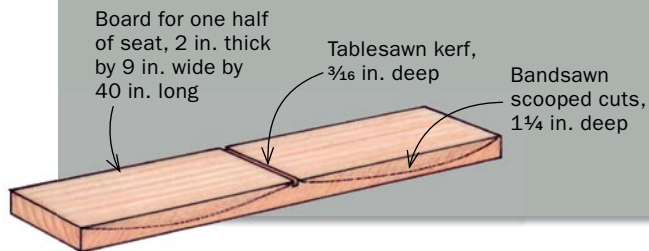


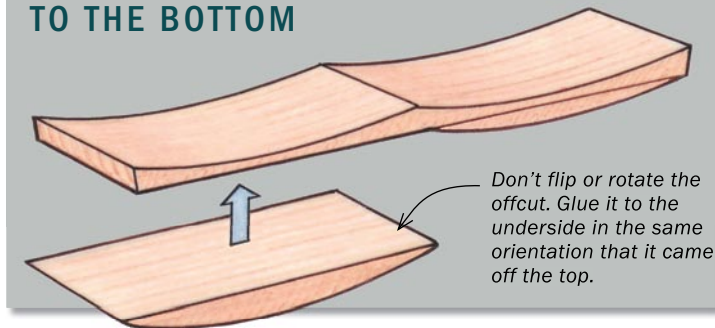
Comfortable Seat for Two

BANDSAW THE SEAT PROFILE



Tablesaw kerf simplifies resawing. When the bandsaw blade enters the kerf, the offcut comes free. Without it, you'd either cut into—and ruin—the second offcut, or stop the blade and back out of the cut.

GLUE OFFCUTS TO THE BOTTOM



Sand the offcuts before glue-up. They come together at too steep an angle to sand afterward. Ames sands across the grain with a shop-made, curved platen inserted in a belt sander.

Platen is concave across its width for sanding underside of seat.



Smart bandsawing creates beautiful curves and saves wood

BY JUDITH AMES

The design for this bench kicked around in my head for several years as I worked out the details. The wait was worth it. Clients love the curvaceous seat and legs, with their subtle but noticeable Asian influence. And being a native of New England, where frugality is prized, I take pleasure in knowing that very little wood is wasted when I make the seat. The offcuts from shaping the top are glued to the underside so that the top and bottom curves run parallel, a technique I first developed when making rocking-chair seats.

The curves of the seat aren't just for show. Each one scoops out a comfortable place to sit. And I add a gentle curve to the edges—I call them “pillowed” edges—to further soften the look of the bench.

I also am pleased that the simple elegance of the bench is the result of a refreshingly simple

GLUE TWO HALVES TOGETHER

The full width of the seat is made by gluing two boards together. For the best grain and color match, both halves should come from a single longer board.

technique. The seat is made from two planks of wood. All it takes is two cuts at the bandsaw to rough out the scoops. I then move the offcuts to the underside and glue them in the same orientation. After the two halves are glued together, I shape the legs at the bandsaw, and join them to the seat with mortise-and-tenon joints.

In all, I find this a satisfying piece to make. Not only do my clients find the design pleasing, but they find comfort in it, too. And it pleases my frugal Yankee soul that I'm helping to conserve a precious resource by getting the most out of the wood I use to make the bench. □

Judith Ames designs and makes furniture in Seattle.

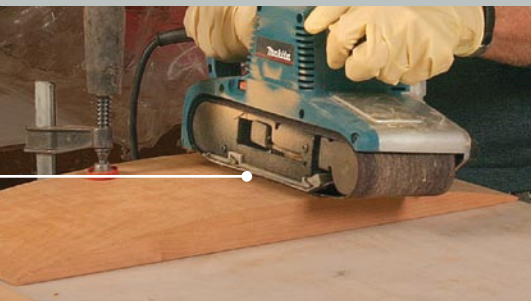
ATTACH THE LEGS

Each leg is cut from a single plank. The tenon is cut while the blank is square, and fitted into an angled mortise (8°). Next, Ames bandsaws the inside and outside faces, then the edges. The edges are also rounded slightly.



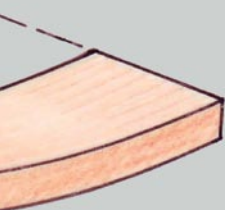


Get help to hold the board upright. Ames clamps the board to an L-shaped plywood support to keep it parallel to the blade, which minimizes the amount of sanding needed afterward.



Got clamps? You'll need them now. Ames spaces them 3 in. apart and uses shaped cauls to get pressure into the valley where the offcuts meet.

And smooth the seat. When gluing, Ames aligns the two halves simply by sight and feel. Afterward, she again sands across the grain (right). The platen for the top side needs only a slight curve. After sanding, Ames uses a card scraper.



Platen is convex across its width for sanding top of seat.

