

# Decorative Hardware Sources

*Where to find the right hardware to complement your work*

by Vincent Laurence



Whitechapel, cast-brass lid hinge

Vinyl siding wouldn't look right on a 17th-century Colonial. And you wouldn't put mag wheels on a Model T. Similarly, Chippendale hardware is not going to do anything for an Arts-and-Crafts sideboard. Each furniture style has a signature look that extends to the smallest details, including the hardware.

The most difficult part of choosing the right hardware for a piece is often finding it in the first place. Readers of *Fine Woodworking* have called many times looking for everything from hardware for tansu (Asian storage cabinets) to hand-forged iron strap hinges. The hardware makers and suppliers listed on these pages should make it easier for you to find exactly the hardware you need.

If you still can't find what you want from stock items in any of these suppliers' catalogs, many of them also will do custom work for you, from casting or forging to refinishing existing hardware. And blacksmiths, jewelers and machinists in your area are often willing to quote a price for just about any piece of hardware you can design. Some will even help with design services.

I've listed only those manufacturers, distributors and retailers whose business is visible decorative hardware—hardware that's at least as important for how it looks as for how it works.

The list is still long, but the decision to limit it to suppliers of visible decorative hardware means that I've left out all those busi-

nesses that deal primarily with drawer slides, European cup hinges, shelf-pin systems and the like. Some of the companies listed also carry these items (or other merchandise like lamps, fireplace tools or other household accessories), but that's beyond the scope of this article.

I mention "architectural" hardware frequently in this list. By architectural hardware I mean full-sized door, window or shutter hardware or other pieces you wouldn't consider for furniture.

On the facing page, I have included a glossary of hardware-related terms that may not be familiar but are mentioned in the list. You'll also find a visual guide to most of the hinge styles mentioned in the list (see pp. 70-73).

Finally, there's a discussion of the different methods of manufacture used to produce hardware and what difference it makes in the finished product (see the box on p. 71). Not all hardware is created equal.

Unless otherwise noted, each of the companies listed has a free catalog. Though I've listed nearly 50 hardware sources, there are many more for which there wasn't space. This list recognizes the companies with the best hardware or selections I could find. □

*Vincent Laurence is an associate editor for Fine Woodworking.*

# Hardware sources

**A Carolina Craftsman, 975 S. Avocado St., Anaheim, CA 92805; (714) 776-7877**

Two catalogs (one in color) for \$5, refundable with first order. Wide range of styles and methods of manufacture, including Early American, Victorian, Campaign style and some Chinese, in stamped, wrought, cast and extruded brass.



**Antique Restorations, The Old Wheelwright's Shop, Brasted Forge, Brasted, Kent, TN16 1JL, England**

Reproduction antique hardware only. Catalog costs £19.50 (plus shipping and handling) and includes free annual updates. The designs are copies of original hardware, minor imperfections and all. Catalog updates reflect whatever new reproductions were made in the previous year. Selection is extensive, including a huge range of pulls, knobs and escutcheons, as well as esoteric items such as French mounts (or ormolu) and capitals and finials for tall case clocks. Custom work is available.

**Ball and Ball, 463 W. Lincoln Highway, Exton, PA 19341; (800) 257-3711**

Manufacturer and retailer of high-quality reproduction hardware, mostly Early American, but also some Victorian. All hardware is either brass or iron, and some of the iron pieces (blanket-chest strap hinges, for example) are entirely hand forged. Extensive selection (over 2,700 items), including full line of clock fittings, casters and feet for table legs. Great variety of Early American pulls. Custom work available.

**J.D. Beardmore & Co. Ltd., 3-4 Percy St., London, W1P 0EJ, England**

Manufacturer and retailer of reproduction

## Glossary of hardware-related terms

**Cast.** Formed by pouring a molten material (like iron or brass) into a mold, usually ceramic or sand, and allowing it to cool until solid.

**Escutcheon.** Plate around a keyhole that is primarily ornamental but also serves to prevent excessive wear at the edges of the keyhole. Escutcheons may be made of metal, wood or a variety of other materials.

