

how they did it

The wizard's secrets

BY JONATHAN BINZEN

While Kintaro Yazawa often uses exposed joinery on his wide range of furniture and boxes, only occasionally does he invent joints like the ones on the back cover. When he does, they are one of a kind. If he thinks he can improve one of his joints he might make a new version, but replicating one exactly is just drudgery, he says. The Japanese joint that first piqued his interest in mysterious joinery—the double-twisted dovetail—was explained in *FWW* #61 by Alan Peters, who learned it from Yazawa. Now, for the first time, Yazawa himself shares the secrets of two of his perplexing joints. In both cases Yazawa's methods are surprisingly straightforward, and could be adapted to an array of other decorative joints.

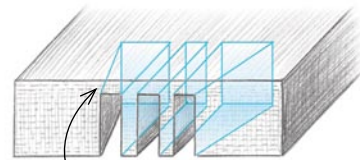


HAWK'S NAIL JOINT



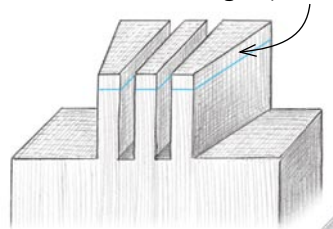
The hawk's-nail joint is a variation on the through-dovetail. The key to this joint as well as to Yazawa's decorative tenons is that he gives a decorative shape to only the last $\frac{1}{4}$ in. of the pins (or tenons). For most of their length, the pins (or tenons) are essentially traditional in shape.

1 CUT THE PINS AND SOCKETS



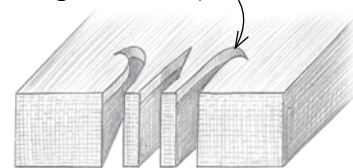
Cut the sockets, leaving an $\frac{1}{8}$ -in.-thick cap.

Cut the pins $\frac{1}{8}$ in. longer than the thickness of the mating tailpiece.

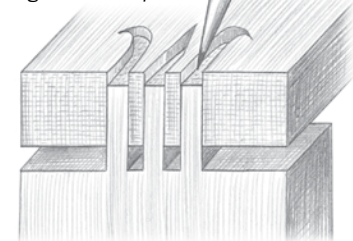


2 CUT THE HAWK'S NAIL

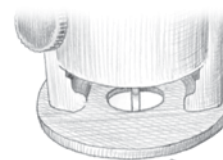
Cut the decorative shapes through the $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. cap.



Trace the decorative pattern onto the end grain of the pins.



3 ROUT THE END GRAIN

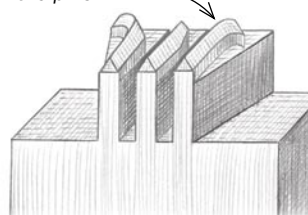


Using a router supported by two boards clamped to either side of the pin board, make $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. freehand cuts with a straight, flat-bottom bit, removing all but the penciled portion of the pins.

4 THE FINISHED JOINT



After pushing the joint home, chamfer the protruding part of the pins.



TALKING TENONS



Yazawa's most astounding joint, his letter-shaped tenon, functions on the same principle as the hawk's-nail joint. He cuts a mortise, leaving a $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. cap. Using a router and very small chisels and rifflers, Yazawa cuts the letters through the mortise cap. Next, he inserts the tenon until it stops against the cap and traces the letters onto the end grain. He then removes the waste between the letters with a router.

