

Simple Hanging Cabinet



The Shakers
had this
diminutive
design pegged

BY CHRISTIAN
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The Shakers didn't invent the peg board, but they refined it, popularized it, and made it one of their hallmarks. They used peg boards to hang not only hats and clothes but also brooms, mirrors, clocks, chairs, shelves—even cabinets. And their wall-hung cabinets have always interested me. This version was inspired by one of my favorites, a small cabinet from the Hancock, Mass., community. The original had a slab door, but I've substituted a frame-and-panel door. I adapted the semi-circular hanger from a larger cabinet, and incorporated half-blind dovetails in the case.

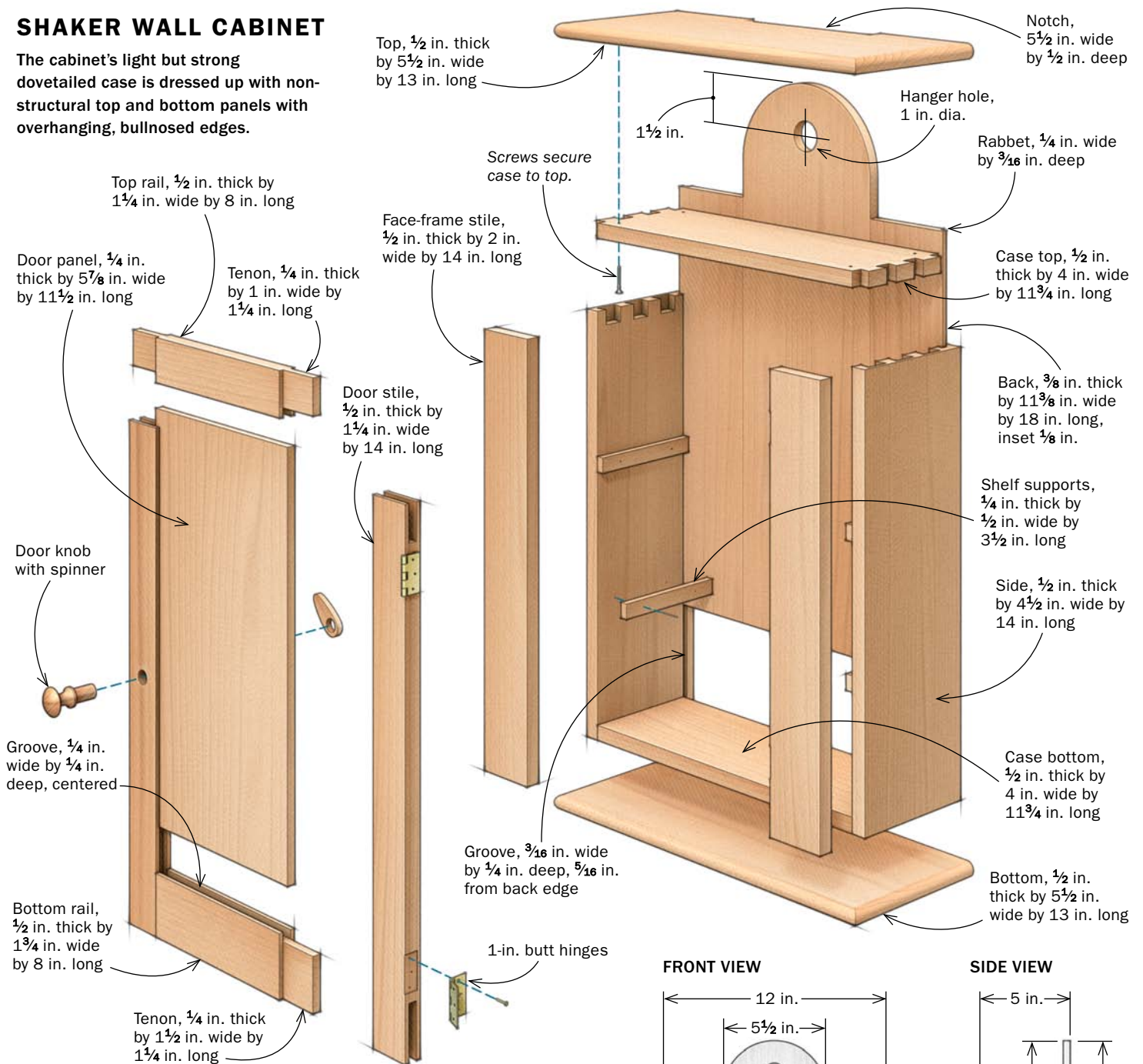
The slight proportions are part of the charm of the piece. The case and the door frame are $\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick, while the back is $\frac{3}{8}$ in. and the shelves and door panel are just $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick. I've built quite a few of these cabinets, and they look great either painted or clear-finished in pine, cherry, or walnut.