**Extruded.** Forced through a shaped die to yield a part of consistent dimensions—just like squeezing toothpaste out of the tube.

**Finial.** A decorative tip on a hinge. On case clocks or atop a breakfront or secretary, an ornament at the top of the case. Sometimes carved of wood, sometimes cast in brass.

**Forged.** Formed by heating metal and hammering it into shape. Traditional smiths forged hardware by hand with hammers of various shapes. Today, large mechanical treadle hammers are used as well.

**French fittings, French mounts.** Extremely ornate hardware, known more formally as .ormolu. Made from an alloy of copper and tin and usually applied to the knees of 18th-century French tables and desks.

**Ormolu.** See French fittings.

**Pressed.** See stamped.

**Stamped.** Shaped and often cut by means of formed dies and massive pressure. Presses capable of exerting as much as several hundred tons of pressure are used by industries to stamp out metal parts.

brass and iron hardware. Founded in 1860. Fair-sized selection of knobs, escutcheons and pulls. Also carries some hinges, casters and finials. Catalog is £5.

**Brassworks, 379 Charles St., Providence, RI 02904; (401) 421-5815**

Both a manufacturer and a distributor of a number of other manufacturers' products. Styles range from Early American to contemporary. Custom services include casting and refinishing.

**Larry and Faye Brusso Co., 4865 Highland Road, Suite J, Waterford, MI 48328; (810) 674-8458**

A small manufacturer that sells directly and through a number of woodworking catalogs. Brusso is the only manufacturer of high-grade knife hinges. And its other products are made to the same standards—milled from thick brass sheet stock, hand fitted and finished. Products include box hinges, knife hinges, butt hinges, lid supports, jewelry box feet and door/drawer handles.

**Buffalo Studios, 1925 E. Deere Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705; (714) 250-7333**

Reproduction Arts-and-Crafts hardware in hand-hammered copper. Handsome hardware, but expensive. Gustav and L & J.G. Stickley lines. Custom services, too.



Cirecast, cast-brass drawer pull

**Cirecast Inc., 380 7th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-8319**

Manufacturer and retailer of beautiful reproduction Victorian hardware, primarily architectural in scale (full-sized door hinges, knobs and so forth), but Cirecast's line also includes cabinet knobs, drawer pulls and escutcheons. All items are cast in molds made from original pieces of hardware designed between 1870 and 1885.

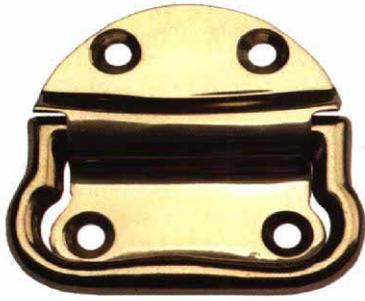
**Constantine, 2050 Eastchester Road, Bronx, NY 10461; (800) 223-8087**

Small but broad selection of furniture hardware. Carries most of Brusso line, a sampling of Early American-style pieces and a few Victorian and contemporary pulls. Emphasis on brass but also carries wood, plastic, porcelain and glass hardware.

**Crown City Hardware, 1047N. Allen Ave., Pasadena, CA 91104; (818) 794-1188**

Its 370-page catalog is \$6.50 (\$9-50 with express shipping). Includes a glossary and primer on various types of hardware it carries. Emphasis is on architectural hardware, but there's lots here for furnitur makers, including hand-forged, cast-iron hinges, cast-brass trunk handles in several styles and cast-iron bin pulls. Mostly reproductions but also some antique pieces. Another 200-page catalog (this one's pricey—\$25), in a three-ring binder, features over 1,000 pieces shown in actual size, most of them of European origin and difficult to find elsewhere. Custom services are available.

(continued on nextpage)



Crown City, chest handle

**Dimestore Cowboys**, 614 Second St. S.W., Albuquerque, NM 87102; (505) 244-1493  
 Manufacturer and retailer of knobs, pulls, hinges, handles and latches featuring contemporary and traditional Western motifs. All items are of hand-forged iron except some pewter knobs and handles. Many finishes are available.

