

Creating Exceptional Home Interiors

With Gary Striegler

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We will spend a week studying the details that separate homes with classically detailed interiors from cookie cutter production homes.

1. Building mantels: The mantel is the center of attention in most homes. It is the perfect place to showcase your skills.
2. Staircase and handrail construction: The stairway always makes a big impression. Make sure it is a good one.
3. Door hanging: It is more than installing a pre-hung door. It is also a great way to show your skills.
4. Curved trim work: The ability install curved molding is like having a PhD in trim work. It gives you instant credentials. We will work with Elliptical, circle tops and segment pieces.
5. Crown molding: It is by far the most difficult type of trim to install. Mastering crown molding gives you the opportunity to create incredible details.

This class will be a mixture of power point presentations, demonstrations and hands-on projects.

Day One-Building Mantels That Make a Statement

Building a mantel can be very intimidating until you realize that each mantel is a composition of several smaller parts. If you understand these parts and how they go together, building a mantel is much easier. We begin by studying the parts of a mantel, the three types of mantels, and the things that effect mantel design. The rest of the morning we will talk about what order to follow when building a mantel and how to design a mantel using a story pole.

After lunch we will build mantels in groups of 5 or 6 students, beginning with the layout on a story pole. Each mantel is made up of several parts. One of the most important parts of mantel construction is planning how the parts will go together and how the mantel will attach to the fireplace. No matter how complicated the mantel, the same basic steps are involved from layout through installing the last piece of trim. By the end of the day, you should be ready to take on just about any mantel project.

Day Two- The Secrets of Stair Building

Stair building is an orderly process. The order is the same whether the stairway is straight or curved. Each type of stairway has the same parts. In the morning we will look at the math involved in figuring the rise and run of a stairway and what are the general guidelines to follow. How do you use a story pole to layout a stairway? There will be a short study of the parts that make up a stairway and then the process of installing these parts.

How are hardwood treads installed? Where do the newel posts go and how do you know the proper height? What determines the layout of the balusters and how does the handrail fit together? Before lunch I will cover all these questions in relation to straight stairways.

After lunch it is curved stairways simplified. Layout is critical for building curved stairs. The layout transfers to curved walls which form the stairway. The basics of stair building do not change for a curved stair, but there are some extra steps. How do you make curved stringers to support the stair? What type of form is used to glue-up the curved handrail? What does it take to make pie-shaped treads for a curved stairway? Finally, what does it take to build a floating curved stair? It will be a full afternoon, but curved stairways will not be a mystery anymore.

Day Three-Door Hanging Like a Pro

One of the best ways to judge the skills of a trim carpenter is by looking at a door he has installed and trimmed. This is really true if the door has been in use for a year or so. Does the door meet the door stop evenly from top to bottom? Are the margins between the door even across the top and down the sides of the door? How tight are the miter joints of the casing trim and do the faces line up? Doing an exceptional job of door installation is a great way to build a reputation for quality.

There are two types of pre-hung doors: solid jamb and split jamb. The most important step in installing either one is proper shimming. I will show two methods for installing each type of door. Then we will move on to twin doors and exterior doors and even talk about pocket doors.

Hanging a door involves routing for the hinges, boring the door knob, and installing the door stop and casing trim. Every carpenter should be able to do this. It separates the beginners from the pros. All you really need to have is a router, a drill, and a six-inch wide ripping of $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood.

A few small tricks and techniques make the difference between great mitered joints and average ones. I will share my tricks and then give each student a chance to try them on their own mitered joints.

Another part of trimming a house that is closely related to door hanging is trimming out the windows. This includes making jamb extensions, a sill and an apron. We will finish out the day with each group building a complete window trim unit.

Day Four-Working with Curved Trim

The morning begins with a study of the three types of curved trim and their uses. Following this we will look at the three parts to every curved trim project: creating a curved blank, profiling the blank, and installing the trim. Most of the curved trim found in houses is casing trim around windows and doors but there is also curve baseboard and crown molding. We will spend some time looking at options for dealing with these types of molding also and a trick to make curved casing trim with a table saw.

The first step to installing curved trim is to have an understanding of the layout used to create the blank. The layout determines what type of joint is needed when the curved trim joins a straight piece. I will share a few basic math formulas that are used to layout curved trim. We will finish up our study of curved trim by working in groups to cut and fit joints for each type of curved trim.

Day Five-Mastering Crown Molding and Ceiling Details

I still remember the first time my father asked me to install some crown molding. When he came back, I told him it couldn't be done. He told me you simply have to think upside-down and backwards. It is not quite as hard as it sounds, and there are a few tricks that will help you. There are two ways to cut crown molding. The first is standing up like it will be installed. The second is laying flat with the saw set on a compound angle. I will discuss the pros and cons of each method and demonstrate cutting crown molding each way. Most crown molding patterns can be fit with mitered or coped joints in the inside corners. What are the best reasons to use either method?

Before any crown molding is cut, there is a lot of preparation to be done. Where do you start to install crown molding in a room? What about 45 degree corners and mitered returns? The last big question before lunch; can you run crown molding up the rake of a vaulted ceiling?

The time after lunch will be focused on design. What are the three kinds of ceiling moldings known as crown moldings? Coffered or beamed ceilings are a very popular architectural detail. I will give my guidelines for laying out a ceiling and tips to insure the best results, along with the order to follow in building a coffered ceiling.

Built-up ceiling details have become more popular as ceiling heights have increased. From simply placing a baseboard behind the crown to multiple steps and layers, the possibilities are almost endless. The class will finish up with each student designing their own built-up crown molding and building a display shelf that shows the design.

TOOL LIST:

Each student should bring: a nail apron, trim hammer (16 oz. or less), nail set, tape measure, coping saw, block plane, utility knife, chisel, and tri-square or combination square.

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