

Shavings

By Glen Friesen

Well as the cold weather of winter settles in, I find myself spending lots of time in my shop and starting yet another house renovation. In the house, I still need to finish off the bathroom renovation that I started almost a year ago. All that remains to do is putting the mirror on the bathroom medicine cabinet doors and a small towel cabinet that I need to build. Once I get the bathroom operational, the walls and floor tile, shower door and plumbing, bathroom vanity and plumbed and the bathroom door installed with casing and the ceiling painted, it is comfortable to use so the pressure came off and a couple of finishing aspects remain.

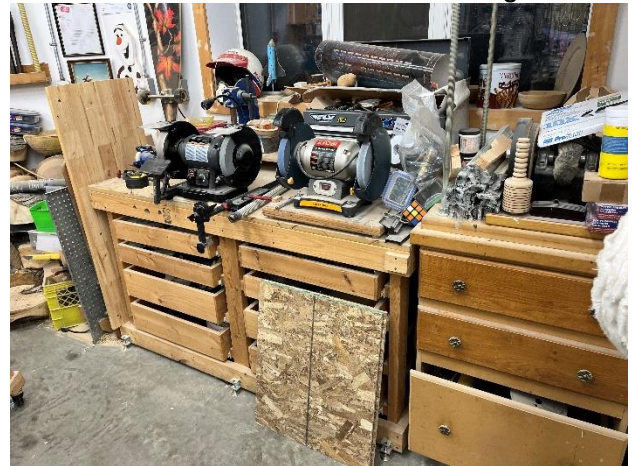


(Drywalling and taping are not my favourite things. Here I am just hamming it up for the camera.)

I have started the next renovation and that is the hallway that connects the bath and bedrooms to the front of the house. This is basically a painting, drywall repair, interior doors and casing type of renovation. If I wasn't doing numerous other things, this would go quickly. Did I mention that I hate painting? The plan is to over the next couple of years, renovate the old part of our house to match the new section.

The Plan:

Anyway, enough of the daily routine around the Friesen place. Another project that I am working on is to make my shop easier to clean up and to work in. I have started on a section of base cabinetry that in the end will be eight feet long, two feet deep and a meter high. The construction consists of 4-24-inch-wide modules that with countertop will be 39.5 inches high. The counter height is a bit higher than normal, but I find the standard 36-inch counter height too low to work comfortably. The extra 3.5 inches makes a huge difference. Since it will be the home of my sharpening station, I like the idea of a bit extra height.



(My new workbench and cabinetry will replace this mess under a large north west facing window in my shop.)

The bench area will have at least 16 drawers. In this space, I intend to store a lot of stuff that is now strewn all over the shop and taking up valuable shop floor space. Initially, I planned to have 4 drawers per section, but when I actually constructed one of the boxes, I realized that I can quite comfortably have 5 drawers per cabinet should I desire it. So, there should be lots of storage space in this unit and it will drastically help the organization in my shop.



(I have lots of stuff that needs a home. This cabinet will take care of most of it.)

My New Shop Cabinet:

Well, the process of trying to organize my shop continues. Yes, my shop is very well equipped. Many of the “small things” that I own are a direct result of my time in the school system where I often took matters into my own hands. When the school budget was not up to my plans, I just purchased these things on my own. So, when I moved out of the school shop a year and a half ago, all that equipment came to my shop. Many of these new additions to my shop require drawer storage.



(If you can name it, I probably have it. Anyone wanting to make some jewellery?)

So, my plan is to build a section of cabinet and as of today it would be, as I have already stated, 8 feet long, 2 feet deep and 39.5 inches tall. I plan to make this cabinet in the modular design. It will consist of 4 – 24-inch-wide modules, each containing probably 5 drawers.

This will provide a lot of storage space for items like my turning accessories, guitar building tools and assorted other small items. To date, I have finished constructing the four modules for the project.



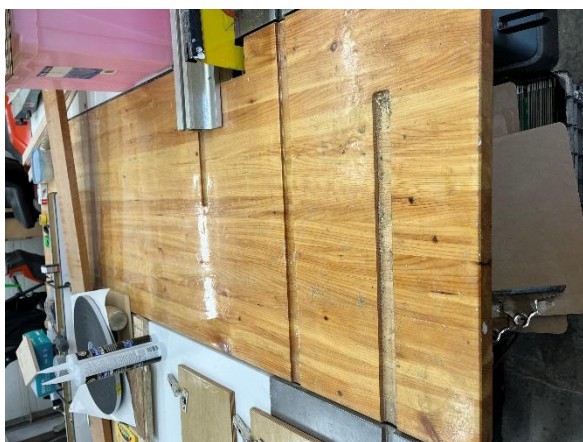
(My almost completed boxes. All that remains to be done on these is the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pine facing. No, this is not scroll saw storage.)

I have also constructed a prototype drawer. The drawer measures 22.5 inches long, by 21.25 inches wide and 5.5 inches deep. I will need to build a set of 5 to make sure that the height is correct. With an exterior drawer height of 5.5 inches, the useable depth is 4.5 inches. Rabbit and dado joinery is used throughout. The drawer face will be constructed of pine. In fact, all the areas of the cabinetry that you see will be covered with pine.