**DuChamp's Irreverent Guiding Spirit Inc. (D.I.G.S.)**, PO Box 2064, New York, NY 10013-2064; (212)966-7352  
 D.I.G.S. manufactures and retails a small line of unique, organic-looking furniture and cabinet hardware called Primaltech. There are five designs, all cast. Each is available in three materials: bronze, brass-bronze and nickel-bronze.

**18th Century Hardware Co.**, 131 E. Third St., Derry, PA 15627; (412) 694-2708  
 Mid-sized selection of Early American and Victorian hardware in brass and iron. Items include pulls, escutcheons, some knobs, a few latches and hinges, as well as casters and French fittings. Catalog provides short, informative discussions of furniture periods (Chippendale and so forth) associated with each style of hardware carried.

**Pagan's Forge**, PO Box 964, Dayville, CT 06241; (203) 963-0130 (Fax only)  
 Small company offering authentic, hand-forged iron hardware reproductions. Mostly architectural, but H- and HL hinges are available, and custom work is done.

**Faneuil Furniture Hardware**, 163 Main St., Salem, NH 03079; (603) 898-7733  
 No-frills catalog of 160 pages packed with hinges, pulls, knobs, escutcheons, bedpost, bolt-hole covers and specialty items like clock finials, corner reinforcement plates and French fittings. Lots of stuff you won't see anywhere else. Largest selection of Chinese-style hardware I ran across.

**Garrett Wade Co. Inc.**, 161 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013; (800) 221-2942  
 Its 46-page color hardware catalog shows each piece of hardware in actual size. Nice selection of high-quality, classic brass hardware. Hinges, pulls, handles, knobs, latches, lid stays, casters and more.

**Hardware Concepts Inc.**, 3728 NW 43rd St., Miami, Fla. 33142; (305) 638-5922  
 Contemporary knobs and pulls in plastic, brass and other materials.

**Hardware+Plus Inc.**, 701 E. Kingsley Road, Garland, TX 75041; (214) 271-0319  
 Retailer and commercial supplier of a wide range of hardware. Mostly architectural, but two catalogs within its three-ring binder deal primarily with furniture and cabinet hardware. One of these catalogs is identical to that of A Carolina Craftsman (see p. 69). The other catalog contains a good deal of Victorian, Oriental and high-style French brass hardware. Also available are wooden Mission-style pulls, brass Arts-and-Crafts cabinet pulls and glass knobs and pulls.

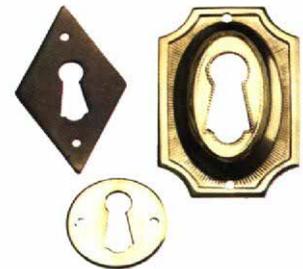
**Harper Hardware Inc.**, 1712 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23223; (804) 643-9007  
 Small selection, but includes good variety of items, from Victorian bin pulls to bronze-coated, cast-zinc, Mission-style pulls.

**HEWI Inc.**, 2851 Old Tree Drive, Lancaster, PA 17603; (717) 293-1313  
 Large European manufacturer of nylon architectural and cabinet hardware and other architectural products. Sleek, contemporary knobs, pulls and handles in bright pri-

mary colors, as well as more muted shades, and black and white. Sold through independent dealers. Ask for name of dealer nearest you, and request the cabinet hardware brochure from customer service.

**Hida Tool & Hardware**, 1333 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702; (510) 524-3700  
 Primarily a tool dealer but also supplies hand-forged and machine-made tansu pulls (both single and double post) in iron, brass, steel and copper. Materials vary with the style of pull. Catalog is \$4.

**Horton Brasses**, Nooks Hill Road, PO Box 95, Cromwell, CT 06416; (203) 635-4400



Horton, various Hepplewhite-style escutcheons, all in brass

Small, family-owned manufacturer and retailer of reproduction hardware. Primarily Early American pieces but also some Victorian. Mostly brass hardware but also some hand-forged iron pieces and wooden knobs. Good selection, high quality.

**Imported European Hardware**, 4320 W. Bell Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89118; (702) 871-0722

Importer and retailer of hardware from many countries, including Spain, France, Italy, England and Taiwan. Materials include iron, brass, glass, porcelain and wood. Not a huge selection, but some unique pieces and a wide variety of styles.

