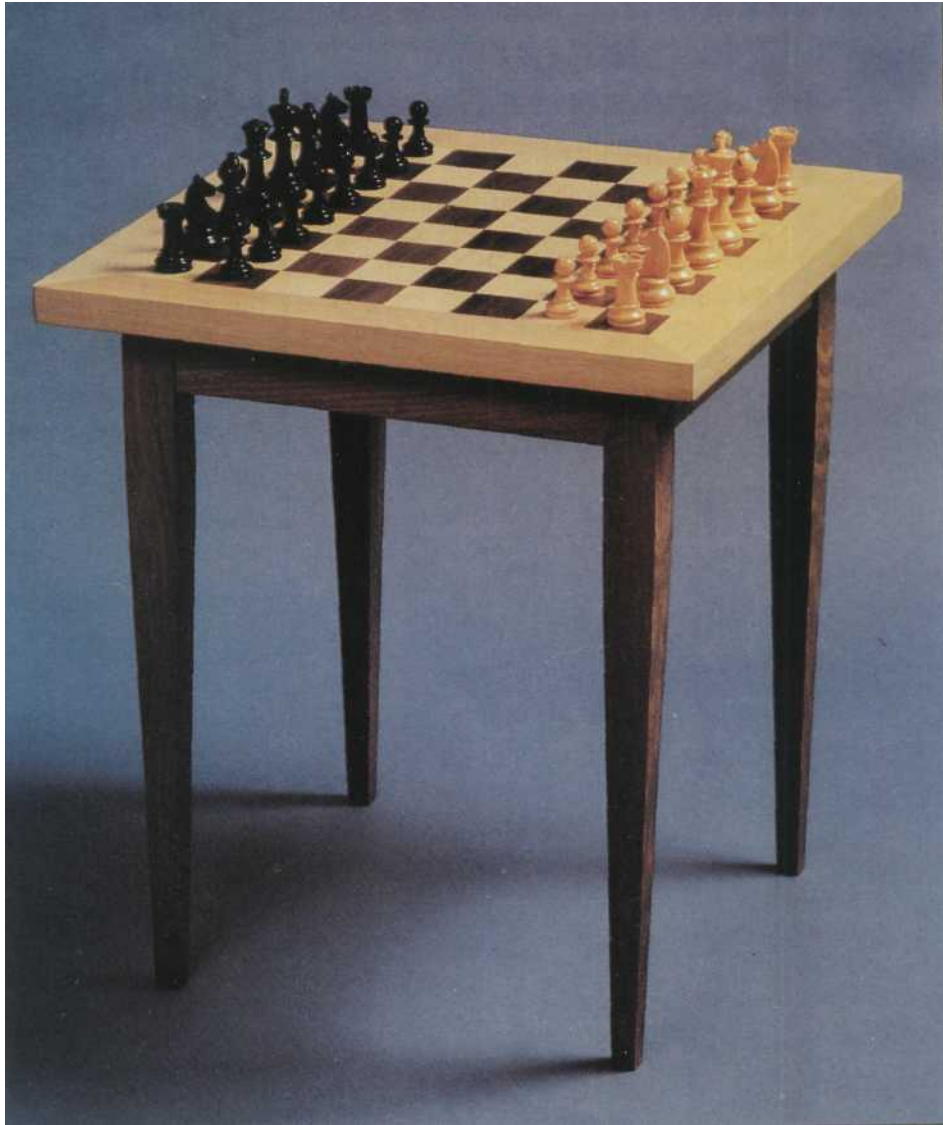


53

TRI-COLOR CHESS TABLE



Have you ever played a serious game of chess while crouching on the floor? You're likely to be racked by lower-back pain. And unless you're a chess fanatic, storing the board out on a surface can take up room needed for other purposes.

This chess table evolved to cure these problems and put the enjoyment back in the game. But even if you don't play, you'll have to admit the top's checked pattern and full four-quarter thickness is an eye-catcher.

