

The slotted T-square guides a 6mm square hollow mortise chisel, cutting the pattern in the veneer

Insight

Joining the dots with a solar sideboard

Peter Sefton helps student Andrew Strickland to add a splash of sunshine to his furniture piece

One of the best things about working with students and assisting them in bringing their furniture designs to life, is when a new idea is laid before you. Experience comes into play, even though this may be a design or technique you have never personally tackled before.

Andrew Strickland presented me with some great concept sketches, plans and a maquette for his piece, 'Solar Sideboard'. The main carcass veneer was a beautiful 0.6mm ripple sycamore, with rich vavona burr details. Part of the design incorporated an attractive veneer detail on the curved doors; a geometric pattern of sunburst dots radiating from the left hand door and spreading across the other door. This was an eye-catching detail that was essential to get accurate and crisp.

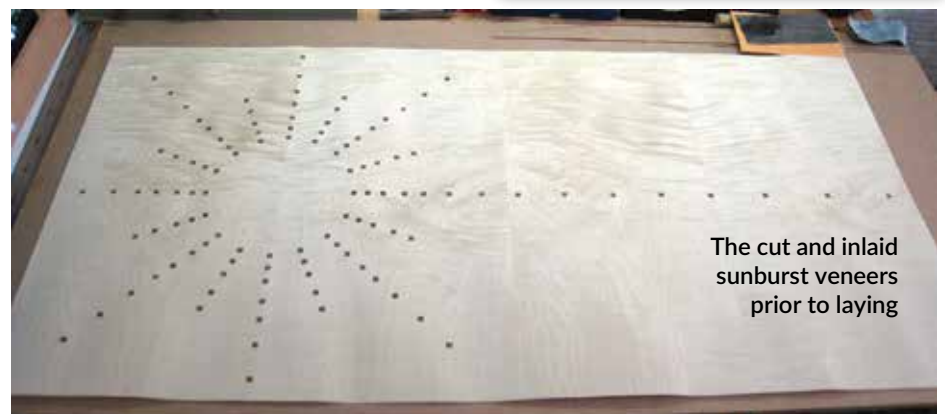
Execution

The first part of the setting out was done by printing off a full-size drawing to act as a template for cutting the square details. This was laid over the book-matched and jointed veneers, ensuring the centre lines matched up. The next challenge was to cut 108 holes, all square and exactly the same

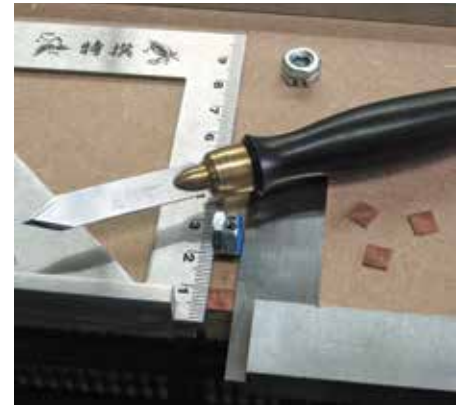
size, while stopping them from twisting or going out of line; an odd one would ruin the entire look.

To make all the cut-outs the same size, Andrew used a very sharp 6mm square chisel from our hollow chisel mortiser. This had to be re-sharpened as the job proceeded. To hold the chisel in line and follow the pattern, we devised a jig based on an old drawing T-square (but double-ended), with two cross bars trapping the chisel.

Cutting through the veneer was carried out with a firm tap from the hammer, going cleanly through onto a plywood backing board. MDF wasn't used as it was too hard and would have damaged the mortise chisel with every



The cut and inlaid sunburst veneers prior to laying



Two nuts make a perfect 6mm spacer to size the veneer inlays

Peter Sefton

Peter Sefton is a well-known furniture maker who runs courses in fine woodworking, teaching and mentoring students at the Peter Sefton Furniture School. He also owns Wood Workers Workshop and he is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers.

Web:

www.peterseftonfurnitureschool.com



blow. The resulting holes were clean and precise. Next, Andrew moved onto the job of cutting and fitting the small vavona inlays. This was done with a similar technique that we use for cutting squares for chessboards. The veneer is cut into long thin strips matching the 6mm chisel. Then we set up a cross cutting jig to ensure the 6mm is cut in the other direction, using a pair of nuts to reference from.

The overall job appears even better than the original concept and will look stunning on Andrew's finished piece. ■

Wood veneers

Ripple sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)
Vavona burr (*Sequoia sempervirens*)