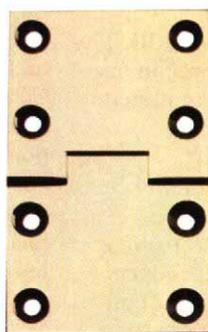
**Iron Art**, 2227 Filbert St., Suite 12, San Francisco, CA 94123; (415) 441-4633  
 Small manufacturer and distributor of hand-

## A hinge for every situation and style

Box hinge



Butler-tray hinge



Butt hinge



Butterfly hinge

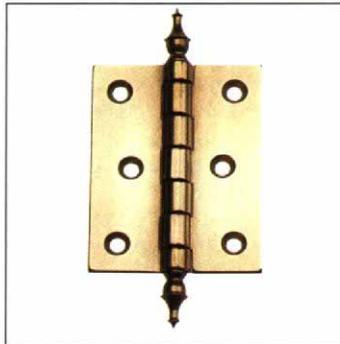


## Method of manufacture determines look and function of hardware

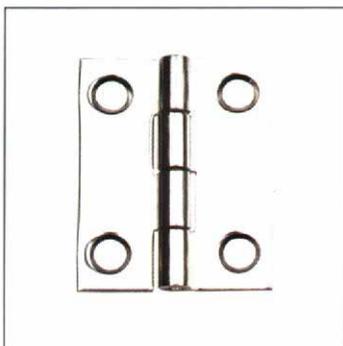
Hardware is made in a number of ways. It may look the same at a distance. But when you look more closely, the subtleties begin to reveal themselves.

On utilitarian cabinets, inexpensive, stamped hinges may be fine or exactly what's called for. But it doesn't make sense to put cheap hardware on a project you've labored over for weeks. So here is a visual comparison of five hinges—one stamped, one extruded, one milled, one cast and one forged. The methods used to produce these hinges are the same for other types of decorative hardware as well.

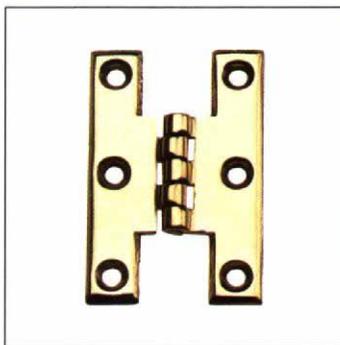
—V.L.



**Milled**  
Milled hinges start out as thicker stock and are machined down to precise tolerances. The hinge-pin hole is drilled and reamed for a perfect fit. The only readily available milled hinges being made today are by Larry & Faye Brusso. The finish used on their hinges is a brushed or matte finish. Not all milled hinges have finials like this one.



**Stamped**  
Stamped hinges are generally thinner than other hinges. Note the rough surface texture, especially where the leaves wrap around the hinge pin, and the distortion at the outside edges of the leaves next to the screw holes. Stamped hinges often are too tight or too loose because it's difficult to tune a press to make a perfect fit around a hinge pin.



**Cast**  
Cast hinges are perhaps the least precise type of hinge. But looks are the real reason to use cast hinges or cast hardware. Cast hardware has a softer feel. The edges aren't as sharp as with the other manufacturing methods; often there are little pits where grains of sand shifted in the mold. These imperfections give cast hardware its antique look.



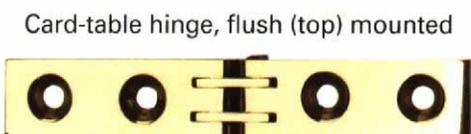
**Extruded**  
Extruded hinges are thicker than stamped hinges, and they are much closer to a consistent thickness over their whole surface. They're also usually better finished, with a more precise fit between hinge leaves and pins. Extruded hinges generally are reasonably priced, making them a good value. Extruded hinges are sometimes called drawn hinges.