This tri-color chess table gets its name from the black walnut, white oak, and blond, fine-textured hardwood, known as *ramin*, it's constructed from. But it doesn't really matter what you make it out of as long as one species color-contrasts from the other (for obvious reasons). Even using just one variety of a light colored, tight-grained softwood and staining the alternate strips of the board could save you the trouble of searching for a darker species. The legs and frame can be matched with the border.

There's no trick to setting up the board other than keeping your cuts square, your blade sharp, and your work on a flat surface. Alternate strips of dark and light wood are glued together, face side down directly on the pipe clamps. It's best to apply the glue sparingly and carefully, so no excess runs from the joints to spoil the final finish. You also should be aware that rust or oil on the clamps can put an indelible stain on the wood, so cover the pipes with kraft paper to prevent disappointment.

Once the parallel strips are cross-cut, they're shifted alter-

Dimensions



Materials List

1	1 × 6 × 5'	ramin
2	1 × 2 × 3'	walnut
1	1 × 3 × 4'	white oak
1	2 × 3 × 40"	white oak

(All measurements are in actual dimension)

Hardware and Materials

4	#6 × 1¾"	cabinet screws
		Yellow carpenter's glue (aliphatic resin)

Tools

Table saw	#6 screw bit
Radial arm saw (optional)	#2 Phillips bit
Taper jig	4 pipe clamps
Combination square	Bar clamp
Framing square	Band clamp
Measuring tape	Palm sander
VSR drill (variable speed reversible)	Belt sander (optional)

Cut List

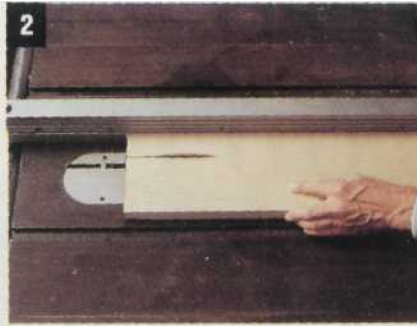
5	1 × 1¾ × 18	ramin strips
4	1 × 1¾ × 18	walnut strips
4	1 × 1¾ × 17½	ramin border
4	1 × 2 × 11½	white oak skirts
4	1½ × 1½ × 19	white oak legs
4	1 × 1¾ × 2½	ramin corner braces

Cutting Assignments

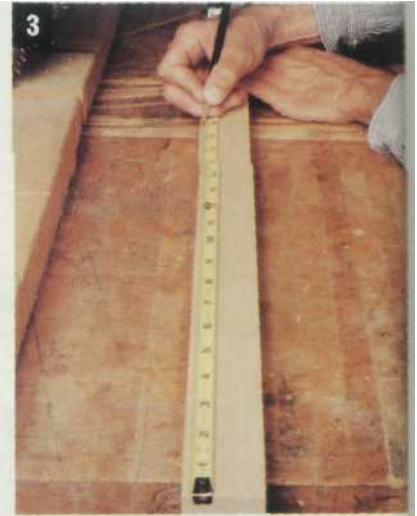
1 × 6 × 5'	ramin strips border corner braces walnut strips
1 × 2 × 3'	skirts
1 × 3 × 4'	legs
2 × 3 × 40"	



1 Set the table saw blade at a 90° angle and measure exactly 1 3/4" from the fence.



2 Rip the ramin into 1 3/4" strips.



3 Cut nine 18" lengths from the 1 3/4" ramin strips and select five.



5 Glue the strips together with an even bead, alternating the four dark and five light species to make a 15 3/4" width. Place the best face down toward the clamps.



6 Use the edge of a framing square to check the plane of this initial glue-up. Any inconsistencies should show on the exposed side, which will be the underside of the table surface. Square one edge as well before tightening the clamps.



7 After 24 hours, once the glue is dry, square up the board against the miter gauge and carefully trim the squared edge.



12 Mark the miter lines on one end of each of the four remaining 1" x 1 3/4" x 18" border strips.



13 Establish the exact length of the first piece against one edge of the board and mark the opposite miter. Set the miter gauge to a 45° angle, and cut the first border piece. Cut the marked ends of the other three pieces.



14 Determine the exact length of each remaining border by measuring against its respective edge before you mark it. The finished lengths should be very close to 17 1/2".



