

## Asian-flavored apprenticeship

BY JONATHAN BINZEN

For Aaron Levine, who built this quilted Western maple and lacewood tansu chest (see the back cover) during his apprenticeship, the cabinet was a curriculum unto itself. Among the techniques he learned in the process were cutting shopsawn veneers in

highly figured wood, shooting their edges with a handplane and laying them up into panels in a vacuum press; building and fitting frame-and-panel sliding doors; and building NK-style drawers. “None of this was extraordinary woodworking,” Levine says now, “but I remember it being very challenging to me.” All of this was welcome, since he picked the tansu precisely because it was packed with such an array of parts to make and challenges to meet.

### DAZZLING VENEER



**Out of the bag and into the cabinet.** After sawing the quilted maple veneers for the sliding door panels, Levine glued them to a plywood substrate in a vacuum bag. He also veneered the cabinet top, bottom, sides, and back. The drawer fronts are solid.

### QUILTED DRAWERS



**Drawers without dovetails.** To echo the drawers in traditional Japanese tansu, which are typically nailed or pinned, Levine joined his with small brass screws (left). He built NK-style drawers, which have runners fixed to the bottom. For details on NK drawers, see “A Better Way to Build Drawers,” FWW #150.



### TANSU ON WHEELS

**Make it mobile.** Levine added wheels, traditional on certain tansu. His brother, a metalworker, welded up a set from sections of steel pipe and steel plate, and Levine patinated them to resemble stone. The axles are stainless steel. Levine used DeStaCo clamps as parking brakes.