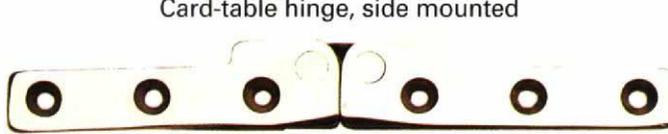
**Forged**  
Forged hinges vary in quality and precision depending on the blacksmith's skill. Price is generally a fair indication of quality. As with cast hinges, you don't use forged hinges for their performance, but rather for their character or appearance. A set of hand-forged butterfly or strap hinges on a painted Early American piece just looks right.



Blanket-chest strap hinge



Card-table hinge, flush (top) mounted



Card-table hinge, side mounted

forged iron hardware. Pieces are all primitive or rustic. Small selection of handles and pulls. Available in a variety of finishes including natural, unfinished iron, rust, verdigris, antique copper and painted black.



Iron Art, iron pull

**Lamp brand hardware from Sugatsune America, Inc., 221 E. Selandia Lane, Carson, CA 90746; (800) 562-5267**

Sleek, contemporary hardware in a variety of metals (including brass, stainless steel, aluminum and zinc alloy), plastics and phenolic-impregnated wood. Pieces include a wide variety of hinges, knobs, pulls, latches, casters, lid stays and more. Sold through independent dealers. Call for catalog and location of nearest dealer.

**Lee Valley Tools Ltd., 1080 Morrison Drive, Ottawa, Ont K2H 8K7, Canada; (800) 267-8767**

Lee Valley has a small selection of generally high-quality brass hardware, much of it imported from Europe. Brass knobs, pulls, hinges, escutcheons, handles and more.

**Liberty Brass Turning Co. Inc., 38-01 Queens Blvd., Long Island City, NY 11101; (718) 784-2911**

Liberty Brass manufactures all manner of items from brass, including pulls and finials with a modern, space-age kind of look. Standard finishes are polished and lacquered brass, polished chrome and satin chrome. Other finishes (including gold, silver or oth-

er precious metals) are available at extra cost. Custom work is available.

**Liz's Antique Hardware, 453 S. La Brea, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (213) 939-4403**

No catalog, but a resource nonetheless if you need to match existing hardware or want authentic antique hardware. Send a photo, a template and a check for \$ 10 (handling fee), and the staff will try to find what you need. Emphasis is on late 19th, early 20th centuries (Victorian, Eastlake, Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Arts-and-Crafts styles).

**Melting Pot Studio, 25 Eagle St., Suite 303, Providence, RI 02908; (401) 453-5639**

A small foundry making unusual pulls and knobs in shapes, such as starfish, sea shells, nuts and maple seeds. Available in brass, red bronze and silver bronze. Color photocopy and price sheet available.

**Minumet Italy, distributed by AIM Tools and Accessories, 91 Niagara St., Toronto, Ont. M5V 1C3, Canada; (800) 665-0900**

Italian manufacturer of brightly colored, nylon and ABS plastic hardware.

**O.C. Mitchell, 8E Hadco Road, Wilmington, DE 19804; (302) 998-1181**

Small forge and foundry. Hand-forged iron and cast-brass hinges, knobs, pulls, handles and escutcheons are its stock in trade. Iron is available with linseed oil or black paint finish. Brass is available in bright, highlighted antique or antiqued finishes.

**Montebello Smithy, 31 Newlands Ave., Newlands, 7700 Cape Town, Republic of South Africa**

Small forge supplying curvaceous handles and pulls in mild or stainless steel. Finishes include polished, semipolished and black. Ask for catalog and price sheet.

**Nathan's Forge, 3476 Uniontown Road, Uniontown, MD 21158; (410) 848-7903**

Mostly accessories for the home, but there are iron H- and rat-tail hinges in the catalog and custom work is accepted.

**Old World Hardware Co., 103 N. Texas, DeLeon, TX 76444; (817) 893-3862**

Victorian (including Eastlake and American Oak styles) and Queen Anne hardware in cast and stamped brass. Mostly pulls, knobs and escutcheons, also a few hinges. Wooden knobs (oak, maple, walnut and cherry), as well.