A small, strong case

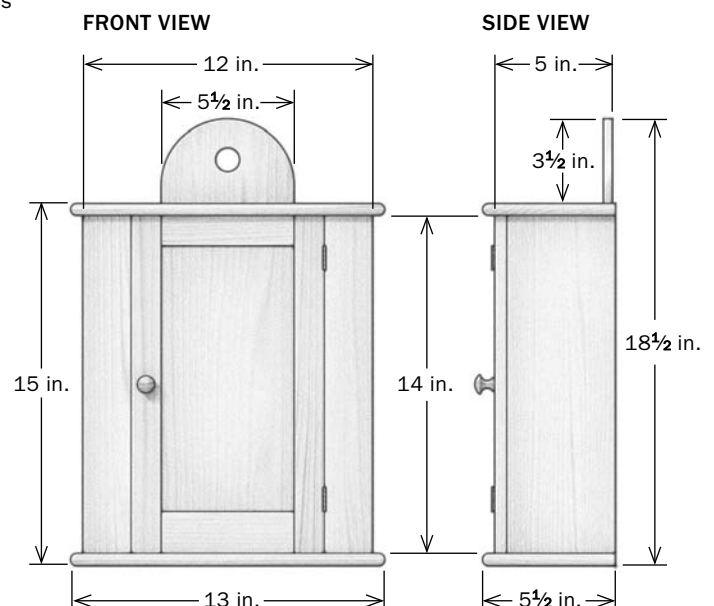
The original cabinet's case is nailed at the corners, but I made mine

SHAKER WALL CABINET

The cabinet's light but strong dovetailed case is dressed up with non-structural top and bottom panels with overhanging, bullnosed edges.



Take your pick. The cabinet's simple design sings in a range of clear finished woods—above, cherry on the left and pine on the right. But it also looks great when painted. For the center cabinet, Becksvoort used Federal Blue milk paint from the Old Fashioned Milk Paint Company.



Create the case



Tails beget pins. After cutting half-blind tails on the case top and bottom, transfer them to the sides. The case parts are flush at the front, but the top and bottom are inset at the rear to accommodate the back.



Cut the grooves. Once the pins are cut, the sides get grooved to accept the back. Two passes on the tablesaw create the $\frac{3}{16}$ -in.-wide groove.

with half-blind dovetails for additional strength. Lay out and cut the dovetails using your preferred method, keeping in mind that while the case parts will all be flush at the front, the sides are wider than the case top and bottom because they are grooved for the back.

Before assembly, sand the inside surfaces of all four pieces. Then glue and clamp, checking to be sure the case is perfectly square. When the glue is dry, plane or sand the exterior surfaces flat and smooth.

While the case is curing, make the cabinet top and bottom. With a roundover bit at the router table, shape the bullnose on their front and side edges, where they'll overhang the case. Glue the bottom to the case at this point, and then add the face-frame stiles and the shelf supports.

Back business

To simplify shaping the half-round hanger, I made the back by gluing up three boards—a long, wide center board sand-

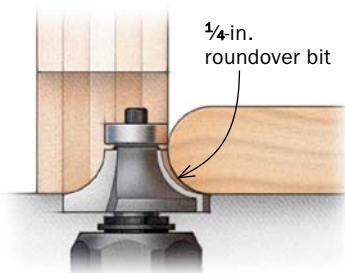
wiched between two narrower, shorter ones. Shape the half-round at the top of the center board at the bandsaw, and refine the curve at the disk sander or by hand. Then glue on the side boards.

Next, use a Forstner bit to drill a 1-in. hole in the center of the half-round. Then trim the back to width, being certain to cut from each side to keep the hole centered. After cutting tongues along the side edges of the back, insert it in its grooves to test the fit. You should have a total of about



Case comes together. Knock the case joints together, following up with clamps if necessary. Check to see that it is perfectly square before setting it aside to cure.

Double roundover. The top and bottom get a bullnose profile on three sides. You can gang the two pieces while cutting the roundovers on the router table.



Notch the top. To make the notch in the top for the center section of the back, define the width of the notch with kerfs cut on the tablesaw, then remove the waste between them with the bandsaw.



Bottom's up. With the roundovers cut and sanded, glue the bottom to the case.



Pieces of the frame. The pair of stiles that compose a partial face frame are glued to the front of the case without joinery.



Simple shelf supports. A couple of finishing nails secure the small strips of solid wood that act as shelf supports.

Make and fit the back panel



Three-part back. Shape the back's half-round top section before gluing on the two narrower side boards. Then trim the whole back to length and width.



Two tongues. Two passes on the tablesaw—one with the back standing on edge—create the tongues on the sides of the back.



Circle session. A Forstner bit in the drill press cuts a clean hanging hole in the back.



Secure the back. Slide the back into place, then add the top (above right). To attach the top, drive screws up through the case top. Then fix the back, screwing it to the case top (right) and case bottom.



Build the door



Diminutive frame and panel. After applying finish to the $\frac{1}{4}$ -in.-thick door panel, drop it into place as you assemble the door frame.



$\frac{1}{8}$ in. of play from side to side to allow for seasonal expansion.

Light door for a small cabinet

Build the door so that its overall dimensions match those of the opening. That will give you the material you need to make a good final fit. Since the stiles and rails are relatively small, I use bridle joints at the corners instead of the more traditional blind mortise-and-tenon. This gives a larger glue surface and more strength.

When cutting the door panel to size, you can let it bottom out in the grooves in the top and bottom rails, but be sure it has about $\frac{1}{8}$ in. of play from side to side for seasonal movement. Glue and clamp the four bridle joints, but don't glue the panel—a brad at the top and bottom is all you need to keep it centered.

When you've glued up the door, trim just enough to produce a $\frac{1}{16}$ -in. reveal around the top and the sides, and about $\frac{3}{32}$ in. on the bottom. Use a pair of 1-in. butt hinges to hang the door. Then add a knob and a stop or spinner, apply finish, and you're ready to hang the cabinet on a peg board—or right on the wall if you wish. □

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Nail the panel.

The panel needs to move with the seasons, so it gets no glue. With the bridle joints glued and clamped, drive a brad through the frame and into the panel to keep it centered.



At last, the pull.

A simple spinner and a Shaker mushroom knob provide the cabinet with closure. For an article on making spinners, see "Keep Your Doors Closed," FWW #246.