

A Southern Huntboard

Cock bead is an elegant touch for doors and drawers

by Carlyle Lynch

“With the Southern forests rich with game and the housewife eager for the results of the day's hunt,” wrote Paul Burroughs in *Southern Antiques*, “the sport was engaged in by all classes. The hunting boards around which the owners of Southern plantations gathered before and after the hunt resemble the sideboard. They were often simple in design. . . . As a general rule, they were taller than sideboards . . . and were used chiefly in halls, where members of the hunt could stand and partake of wine and food in the fashion of a buffet lunch.” Besides serving as informal hall furniture, huntboards helped keep the muddy hunters off the chairs.

This huntboard is adapted from one that I measured and drew in 1952 while it was on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. It's like most of those illustrated in Burroughs' book in that it has four legs instead of the six usually found on sideboards, and it's of a convenient size. Within reason, the piece can be made longer, deeper or taller without destroying its appearance. When I built the huntboard, I put doors on the two end compartments instead of the deep drawers of the original. The center compartment could be fitted with doors or with two drawers of differing depths.

The edges of the doors and drawer fronts of the original were decorated with a plain, but elegant, molding called cock bead and I recommend retaining this detail. Though cock bead is defined as any beading that stands proud of the surface it is meant to decorate, it is best applied as a strip glued to the edges, as shown in the drawer detail in the drawing, rather than merely stuck on the front. Cock bead is common on drawer fronts and door edges of furniture of the Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton styles. I see no reason why it couldn't be used to good effect on more contemporary furniture. Because cock bead is an applied molding, it can be of a different wood than that of the drawer or door, giving the maker an opportunity to experiment with colors and textures. I made the cock bead of cherry, which contrasts subtly with the walnut used for the rest of the piece and with the holly inlaid in the doors and drawer fronts.

Building the huntboard is straightforward. The carcass consists of two solid wood sides and a back mortised into the four tapered legs. Openings for the doors and drawers are

formed by rails attached to the front legs. Two solid wood partitions, mortised into the front stiles and nailed through the carcass back, divide the case into three compartments. Except for plywood doors veneered with walnut, I built with solid wood throughout. But you could substitute plywood for the drawer bottoms and the carcass bottom.

Start by making the legs. They are rectangular in section, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{5}{8}$, as on the original. Lay out and cut the joints to join the sides, back, and front rails to the legs. Then cut and fit the stiles, the center rail, the drawer runners and the two partitions. Dry-clamp the carcass before gluing it up. Before assembly, groove the bottom front rail to accept the bottom; the bottom itself, though, can be fitted later. For added strength, the leg, back and rail tenons should be pinned after assembly.

So they won't warp or swell, the doors should be made of $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood veneered on both sides. Don't forget to allow for the thickness of the cock bead when sizing the doors. If you squeeze the leaves of the hinges a bit in a vise, you can mortise them entirely into the legs instead of into both leg and door edge—this makes a neater appearance.

Drawer construction is conventional. I allow for the cock bead on the top and bottom edge of the drawer fronts by making the fronts narrower than their sides by an amount equal to twice the thickness of the cock bead. Or, you could glue up the drawer and cut down the drawer front after assembly. In either case, cock bead on the drawer sides is let into a $\frac{5}{16}$ -in. wide, $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. deep rabbet. The rabbet should be cut after assembly so that the rearmost edge of the bead will just touch the tapered ends of the dovetail pins.

I make cock bead by ripping thin strips and then using a jack plane to remove the sawmarks and shape the small radius on the bead's front edge. Once made, the bead is simply mitered to length and then glued in place so that it projects about $\frac{1}{16}$ in. You'll have to cut a stopped miter where the wider bead along the top and bottom edges of the drawer fronts meets the narrower bead on the drawer sides. □

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Materials List

4 Legs: $1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{5}{8} \times 38$
2 Sides: $1\frac{3}{16} \times 12\frac{1}{8} \times 13\frac{7}{8}$, shoulder to shoulder (s/s)
1 Top rail: $\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 43\frac{3}{4}$ (s/s)
1 Bottom rail: $\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 43\frac{3}{4}$ (s/s)
1 Back: $\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{1}{8} \times 43\frac{3}{4}$ (s/s)
2 Stiles: $\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{3}{8}$ (s/s)
2 Partitions, pine: $1\frac{3}{16} \times 11\frac{1}{4} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$ (s/s)
1 Center rail: $\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 16$ (s/s)
1 Bottom, pine: $\frac{3}{4} \times 14\frac{3}{4} \times 46\frac{1}{8}$

1 Top: $\frac{7}{8} \times 18\frac{1}{4} \times 49$
2 Doors: $\frac{3}{4} \times 10\frac{5}{16} \times 12\frac{15}{16}$ plywood, plus veneer of desired species
2 Drawer fronts: $1\frac{3}{16} \times 4\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{15}{16}$
2 Drawer backs: $\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{8} \times 15\frac{15}{16}$
4 Drawer sides: $\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 15\frac{5}{8}$
2 Drawer bottoms: $\frac{3}{8} \times 15\frac{1}{16} \times 15\frac{3}{8}$
4 Drawer runners, pine: $\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{4} \times 14\frac{1}{4}$
- (2 are kickers)
15 linear ft.: $\frac{1}{20} \times \frac{1}{16} \times 36$ holly inlay

14 linear ft.: $\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{7}{8}$ cock bead
2 linear ft.: $\frac{1}{8} \times \frac{3}{8}$ cock bead
14 Joint pins, walnut: $\frac{3}{16} \times \frac{3}{16} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$
(2 in front, 4 each end, 4 in back)

Hardware: 2 pairs brass butt hinges, $1\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{8}$ open; 4 bright brass drawer pulls, $3\frac{3}{4}$ -in. bore; 2 brass thread or inlay escutcheons; 2 cupboard locks, $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. selvage to key pin, with barrel keys.