**Paxton Hardware Ltd., PO Box 256, Upper Falls, MD 21156; (410) 592-8505**

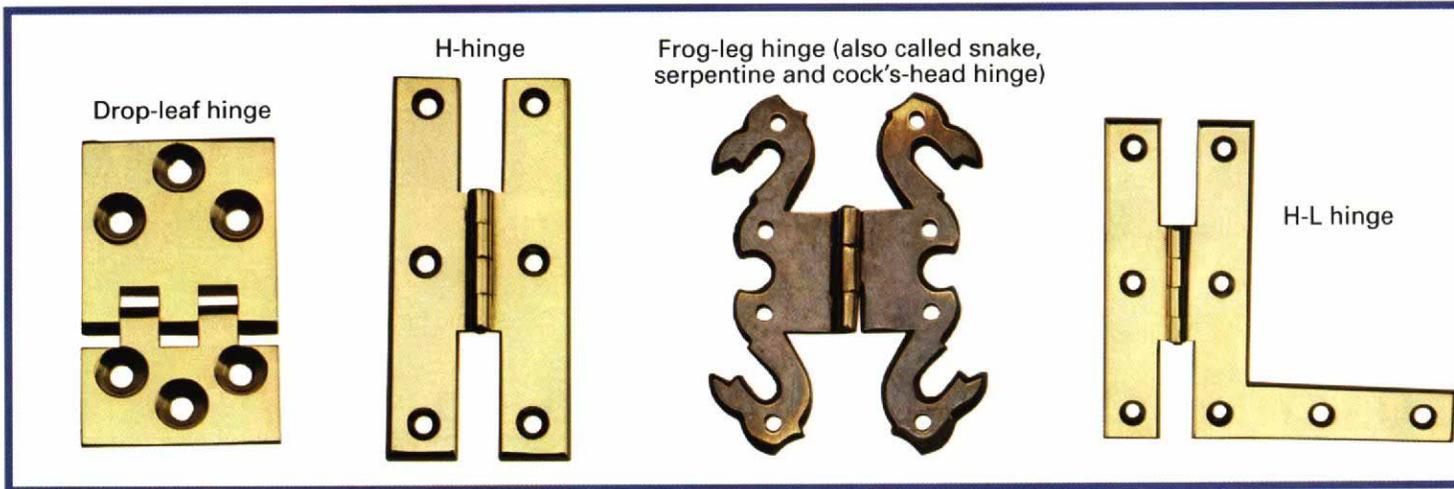
Retailer of traditional iron, brass, wood, glass and porcelain hardware. Fairly broad selection of styles including Federal, Chippendale, Victorian, Campaign and Arts and Crafts. Items include pulls, knobs, handles, escutcheons and lid stays.



Smith Woodworks, tenoned Shaker-style knobs and Mission-style pull

**Period Furniture Hardware, 123 Charles St., PO Box 314, Charles Street Station, Boston, MA 02114; (617) 227-0758**

Retailers of brass, iron, wood, plastic, glass and porcelain hardware in a wide range of primarily traditional styles including Chippendale, Victorian, Sheraton, Hepplewhite, Campaign and Oriental. Pieces include pulls, knobs, escutcheons, clock finials, bed-bolt hole covers, corner reinforcements, casters, cast claw feet, lid stays and more.



**Reid Tool Supply Co.,** 2265 Black Creek Road, Muskegon, MI 49444-2684; (800) 253-0421

More a machinist's than a woodworker's supplier, but all the more interesting for that. Knobs and handles in various shapes and materials (including zinc, steel, aluminum, phenolic, ABS plastic, polypropylene). Hardware is not intended to be decorative, but it could be perfect for shop furniture, industrial-looking kitchens or wherever a utilitarian aesthetic is desired.

**Wm. J. Rigby Co.,** 73 Elm St., Cooperstown, NY 13326; (607) 547-1900

Small-scale retailer of old and antique hardware. Catalog costs \$7, which includes updates, additions and "spur of the moment offerings of items of limited quantities." Primarily architectural, but cabinet pulls, knobs, catches, handles, hinges and escutcheons are also in the catalog. Also, you can send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with a request, and Rigby will try to find what you're looking for. Almost all of the hardware is old but unused; 5% is cleaned-up salvage.

