



# A Chisel Cabinet

Organized tool storage can improve your work habits

BY FRED WILBUR

Early in my career as a carver, I learned the frustration of a bench cluttered with tools. As most woodworkers know, spending time trying to find the right tool when you're in the middle of a complicated project is not an efficient way to work. Invariably, I found that the less-used tools migrate to the edges of the bench, where they are more likely to fall off and then require resharpening. Having suffered such disarray, I finally gave in to the wisdom of orderliness, confessing, as did Benjamin Franklin, "I found myself incorrigible with respect to Order; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it." What makes this sense of order more imperative as one grows older is that the problem gets worse year by year, as you collect more tools.

Whether you are a carver with a collection of gouges or a cabinetmaker with scores of chisels and screwdrivers, the ultimate storage solution is a wall-mounted cabinet near your workbench.

I made this cabinet from scraps many years ago. The drawing below shows the construction details, which afforded 183 spaces for gouges and chisels. It did look a little ridiculous at first—sheltering only a few gouges—but I have filled it up so that there are only a few vacan-

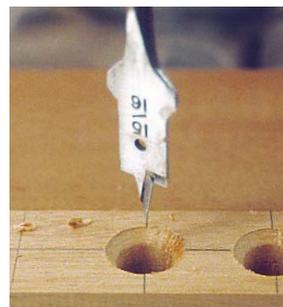
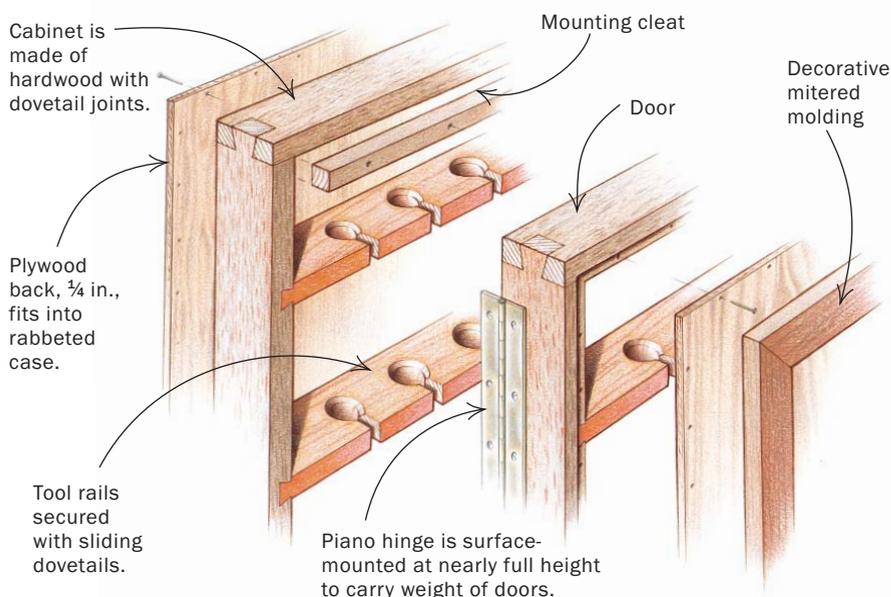
cies left. Easy to construct, this wall-mounted unit is a shallow box with several horizontal dividers, or rails, secured with sliding dovetails. Two doors of exactly the same shallow depth echo the cabinet carcass. By using the inside of the doors for storage space, I doubled the cabinet's capacity.

The rails have holes to hold all of my chisels and gouges. Because the various handles weren't all the same shape, I found that a countersunk hole would best accommodate the tools in an upright and tidy position. Some handles had to be shaved slightly to fit snugly. I modified a spade bit so that I could drill and shape the countersunk holes in one drill-press operation. Then I cut slots in all of the holes using a finger-joint-type jig. I mounted doors to the carcass with piano hinges to carry all of the weight and used magnetic catches to hold the doors shut.

I always intended to add some pierced carvings on the front of the doors but have only applied bead-and-billet molding around the edges of the door panels. I'm sure Ben Franklin died with a few things left undone. □

*Fred Wilbur is the author of Carving Architectural Detail in Wood, published recently by The Guild of Master Craftsmen.*

## CABINET DETAILS FOR STRENGTH AND CONVENIENCE



**Drill and countersink in one shot.** With a standard shop grinder, an inexpensive spade bit can be shaped with a profile that will drill and countersink a hole at the same time.



**Access slots make it easy to slip tools in and out of storage.** A small piece of wood indexed into the miter-gauge fence makes the repetitive cuts quickly and accurately.