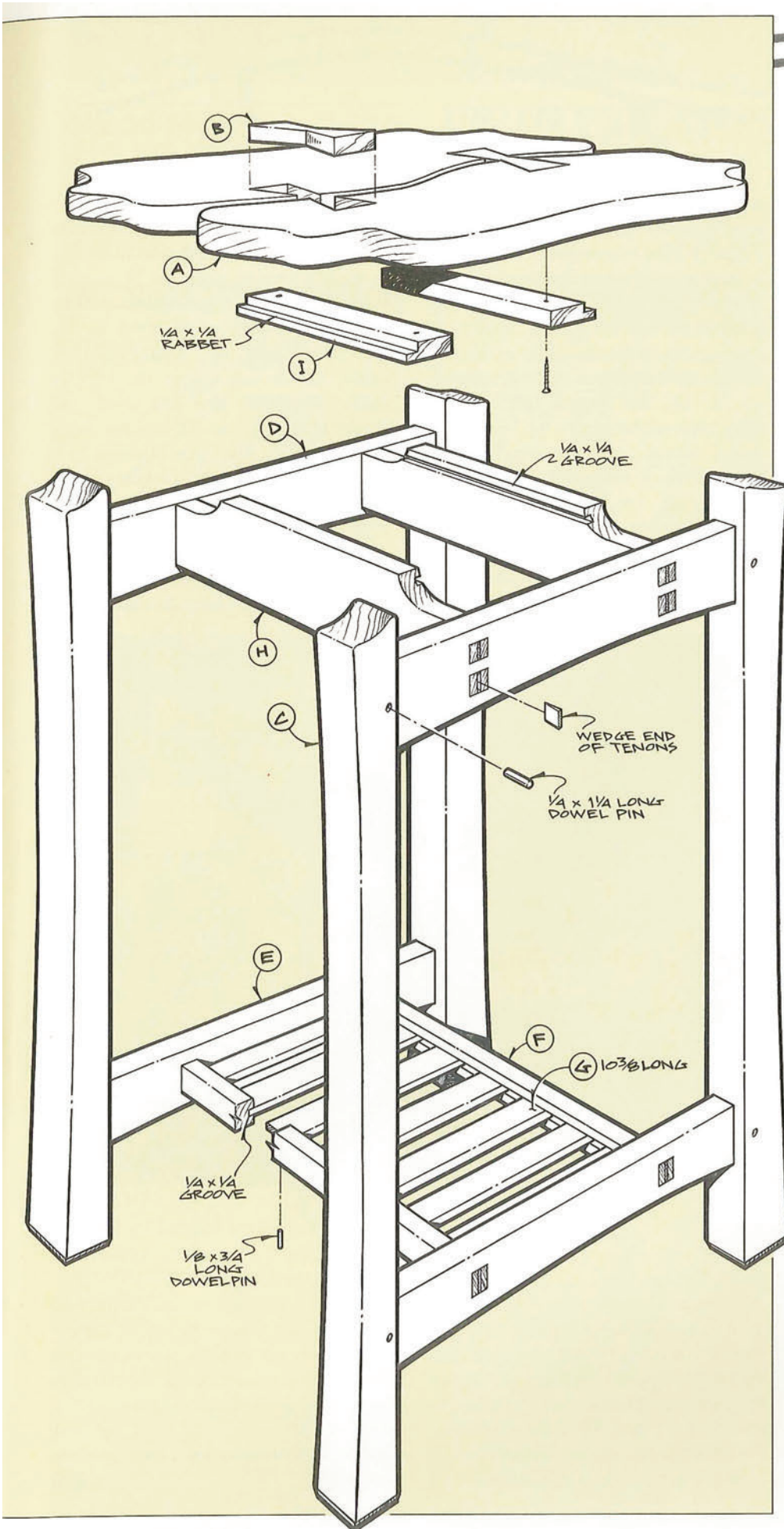
**Bill of Materials**  
(all dimensions actual)

Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Top*	3/4 x 16 3/4 x 19 3/4	1
B	Butterfly Inlay	1/2 x 1 1/4 x 4	2
C	Leg	1 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 31	4
D	Top Stretcher	3/4 x 3 x 17 1/8**	2
E	Bottom Stretcher	3/4 x 2 x 17 1/8**	2
F	Shelf Support	1/2 x 1 x 15**	2
G	Shelf Slat	1/4 x 1 x 10 3/8	7
H	Cross Stretcher	3/4 x 3 1/2 x 15**	2
I	Cleat	1/2 x 1 3/4 x 9	2

\* Top can be cut from a single wide board, or you can use two separate pieces to get the two halves.

\*\* Length includes tenons.





