



Scott Horsburgh Designer and Maker of Fine Handcrafted Furniture

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Piece: Display cabinet on a stand

Subject: The making of the cabinet back panel.

The cabinet back has a bridle jointed frame and a double panel held within this frame. Before I discuss the details of the back panel I will briefly mention a little about frame and panel construction. If the panel used in this method is solid wood it must be able to move across its grain. As a result, when gluing a solid panel into a frame, you should only glue the panel to the frame at the centre on the top and bottom of the panel. This is really just to hold it in place, and it can then change its width when the humidity changes. When gluing the frame and panel it is a good idea to wax the corners of the panel so that if there is any squeeze out from the frame corners it will not fix to the panel and not allow it to move.

I read an interesting article in David Charlesworth's second book where he was discussing a piece made by one of his students Nicholas Purcell. The bit that grabbed my attention was the discussion of the back panel. In the cabinet Nicholas had used a light wood on the inside and the same wood as the cabinet carcass on the outside. Instead of veneering he used two thin panels and glued them down the centre to enable them to move at different rates. I liked this idea and replicated the technique in this cabinet. The internal panel is Tasmanian Huon Pine. Huon pine is a hard wood with a magnificent light colour. The timber planes beautifully. The exterior panel is Western Australian Jarrah, the same as the carcass. I prepared the two panels and planed them down to 5mm each. I then glued these down the centre. The reason for only gluing down the centre is that the panel within a frame is always allowed to move across its width. Because I have used two different timbers of different densities they will most likely move at different rates. If I glued them together completely there could be trouble.

The photos below show the process. Once the two panels were glued together I am then working with one panel. I will then mark out for the shoulders that will fit nicely into the corresponding groove cut into the frame members. These cuts will be made on the router table and cleaned up with a shoulder plane.

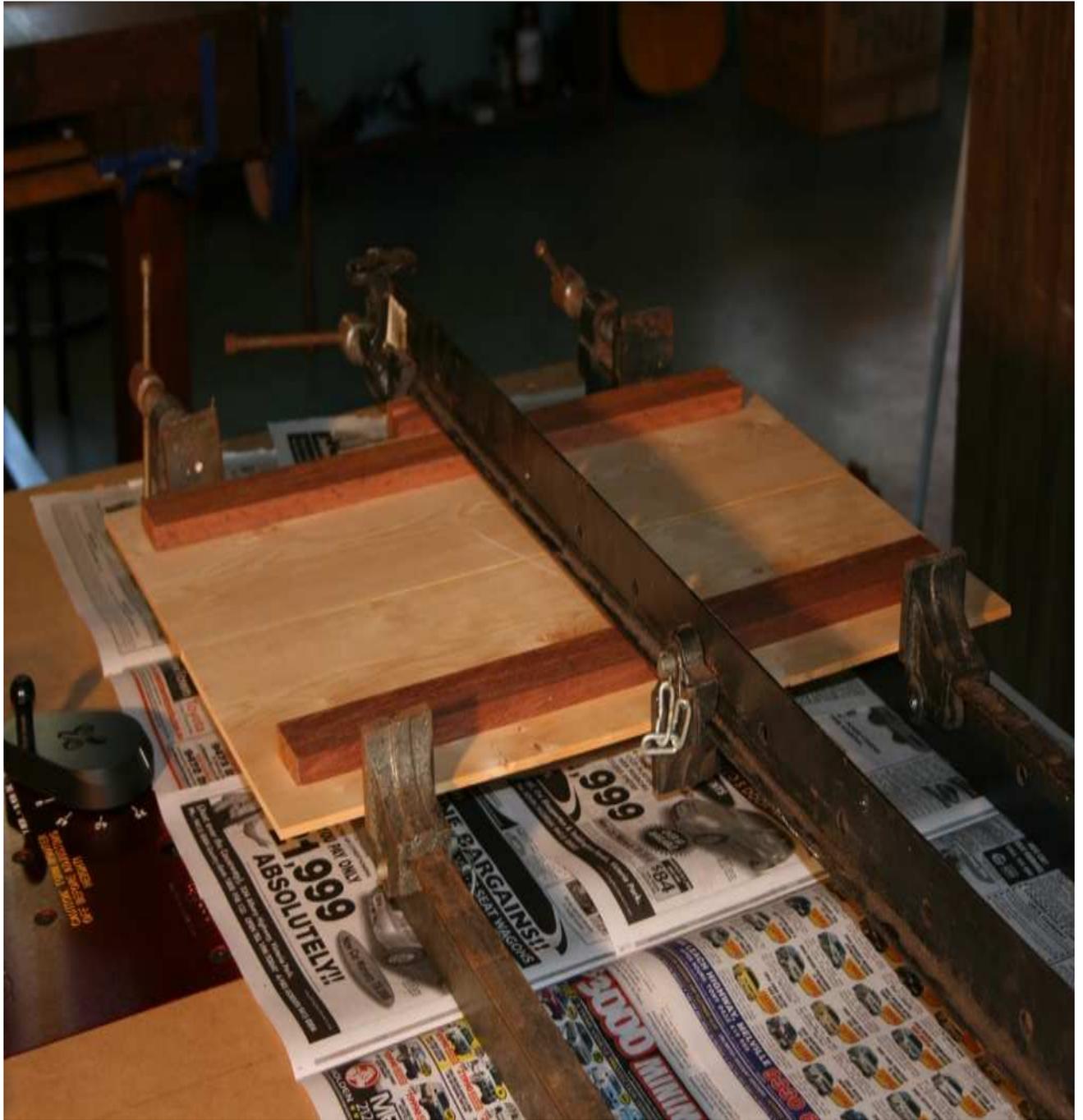
Below: Planing the Huon pine panels. These will be edge jointed.



