

The Making of a Rocker Blotter



1. Here's the end product. A stained and sealed smaller prototype is on the left and a larger production model is on the right -- not yet stained and sealed.



2. I use quality American Red Oak.



3. For the bottoms, 1 x 4's are glued up face to face.



4. The length of the arc will cover a personal check in one motion. This simple jig helps provides a nearly consistent pattern for the next step.



5. Rockers are rough cut on a band saw.



6. There is much work to do in smoothing these out. No two are exactly the same varying much in grain and slightly in size and shape.



7. An oscillating belt sander is used to smooth out the bottoms. This process takes 10 to 15 minutes for each rocker.



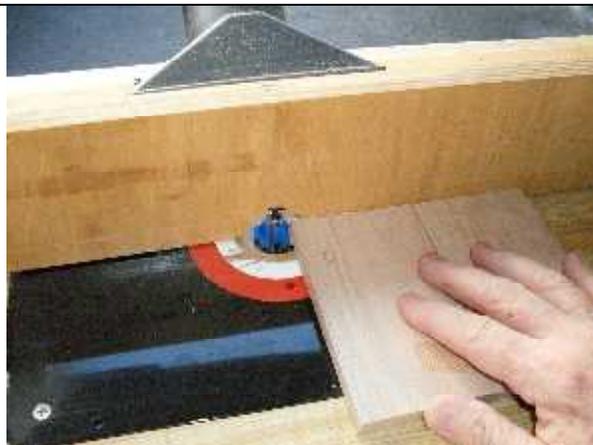
8. Each bottom is checked for squareness to insure a smooth rocker motion.



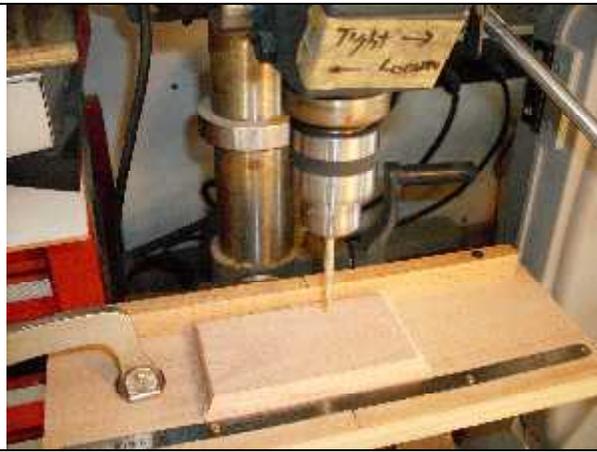
9. Tops are $\frac{1}{2}$ oak stock and cut to width, matching the width of the rockers.



10. Tops are cut to match the length of the rockers. Each set of top and rocker bottom are individually matched.



11. Tops are edge shaped using a table mounted router and Roman ogee bit.



12. Center holes for the handle bolt are drilled.



13. Using the top as a template the hole for the insert nut is marked.



14. Holes for insert nuts are drilled. Scrap cutouts are used to stabilize and center the rocker bottom.



15. The top 1/16th of the hole is widened to counter sink the insert nut.



16. Insert nuts are used to anchor the brass knob post.



17. Insert nuts are screwed into place using an allen wrench.



17b. ...or a drill



18. Paired tops and bottoms are numbered to keep them together through the sanding process.



19. Tops and bottoms are hand sanded at 120 grit, inspected for scratches, then sanded again at 150 grit, and re-inspected for scratches, and given a final sanding at 180 grit.



20. The underside of the tops are brandished with a personal note!



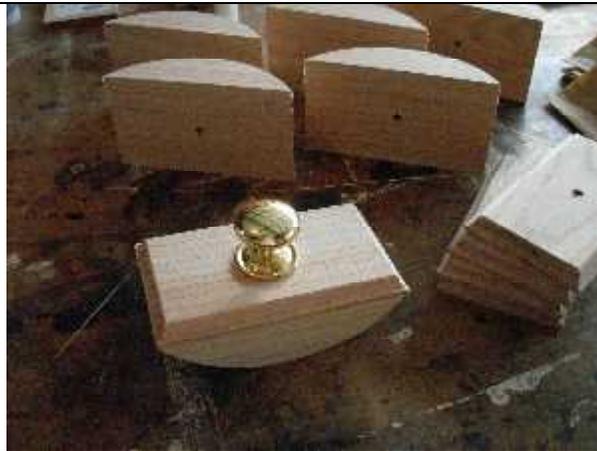
21. Tops and bottoms will be thoroughly cleaned of dust in preparation for staining.



22. Some blotters are stained with a mixture of Minwax Dark Walnut (2716) and Minwax Provincial (211). This combo provides a pigment stain which enhances the grain and a dye stain for surface color. I am also using Minwax Dark Walnut gel stain.



23. I also like to use Wood Kote Jel'd stain, a pigment stain that is very easy to work with; and Minwax Dark Walnut gel stain.



24. Some blotters are left unstained displaying the natural beauty of the red oak.



25. All tops and bottoms, both stained and natural, are brushed with a sealer coat of 50% polyurethane varnish and 50% paint thinner.



26. Drying time is at least 8 hours between sealer coat and each successive top coat. Rocker blotters dry in a dust free tent.



27. After the sealer coat all pieces are lightly sanded with 600 grit paper. Then each top and bottom receives 3 top coats of polyurethane varnish. The thick top coat will protect them from inks and naturally occurring body oils from the hands. They are easily cleaned with a slightly dampened cloth or a liquid polish if you prefer.



28. Each piece is lightly smoothed with 0000 steel wool between coats.



29. Temporary zinc studs are replaced with brass studs and topped off with a Liberty solid brass knob.



30. The brass knob is loosened, blotter paper is fitted and the knob is retightened and you are ready to go.



On average, each rocker blotter takes about 3 hours to complete.



**Your new rocker blotter will
last for many years!**

www.rockerblotters.com

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