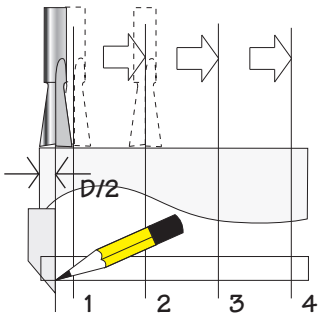
WoodRat Corner No.6

Inlaid dovetails

The basis of this intriguing joint is the end-to-end dovetail, made with two contrasting, clean-cutting hard-woods. In this case – sycamore and black walnut, and with a little brown lime in the case of one on the right.

It's a good case for the **back-registration method**, making it equally suitable for working with the LittleRat. It's also deadly accurate

.Select two dovetail bits; one at least 4mm larger in diameter than the other. Place the larger one and depth it (not fully).

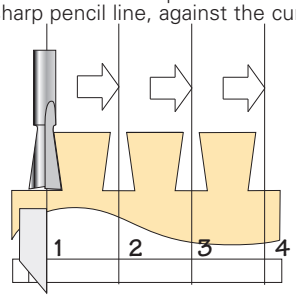


As well as four boards (marked up with triangles) making up the box, make another in light wood for the template.You'll also need a contrasting board for the dark effect.

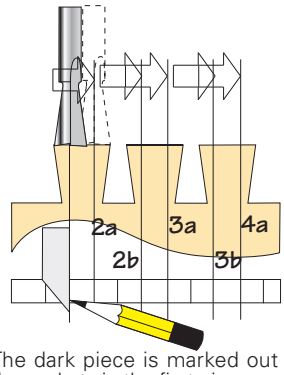
Note that the template in Marker Position, is shown under the board being dovetailed, so you can compare what happens each side.

Measure off half the dovetail bit on top of the template. Track the box Side under the cutter, and fix the acrylic cursor (Blu-tak is fine) on the channel top exactly over the mark. That sets the cursor.

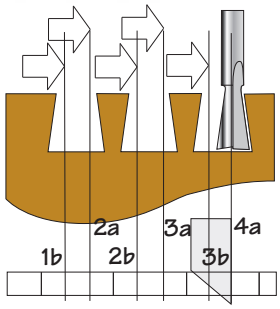
Track the cutter to each joint position, and mark the template with a razor sharp pencil line, against the cursor.



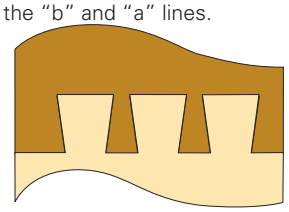
Drop the cutter and cut a socket at each joint position.



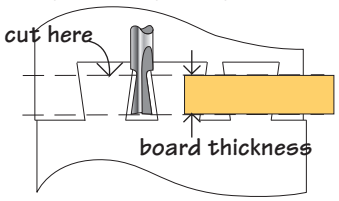
The dark piece is marked out from the sockets in the first piece, so track the bit to the edge of the first Tail. Overlap it by a gnat's smidgen (no more), and mark up the template at each "a" and each "b" position in turn.



Cut the sockets each with two cuts on the "b" and "a" lines.

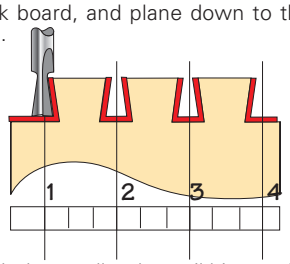


The dark piece will then flip over and join with the light piece. Glue it, tap it into place, and plane up.



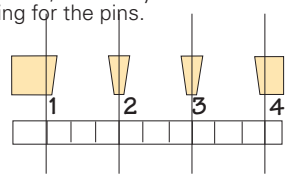
Lay the smaller cutter over the dark dovetail. Place it so that the border is equal around the bit.

Mark one point at the base of the bit, and another above the light board thickness. This marks where the cut is needed. Saw off the rest of the dark board, and plane down to the line.



With the smaller dovetail bit, cut the sockets for the pins on the original pin positions. Depth the bit exactly against the lighter board.

Before you change bits, Make a socket in a thin stick and a groove in a thicker stick, as you would for through dovetails, so that you can find the setting for the pins.



and cut the pins to fit the sockets.

As usual we are very short of space, but I hope it makes sense enough for you to develop your own ideas.

Happy 'Ratting

Martin Godfrey