(With $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch sides and a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch bottom, these will be sturdy drawers.)

The countertop is another area where I was looking to keep the economy aspect of this build in check. Since I have an abundance of one inch pine, I am going to plane both sides of the 1-inch pine, joint an edge and then rip the boards into 1.75-inch pieces. I will laminate it all together on edge to make a panel about 10 feet long at the back and 26 inches wide. I expect that it will finish to 1.5 inches thick. I have made a couple of similar countertops in my shop and once they are covered with epoxy, they look nice and are very durable.



(I expect my countertop will look like this. I like the look and it is durable and cheap,)

My Cabinet Construction Material:

Remember, that my budget was the limiting factor in this build, I was looking for a cheap material to build the boxes out of. Typically, I would have used MDF. I would have loved to use cabinet plywood, but in the end, I settled on the cheapest sheet material that I believe that there is: OSB! I have to admit that I stepped out of my comfort zone a bit with this decision. What clinched the choice for me was that fact that OSB is approximately half of the price of MDF and a quarter of the price of birch plywood. If you want to see what this looks like, check out my YouTube channel, RLDR Custom Creations chapters 104, 105 and 106. This explains the build process better than I will do in this article.

I decided to use 5/8 OSB. This is tongue and groove floor sheathing. The tongue and groove uses up about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 48 inches of width. I made the gable ends $23\frac{1}{4}$ wide so I covered

the edges with a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch piece of pine. The whole face of the cabinets will be covered with $\frac{3}{4}$ inch pine. The one end of the cabinet that will be exposed will also be covered with pine. In the end all the OSB will be covered up so as long as it has the structural integrity to hold my tools off of the floor, there is no problem using OSB for shop cabinetry.



(The construction material of choice: OSB!)

Hardware:

I was unsure as to what drawer slides that I was going to use. Initially, I had planned for 16 drawers in total, but making the cabinets with a counter height of 39.5 inches, it seems like there will be room for 5 drawers in each unit, so 20 drawers in total.

As luck would have it, while I was thinking about making this work bench, Princess Auto had a sale on side mount drawer slides. I purchased 16 pairs of 22-inch side mount drawer slides for \$9.95 a pair. This is about half price. These are not the soft close version, but I don't care. They are strong and will support my stuff just fine. Another win.



(Princess Auto to the rescue. Solid drawer slides at a good price.)

As far as handles are concerned, I have not made a decision on this yet. I have a bit of time before I will be at that point, but I will start looking soon. One characteristic that I will be looking for in drawer is that they will not hook on your pants, etc. Oh yes and they will need to be cheap.

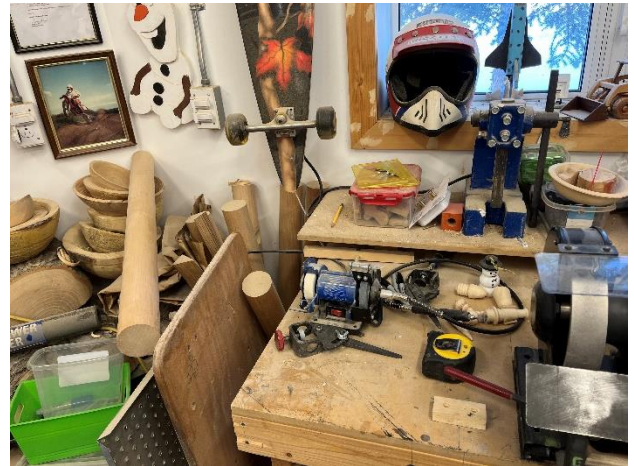


(Pulls like this are definitely NOT going on the new cabinet. These will hook your pockets!)

The Countertop:

As I alluded to earlier, I am making the countertop out of pine. Laminating the pine on edge will make a nice solid top. I am hoping to have a finished thickness of 1.5 inches. At this moment, I am thinking of making the back of the counter 10 feet long and angling it to overlap about 3 inches at the front side of the countertop. This creates approximately a 22.5-

degree angle. This matches the corner of my shop. Remember, my shop is an octagon. For a finish on the countertop, I intend to use epoxy. I covered my main workspace with this several years ago and while it is a bit beat up; I have been very happy with it. I think that the look of it fits in nicely in a wood shop. As of now, this countertop will be the new home to my sharpening grinders.



(The bat blank is approximately marking the end of the countertop. Right now, I plan to make shelves under this part of the countertop. The front of the counter is in alignment with the bat blank.)

Wrapping It Up:

Well, those are my plans and thoughts about making a cost-effective shop workbench. Initially, I was a bit afraid of using OSB as the main construction material, but as I realized that many others on the internet had already done this, I went ahead. In all honesty, seeing others do this eased my mind but I would have done it anyway. I think that since my shop does not generate a lot of income, I need to make improvements as economically as possible. So, if this build interests you, check out RLDR Custom Creations and please subscribe. My goal is to have this finished by the time you come out for my shop visit in May.