Bow Front Table

The bow front table started as an exercise in working with curved doors and drawers. Additionally, the curved surfaces were to be achieved using bricking techniques to help develop an understanding of how this woodworking technique compared to bent laminations and vacuum press techniques.

The design was kept fairly simple to allow the appeal of the piece to be based on the curved features and the olive burl veneer that would be applied to the door and drawers. The visibility of hinges, handles and pulls were to be kept to a minimum as to not interfere with the shapes or the natural beauty of the veneer.

The table can best be described as an occasional table of size and dimension approximately that of an 18th-century sewing table. It features a drawer on top and a cabinet below the drawer. Both these elements have curved surfaces and are veneered with olive burl. The legs are tapered starting below the cabinet case. The sides and back are plywood covered by shop made veneer on both sides. The entire table is made from a single 8/4 board. All of the primary wood for the project, including the veneer for the sides and back, was harvested from a single board. This approach guarantees grain and color compatibility of the finished product.

The edge trimming around the doors and drawers are primarily there to protect the veneer edges. It can be flat trim, cockbead or simply purfling.

The doors and drawer face are made first and should be oversized. The case is then made but not glued up. The top, middle and bottom rails are left square and proud of the curve of the door/drawer until the door and drawer are fitted. After the drawer and door are fitted to the case front, the outside of the door/drawer are traced onto the rails. The rails are then trimmed back to the door/drawer face. The case can now be glued up.

Knife hinges and magnetic spring catches are used to avoid visible hardware.
Project: Bow Front Table  June 2021  Design: Jim Russell  Sheet: 2
Dashed lines show the position of the rails.

Dovetail Housing 1:7 Pitch

Taper starts 3/8" below the bottom rail.
Template Front Bottom Rail Half
Face View
Scale 1:1
Print out two half templates and join in the middle

Template Drawer and Door Half
Top View
Scale 1:1
Print out two half templates and join in the middle

Full Size Templates
Print out two half templates and join in the middle.