

SKILLS WEEK – ESSENTIAL CABINETMAKING HAND SKILLS

THE COURSE

The Cabinetmaking Skills Week is the course you've been waiting for. If you're a complete beginner this will give you the perfect grounding; if you've been woodworking for a while, this will be a great tune-up, sorting out any bad habits and reinforcing fundamental skills.

Everything in Woodwork is based on Sharpening so this is the initial focus. You MUST have a sharpening system at your fingertips that works for you, we will look at angles, the exotic and not so exotic steels used for blades, high speed grinders, water cooled grinders and bench stones. You will learn a method of sharpening freehand, but you will also learn how to use honing guides – it's quite OK if freehand honing remains an aspiration for the moment. Western dovetailing and cross-cut saws are great to use, but they also need to be super-sharp, so we'll look at sharpening these too.

Planing, Sawing and Chiselling are the three critical elements needed for shaping and jointing bits of wood together so you will be given some good solid technique and exercises to help you practice and conquer these vital skills. Setting up a plane to take gossamer-thin shavings, planing strategies to deal with misshapen pieces of timber, chopping and paring to a knife line with a chisel and bringing a bit of Zen into sawing to make it a focussed, precise process.

To see how things are progressing you will prepare and join several pieces of wood together to make a cheese-board, this will give you a chance to get some calm, composed gluing under your belt, adding some tapered chamfers with a wonderful 'finesse tool', the spoke-shave, will complete this little project.

Jointing pieces of wood together is what woodwork is all about so we'll cut some Through Dovetails and through, wedged Mortice & Tenons. Cutting a groove and inserting a veneered bottom will complete an elegant 'Water Biscuit Box' to perfectly compliment your board.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- SHARPENING – Cutting angles, Bevel Angles and fool-proof systems that produce razor-sharp blades
- PREPARING A PLANE – fettling and setting up for gossamer-thin shavings
- PLANING STRATEGIES – producing super flat, square, wood with a mirror surface
- CHISELLING – techniques for safe, accurate chopping and paring
- SAWING – Japanese and Western saws need different techniques to get the best out of them – (includes looking at sharpening a Western Dovetail Saw)
- CHEESEBOARD EXERCISE – Planing and gluing with some simple cramping tactics and a hand-cut, curved chamfer
- MAKING FRIENDS WITH A 'FINESSE' TOOL - cutting a tapered chamfer with a Spokeshave

- A VITAL JOINT – THROUGH DOVETAILS – sawing and chiselling practice to make this hugely important, elegant joint.
- ANOTHER VITAL JOINT – THROUGH, WEDGED MORTICE & TENON – another classic joint, the perfect joint for a frame, or in this case, a box divider.
- BOX EXERCISE – Combining all the tools and techniques – this dovetailed box exercise is the perfect way to check progress.