**Smith Woodworks & Design,** 101 Farmersville Road, Califon, NJ 07830; (908) 832-2723

Crisply turned wooden knobs and Mission-style knobs (face grain) in maple, cherry, walnut and oak. Excellent prices.

**Tremont Nail Co.,** 8 Elm St., PO Box 111, Wareham, MA 02571; (508) 295-0038

Strap, butterfly, H- and H-L hinges in iron.

**Van Dyke's,** 4th Ave. & 6th St., PO Box 278, Woonsocket, SD 57385; (605) 796-4425

A supplier of materials for upholstery, cabinetmaking, woodworking and antique restoration. Cast brass claw-and-ball feet, claw feet and claw-foot casters, regular cast-brass casters, feet, finials, pulls and knobs. Pulls and knobs also available in glass, porcelain, marble and combinations of brass and wood and brass and porcelain. A few hinges and escutcheons.

**Wayne's Woods, Inc.,** 39 N. Plains Industrial Road, Wallingford, CT 06492; (800) 793-6208

Wayne's Woods has mostly Victorian brass pulls and escutcheons. Some handles and brass, glass, porcelain and wood knobs.

**Whitechapel, Ltd.,** PO Box 136, 3650 W. Highway 22, Wilson, WY 83014; (800) 468-5534



Whitechapel, brass rosette pull

Good-sized catalog of excellent reproduction hardware from all over. Emphasis is squarely on traditional furniture, with Early American and older European hardware making up most of the offerings. High-quality cast-bronze Arts-and-Crafts pulls, too, as well as hand-forged Oriental iron pulls and corner (and other joint) reinforcements. Some Victorian and Edwardian pieces. Materials used are brass, iron and wood. Pieces include virtually any kind of decorative hinge you can imagine, knobs, pulls, escutcheons, finials and other clock hardware, lid stays, casters (claw foot and plain) and bed-bolt hole covers.

**Windy Hill Forge and The Cast House,** 3824 Schroeder Ave., Perry Hall, MD 21128-9724; (410) 256-5890

One-man shop doing primarily custom work in hand-forged iron and brass and cast brass. Strap hinges available with 21 different endings. A lot of Early American as well as Mission-style, Oriental and even modern pieces.

**Woodbury Blacksmith & Forge Co.,** PO Box 268, Woodbury, CT 06798; (203) 263-5737

Three smiths making beautiful, historically

authentic, hand-forged iron hardware. Pieces include strap, H- and H-L, butterfly and rat-tail hinges. Custom work accepted.

**Woodcraft,** 210 Wood County Industrial Park, PO Box 1686, Parkersburg, WV 26102-1686; (800) 225-1153

Small selection of generally high-quality hardware including most of the Brusso line, a few brass pulls, escutcheons and hinges. Also, wooden and porcelain knobs, some specialty jewelry-box hardware and stamped-brass Mission-style hardware.



Whitechapel, Arts-and-Crafts pull

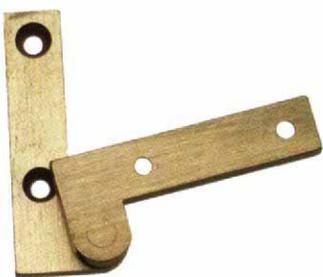
**The Woodworkers' Store,** 21801 Industrial Blvd., Rogers, MN 55374-9514; (800) 279-4441

The Woodworkers' Store carries a mid-sized selection of inexpensive brass hinges, lid stays, latches, pulls, knobs and escutcheons. Also, some commercial-style pulls, wooden and porcelain knobs and pulls and most of the Brusso line.

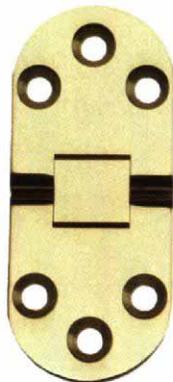
**Woodworker's Supply,** 1108 N. Glenn Road, Casper, WY 82601; (800) 645-9292

Woodworker's Supply has wooden knobs and pulls, various brass and brass-plated steel hinges, hasps, latches and pulls. □

Knife hinge



Counter hinge



Rat-tail hinge



Piano hinge

