

Slanted Brick Pattern Pen Blanks

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This tutorial will explain how to make Slanted Brick Pattern Pen Blanks like these:



1. Choose 4 types of wood that contrast with each other as well as a contrasting veneer. In this tutorial I chose to use: Purpleheart, Birdseye Maple, Bocote, and Fernambuco. The veneer you choose will serve as the “mortar” between the “bricks” (I choose Walnut veneer). Remember throughout this tutorial that alignment is critical.
2. Rip the 4 woods that were chosen into $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 10" strips. Cut 2 strips of veneer approx. $\frac{5}{8}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch in width and 1 strip to approximately $1\frac{1}{4}$ ". Oversizing the veneer will ensure that the veneer will have a good solid edge after glue-up (See Figure 1).



Figure 1

3. Separate your strips into pairs for glue up. In this tutorial I paired the Birdseye Maple with Purpleheart and Fernambuco with Bocote. Glue each pair of strips together with one of the small strips of veneer (See Figure 2). Ensure that strips are aligned for glue-up so minimum material will need to be removed in Step 4.



Figure 2

4. Once the glue is dry, sand laminates to ensure a flat surface for the next glue-up. Try to minimize material removal to keep your strips as thick as you can (See Figure 3).



Figure 3

5. Next, glue the laminated strips together with the wide veneer strip in between just as in Step 3. Make sure you have your color match-ups the way you want them. Once again I chose to keep a light wood next to a dark wood to help in color contrast by gluing the Birdseye Maple to the Bocote and the Purpleheart to the Fernambuco (See Figure 4).



Figure 4

6. Once again, sand your new laminate to remove the glue and excess veneer. When blank is complete it should look like Figure 5.



Figure 5

7. Now it is time to cut the blank into smaller segments. Setup your table saw to make 45° miter cuts as shown in Figure 6.

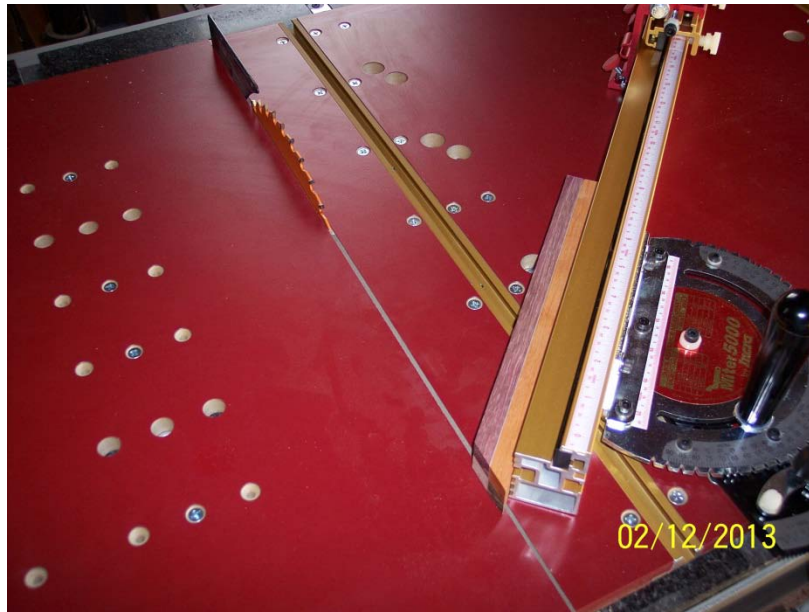


Figure 6

8. Cut the blank into segments of 3/16". To ensure all my segments are the same size I added a stop block that you can see at the bottom of Figure 7. Be very careful. Since you are cutting very small segments the table saw can throw one back at you. I stand to the far right since my segments will be coming off to the left side of the blade. You should end up with about 22 segments.



Figure 7

9. Now cut small squares of veneer to glue in between the individual segments. In this case the veneer squares were approximately $1\frac{5}{16}$ " X $1\frac{5}{16}$ ". Since there are 22 pieces you will need 21 squares of veneer as shown in Figure 8 below.



Figure 8

10. In order to aid keep the veneer and pieces from sliding around during glue-up, glue a piece of veneer to each individual segment. Ensure you have a good flat clamping surface in order to ensure the veneer completely adheres to the segment as in Figure 9 below.



Figure 9

11. I chose to glue a piece of veneer to both sides of half of the pieces. During blank assembly I will place 1 segment without veneer between each double laminated piece. You can see my pile of clamps in Figure 10.



Figure 10

12. Since alignment is so critical in this glue up I have chosen to glue 1 piece without veneer to 1 piece with the veneer attached from the previous glue-up. For this design I have aligned the pieces to where the angle between the 2 pieces make a 90° angle as shown in Figure 11.

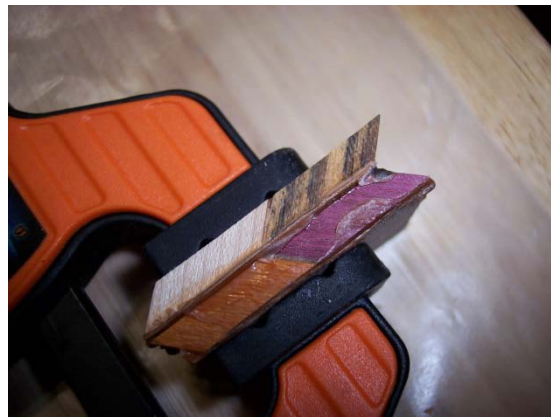
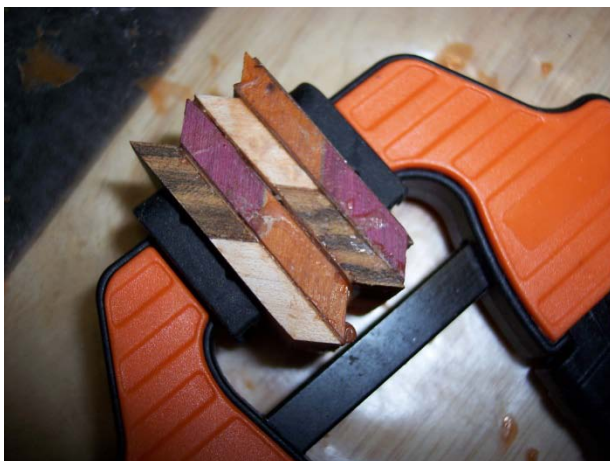


Figure 11

13. Then glue-up continues by gluing up the assemblies until the blank is completed, keeping your design in mind.





14. Here is how the blank turned out when rounded.



15. Another option is to glue separator pieces in the blank as shown below.



Play with varying the alignment of the pieces to make your own unique designs.