4 Rip the walnut into 1¾" strips and cut them into four 18" lengths.

nately and reglued with the same care to create the checked pattern (step 9). Then the border pieces can be trimmed and fastened. Though you may prefer to rip down the 1¾" border to a less imposing 1" width, I left it full to provide for a place to line up chess pieces taken in play.

This project does not use metal fasteners, except for four screws that hold the corner braces to the legs. All the joints rely on an even application of glue and solid clamping. However, don't make the mistake of overtightening the

pipe clamps, which would force the glue out of the joints and weaken them.

You can finish the table with a brushed-on semi-gloss polyurethane for good abrasion and stain resistance. If durability isn't a major concern, try a wipe-on technique using water-based polyurethane for a thinner coat. Simply slosh the liquid over the surface and remove it immediately with a lint-free rag. It will get into the wood and still leave a somewhat protective film that looks surprisingly like a Danish oil finish.



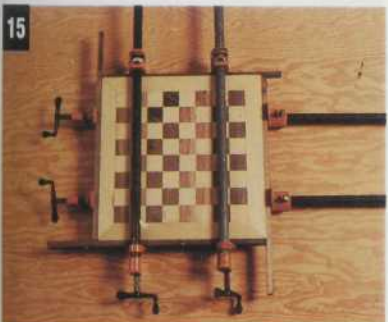
8 Reset the fence for a 1¾" cut and pass the board through the blade until you've got eight dark-and-light strips. Arrange them in the same order they've been cut.



9 Using the same procedure as before, glue the eight strips together, in order, best face down, but shift every other strip by one block width to create the checkered pattern. Line up the cured joints carefully, because you won't get a second chance!



10 Clamp the board and allow the glue joints to cure for another 24 hours. Note the protective stickers at the clamps' heads and tails.



15 Glue and clamp the finished border pieces to the board. The border and board should be on an even plane against the pipe clamps.



11 Use the saw's miter gauge to carefully trim the board to a 14" square.



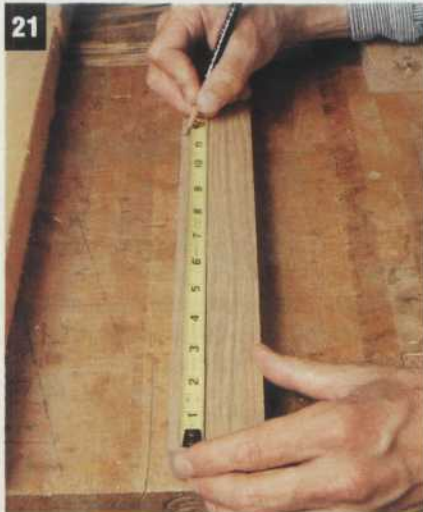
16 Rip the 2" x 3" x 40" leg billet in half to make two 1½" x 2" x 40" pieces.



17 Lay the pieces side by side, align the ends flush, and mark at 19".



18 Use a square to carry the mark to the adjacent piece, then cut both. Repeat the procedure on the remaining pieces to make four 19" leg blanks.



21



22

22 Measure an 11½" length on the 1" x 2" x 48" skirt piece. Square the mark and cut. Repeat for the remaining three skirt pieces. Now's the time to check the skirts and legs for blade burn, and sand the faces if needed.



23



24

24 Tilt the table saw blade to a 45° angle and cut the four 1" x 1¾" x 2½" corner braces. Because the work is so close to the blade, clamp each brace to a scrap of 1 x 2 and make the cuts that way. Be sure the clamp clears the blade before starting the saw.



25

25 Set up the table frame on a flat work surface with a band clamp placed snugly around the frame's circumference. Use a #6 screw bit with the stop collar set at 1¾" to pre-drill a hole through each brace and then into the leg behind it. Center the hole ¾" from the exposed edge, and set the braces flush against the work table.



26

26 Glue the skirts to the legs, and the braces to the skirts. If the corner braces don't set squarely against the skirts, place and draw up the cable screws lightly to hold the braces in place. Tighten the band clamp.