

Valley Woodwork

66 Amy Drive

Gap, PA 17527

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Decorative Details with Steve Latta May 18-22, 2020

Dear Decorative Details Attendee,

At the close of the 18th century, inlay, marquetry and ornamental veneer work were the hallmarks of the craftsmen trying to develop a style appropriate for a new nation. The Federal style was bold, bright, and phenomenally precise in its execution and technical demands. Many of the techniques used by these early artisans are just as applicable to contemporary craftsmen. My goal for the week is to provide you with an understanding of these techniques, an appreciation for the designs they reflect, and ways to adapt them to your work, be it reproduction of early masterpieces or more modern efforts.

We are going to look at both rural and urban practices of surface ornamentation. Back then, just as today, country furniture makers traveled to the city and were often inspired by new ideas. Like modern builders visiting the galleries in New York, they went home and tried to repeat what they saw. After all, imitation is one of the greatest forms of flattery.

We'll cover both historic and modern approaches to inlay using traditional and contemporary tooling which allows us to do things never imagined in earlier times. Over the course of the week, we will learn the motifs most associated with traditional work including stringing, bandings, bellflowers, cuffs, pictorial ovals to name but a few. Hopefully, we will build on these foundational elements and come up with some designs of our own.

My hope is that a whole new realm of techniques, with the wide array of possibilities, will find its way into your work. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the email below.

Sincerely,



Stephen P. Latta
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Decorative Details: Class Syllabus

Day 1.

Tooling

We'll review the various tools necessary to doing inlay with traditional tooling and start putting them to use.

Once the tools are working well, we will have a practice session with a variety of inlay exercises.

Day 2.

Continue with exercises. Introduction of more modern designs

Modern Approaches and new tooling. Making a double-string butterfly

Day 3.

Introduction to Traditional Inlay Techniques and Motifs

Cuffs and bandings- making both simple and complex

Bellflowers – single element (South Carolina, New York, New Hampshire)
multi-element – Baltimore, Boston etc.....

Stringing a card table leg – pulling the days information together

Day 4.

Continuing with our leg

Simple Paterae (ovals) making up simple ovals, bordering, and inseting

Day 5.

A demonstration of hammer veneering (hopefully) and wrapping things up

All of this is subject to change depending on the flow of the class and where interests take us.

Tool List For Decorative Details Course – 2020

In addition to a basic set of tools (chisels, block plane, screwdrivers, hammer, dovetail saw, combination square, dead blow mallet, adjustable bevel, etc.)

- X-acto knives with extra blades #11
- A decent compass **and** a set of dividers.
- A circle template.
- Card scraper with a file for sharpening it.
- If necessary, reading glasses or an Opti-Visor
- A slicing gauge. Lie-Nielsen, Lee-Valley and most other companies offer a slicing gauge. We will be using it to slice veneers. A Master Airscrew Balsa stripper is very inexpensive tool that does a nice job when combined with a 1" c-clamp and is a nice place to start. See <http://www.hobbylinc.com/htm/mas/masma4000.htm>. I will be bringing several that we can share so **do not feel the need to purchase one.**
- 12" straightedge. Combination square blades work fine
- Utility knife or veneer saw if you have one. Don't buy one if you don't.
- A roll of clear 2" packing tape
- A tape dispenser of 3/4" Scotch tape – transparent.
- Carving chisels—if you have them—especially gouges. Bring whatever you have and we'll see what we can create. For Baltimore bellflower #5-30mm Swissmade or equivalent. Swissmade #7-18 for multiple operations; #2-10 **or** #3-10 for cleaning corners. The first two gouges are expensive and will be used very little. If you have them, bring them. If not, I will have one to use. If you don't see this as being a major part of your work, save your money and we'll share.
- Palm chisels if you have them. Don't go out and buy them for this workshop.
- If you have a burn-in knife for touching up shellac, please bring it. As a substitute, Jo-Ann Fabrics sell a Clover mini-iron for about \$29. I will be bringing irons that we can share so hold off if you do not have one.

For doing inlay by hand:

- Lie-Nielsen radius inlay cutter. IN-RC and 3" extensions IN-RC-EXT. Purchasing this tool will save a great deal of workshop time. **This tool is required and I suggest you order it well ahead of time. They often run short.**
- Lie-Nielsen Thicknessing Gauge, 1-IN-TG.
- My complete set of inlay tools is available from Lie-Nielsen. Although they would simplify the process for doing inlay by hand, if you are experimenting with inlay, you may want to hold off buying the complete set.

For doing inlay with modern tooling:

- Dremel rotary tool with a router base. Any fixed or variable speed dremel unit that spins at 35,000 rpm should work. Do not get a cordless version. Also, purchase the router base #5260 from www.Stew-mac.com. This is an excellent tool that is very well made. Do not buy the dremel router base. This router/base combination will get a lot of use in class and I consider it essential.
- Two small 1" c-clamps to secure a fence to the router base if you bring one.
- Although it is not necessary, I would recommend purchasing the Deadman Foot Switch # 1301 available at http://www.ptreeusa.com/rtr_power_switches.htm. This is a good switch selling for about half the price I've seen it elsewhere.
- I will provide the endmills for inlay in class and have extras available for sale. Do not buy the bits from Stew-Mac. They are twice my price.

I intend to cover both hand and dremel inlay techniques because experience has shown me that most folks enjoy both methods and their many related applications. Although most of my inlay is done by hand, the dremel and stew-mac router base are used regularly. It is a versatile combination with many applications other than inlay.

If any of the above seem costly and you are not sure if this type of ornamentation will become a regular part of your work, hold off on purchasing and we can share. I have seen too many instances where great amounts of money were spent on tools that were never used.

All of that being said.....

To get the most out of your experience, the following are required:

- Lie-Nielsen radius inlay cutter. IN-RC and 3" extensions IN-RC-EXT.
- Dremel rotary tool with a router base. Any fixed or variable speed dremel unit that spins at 35,000 rpm should work. Do not get a cordless version. Also, purchase the router base #5260 from www.Stew-mac.com. This is an excellent tool that is very well made. Do not buy the dremel router base. This router/base combination will get a lot of use in class and I consider it essential.