Scott Horsburgh
Designer and Maker of Fine Handcrafted Furniture

Article 2: 14th December 2008
Piece: Sideboard

Subject: Fitting Cabinet Hardware Perfectly.

Making and fitting fine cabinet hardware from dense woods is a wonderful experience and these small items add an enormous amount to the overall feel of a piece of fine furniture.
The first article on the Sideboard covered the making of these beautiful little items. This article will cover 'how to fit them perfectly' so there are no gaps around their sides. Your friends will look at these pieces and how they fit and marvel at your skill. Really, it is a very easy thing to do. I have recently completed filming DVD Number 2 and in this dvd I cover the use of the 'Shooting Board' and show you how easy it is to fit these small pieces perfectly.

Below are photos of cabinet hardware. When I am making a carcass that will have doors I always make 'Door Catches', 'Door Stops' and 'Door Stops and Lifters'. If the carcass has drawers you will need to make drawer stops. The making and fitting of drawer stops is exactly the same process.
Below: These are made from African Blackwood.

Below: Hardware from South African Leadwood.

Once I have these items made I shoot their edges on the shooting board to clean them up and ensure they are square. See photos below for the shooting of the large 'Stop & Lifter'.

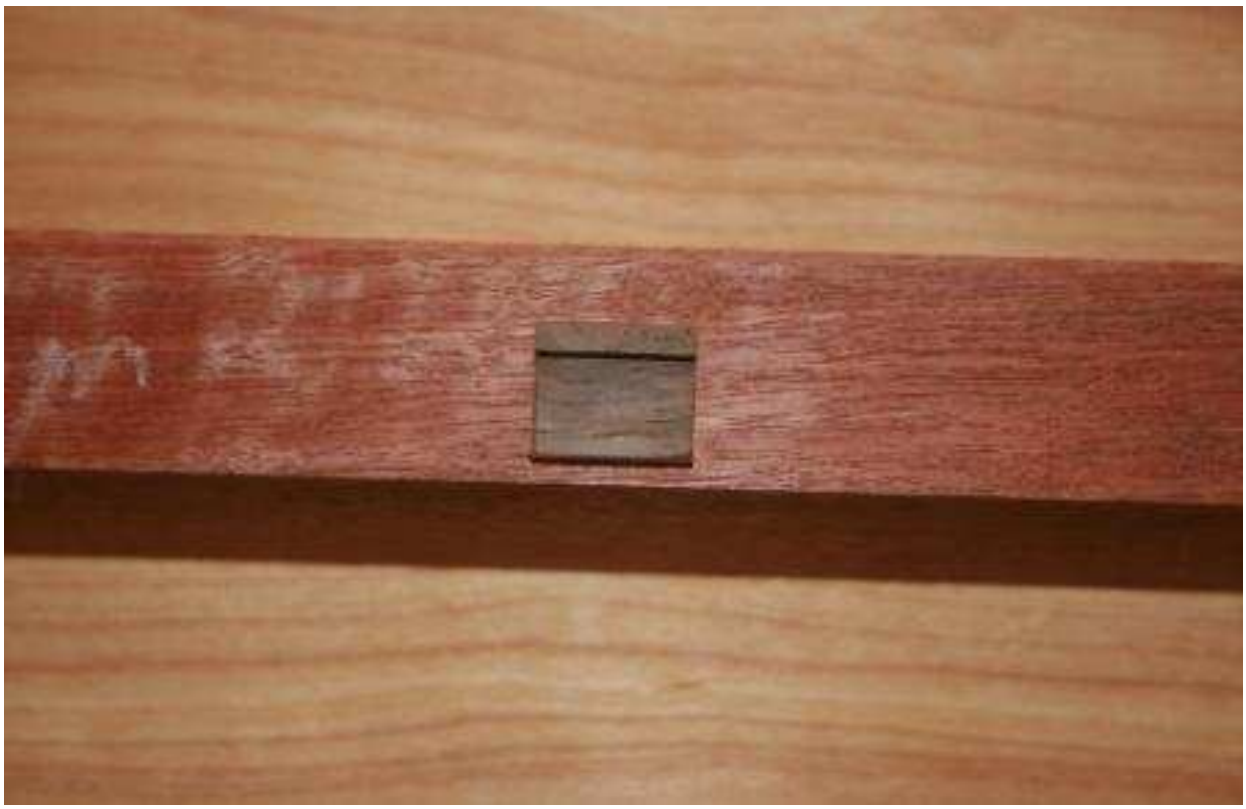
Once I have these square cut, they are ready to be marked out on the carcass. I choose the desired location and very carefully with a sharp pencil I mark as closely as I can to the outside edge around the hardware piece. I then use my square and a sharp marking knife to set the square so that the edge of the square is slightly

inside the pencil edge – about 0.5mm. I do this all around all four of the pencil marked lines. I am going to cut the housing for the hardware to the knife line. The cut housing will be square to the pencil lines and 0.5mm inside all pencil edges. Therefore the housing will be too small for the hardware opening. That is exactly what we want. I use a small hand held router with a 3mm parallel sided router bit to remove the bulk of the waste. If the housing is 5mm deep, I will take 3 or four cuts to get there as I don't want to try and remove a deep amount of wood with a small 3mm router bit. Take between 1 to 1.50 mm at a time. When routing wood that is not wide, it helps to have another piece of wood of the same height next to the routed piece. This helps you balance the router.
Use chopping chisels to clean up the housing edge up to the knife line. Slot the end of the chisel blade into the knife line and cut down vertically. Depending on how close you rout to the line, you should only be left with a small chisel cut to clean the edges of the housing. Remove all wood from the corners.

Below photo of hand held router and cut routed housing ready to be chiseled. I have placed another similar board behind to help balance the router.

Below: Housing finished off with chopping chisels.

We now have a housing that is too small for the hardware it holds. Now we will shoot the hardware to fit on the shooting board. We take shavings of about 1/20thmm to 1/10thmm and gradually shoot the piece to fit perfectly. This is fun. You will take a shaving and the piece will just drop in nicely. No Gaps.



This is really not difficult and very rewarding. I use this technique for all wood hardware items and much more. The shooting board gives you complete control over the fitting process. There is no guess work.

Scotty Horsburgh
Yallingup Steading