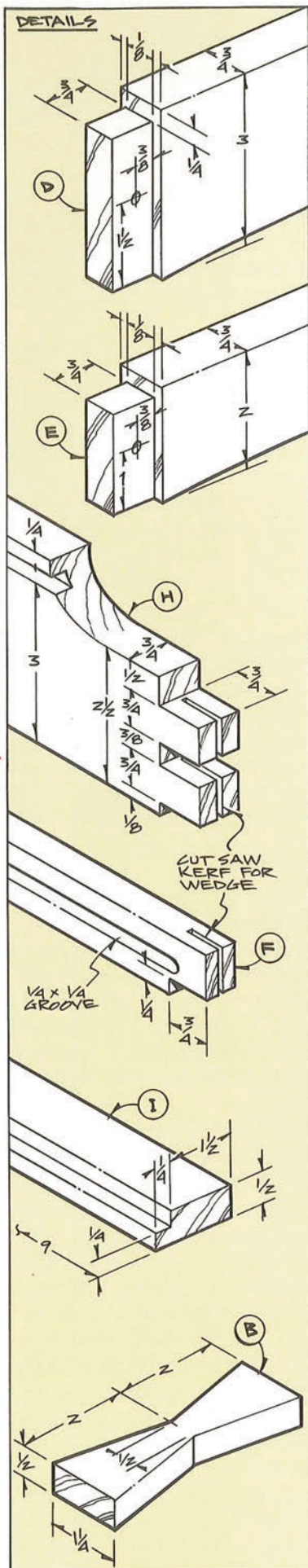
of the top together with the strips between; the three  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. strips will maintain the  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. spacing between the two halves while the butterfly mortises are cut.

Make the curly maple butterfly inlays (see Details), then lay out and cut the matching mortises. You can scribe the mortises using a sharp knife. Use a router and a straight cutter to waste away most of the stock to a  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. depth, but stay well off the scribed line. Then use a sharp chisel to pare back to the line and to clean into the corners, testing the butterfly periodically for fit. Once both inlays and their matching mortises are cut, you can unclamp the sandwich and remove the  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. strips. Use the band saw or jigsaw to cut the outside profile of the two halves of the top, sand smooth, then glue the butterflies in place to complete the top. A little final sanding may be needed to make certain the butterfly inlays are perfectly flush.

### The Table

The table itself is a fairly straightforward construction. Don't let the leg curve or the curves and profiles on the various stretchers fool you; in all cases the parts are shaped after the mortise and tenon work is complete. Lay out for the mortises in the legs (C), and cut the tenons on the ends of the top and bottom stretchers (D, E). As shown in the Details, the tenons have shoulders on the sides and top, but are flush with the bottom edges of the stretchers. Also cut the shelf supports (F), shelf slats (G) and cross stretchers (H). Cut a  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. deep by  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. wide groove on the cross stretchers as shown to fit matching tongues on the edges of the cleats (I). Use the router table with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. diameter straight cutter to establish the  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. deep by  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. wide stopped groove in the shelf supports for the shelf slats. You may need several passes, raising the router bit about  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. at a time, to cut the full  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. groove depth.

Once all the joinery has been cut and test fit, establish the curves and profiles on the legs and stretchers. For the legs,



rough in a gentle curve with the band-saw, then smooth with files and sandpaper. A long thin strip of wood, bent around a brad located 1 in. from the inside edge of the leg, is an easy way to scribe the gentle curve. Use this same technique to scribe the curves on the top and bottom stretchers. A compass is used to scribe the 1 in. radius curves on the cross stretchers. You can freehand the profile on the leg ends, or transfer the exact profile using the full-size pattern provided. A few minutes with a block plane will quickly yield the 1/4 in. chamfer on the bottom end of the legs.

cross stretcher tenons, as shown.

Cut walnut wedges to fit the kerfs snugly, dip the wedges in glue, and insert. The wedges should be 3/4 in. wide by about 1 in. long, but tapered so they fit snugly when inserted about 5/8 in. deep into the kerf. This insures that they won't bottom out before the kerf is filled. When the glue has dried, the excess length is cut off and the ends sanded smooth. The 1/4 in. diameter by 1 in. long dowel pins anchoring the stretcher tenons to the legs are also walnut.

Turn the table upside down, space the slats about 7/8 in. apart, and anchor each slat with a pair of 1/8 in. diameter by 3/4



### Assembly

Once all the curves have been cut and sanded smooth, start the assembly. First make two subassemblies, each consisting of a pair of legs joined by a top and bottom stretcher. Then join the two leg/stretcher subassemblies by adding the shelf supports (the slats must already be in place) and the cross stretchers. First, though, use a sharp handsaw to cut a wedge kerf in the shelf support and

in. long dowel pins inserted through the shelf support bottom edges. A hand drill will easily drill the holes.

All that's left is to mount the top and apply a finish. Center the top, then use a few screws up through the cleats and into the top to anchor it securely. A hand-rubbed oil finish, topped with a coat of paste wax will yield the soft luster that shows this piece to best advantage.



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Internet Production Coordinator