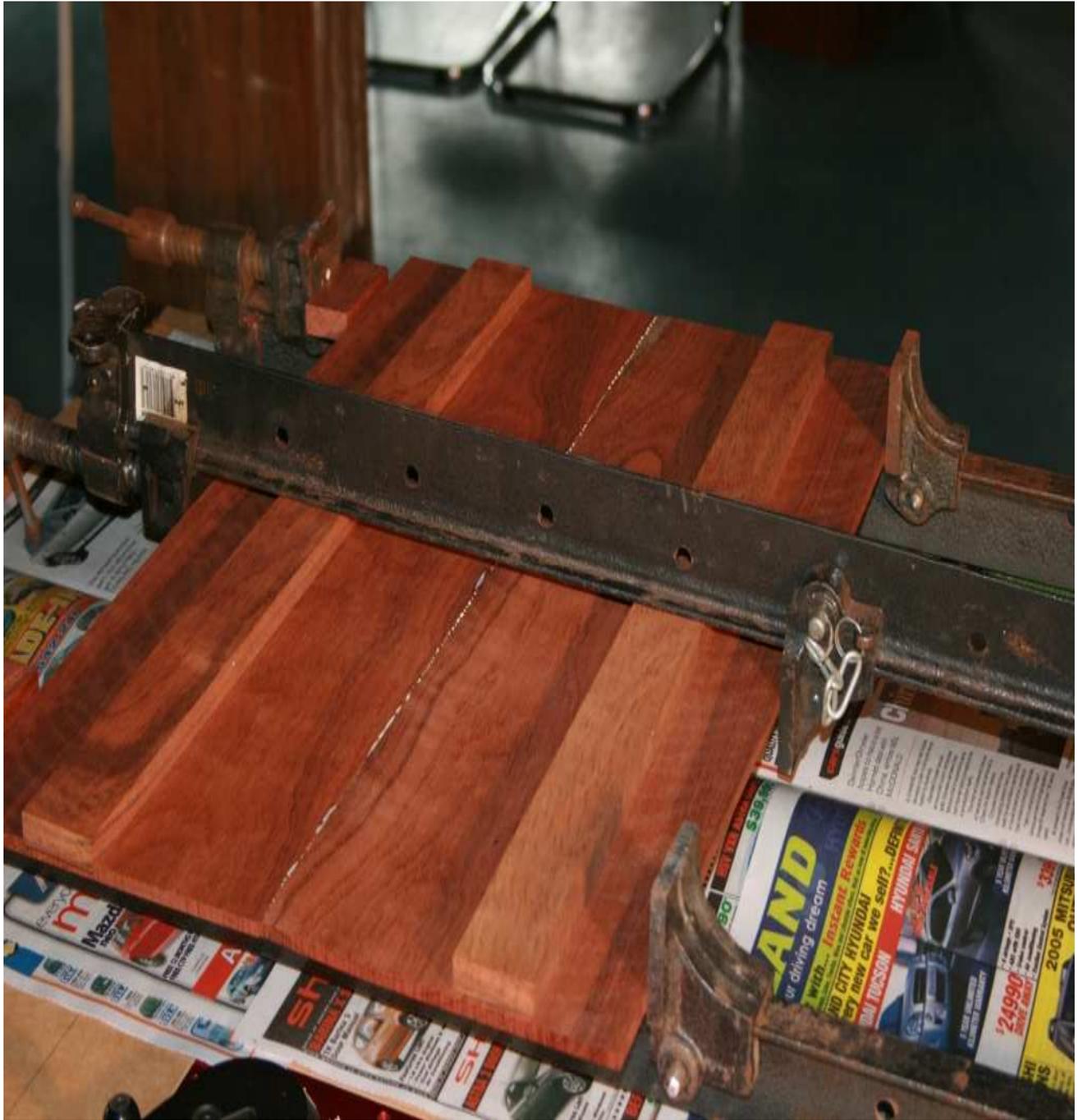
Below: The hand planed panel on the right and the panel direct from the thicknesser on the left.



Below: Edge joining the two hand planed Huon Pine panels.



Edge joining the two Jarrah panels.



Gluing the two panels together down the centre. I have placed a long piece of hardwood down the centre which is about 50mm wide. On top of this I have placed a 20kg piece of steel to exert some pressure.



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