

A Simple, Small, non-Gigantic Entry Sideboard

I've made all of three pieces of furniture in my adult life.

My first project, a workbench, lasted almost four years before disassembly and reuse as scrap. My second project, a small, two-shelf bookcase based on a Kreg design remains in the corner of my son's bedroom – still quite stout, functional, and dutifully holding two shelves of books.

Most of my time doing projects has been spent on remodeling projects focused on finding storage in a tiny townhouse in the DC suburbs. In light of the challenge of storage, and a home with a small footprint, it may seem ironic that I was inspired by anything with "Gigantic" in its title. Yet, browsing for design inspiration for an **entry sideboard**, I came across Hillary's The Friendly Home and Gigantic Rustic Sideboard design. It meshed with the desired, Pottery Barn-ish, design aesthetic and my modest woodworking skills.



Finished entry sideboard.
Approximately

38x40x26".

An hour or so with pencil and paper, and I downsized the design and came up with a design and cut list that reflected the finished proportions. All lumber, including sheet goods, came straight from Home Depot. Hardware, on the other hand, required a trip to my local Woodcraft as did the wax for the finish, which was a 50/50 mix of clear bowling wax and Tudor Brown Briwax. As most of my 'woodworking' has been outdoor-oriented carpentry projects such as fences and decks, and I didn't own a chop saw or radial arm saw, I relied on my sidewinder fitted with a finish blade, a steady hand (assisted by clamps), and methodical approach to cutting to include taking the time to 'gang cut' 'matched' parts of the frame. I worked in the elements (this was late summer 2014).



Finished entry sideboard.

If you have access to a chop saw or radial arm saw, so much the better – I recommend using one and setting up a stop in order to get good, uniform cuts. Otherwise, primary tools included a Kreg jig, a standard assortment of framing and carpenter squares, Titebond, and a Bosch Colt handheld router (although designed more as a laminate trimmer, this router – equipped with a new Bosch bit – was more than powerful enough to cut and route smoothly in the the whitewood that forms the frame and stiles of the door and back). I'm a huge fan of a

Dewalt variable speed R/O sander that I purchased for this project – and the sideboard received a standard progression of sanding from 80 grit up to 220 grit (3-4 complete sandings). I relied heavily as well on my Makita impact driver and Makita 14.4V drill. Clamps – Bessey H-clamps, Kreg clamps, and an assortment of other clamps also made possible the assembly of the case and other components.

Framing & Case Assembly. I basically followed instructions for the sideboard's 'gigantic' cousin except for inseting the doors and the back with $\frac{1}{4}$ " baltic birch plywood (Hillary discussed this in her article). I opted to inset the back



simply because it looks better and our sideboard would be positioned near the front entrance of the house. The side assemblies are straightforward – joined with pocket holes with the assistance of the Kreg jig. I assembled the interior divider separately. The proportions of the interior divider were key to the overall design: the interior divider comprises six compartments. Three small compartments for shoes (7.5" high) and 28" upper

compartment to accommodate backpacks and large purses. Unlike many projects with face frame assemblies, the face frame and the back – which again was inset – were the last components assembled. The H-clamps (Bessey pipe clamps) should receive an honorable mention. Although I had the actual clamps for a few years before this project, it was their first use in accordance with the design. The H design allows for the clamps to "stand" on their own feet, as seen in a few photos, easing the process of alignment and clamping.

Top Assembly. The top is the easiest part – but I would recommend leaving assembly of the top for the next step

after the case (or even the last step).

The sideboard's top is simply comprised of 2X6"s and 2X4". I only left a 3/4" overhang all the way around my sideboard.

Although a modest amount of contortionist endeavor will be required, the top should be attached to the case only after drawers are installed.

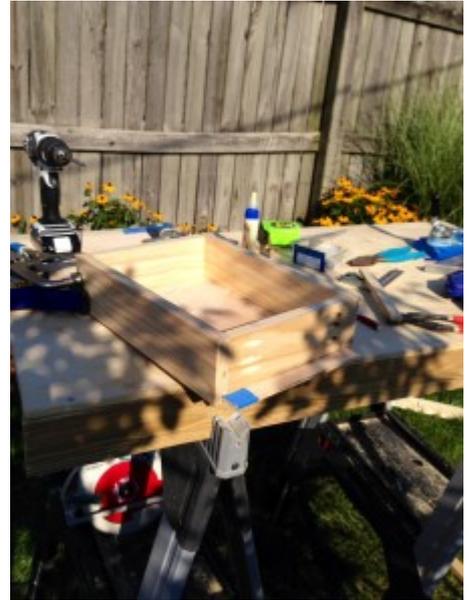
Drawer Assembly. Another moment of honesty: this was my first time building drawers. I kept them simple, and relatively strong, albeit not highly attractive. I knew that it was important to know the dimension and method of operation of the sliders before designing the drawer. I opted for ball bearing slides that would more than accommodate the likely weight of any items (my backup plan for the project was to use it as a replacement for the aforementioned dismantled workbench – so heavy duty slides made sense). My slides were pretty rudimentary – Richileu 18" sliders from Lowes.

The front and sides of the drawers are whitewood. To assemble the side, I routed grooves to accept the bottom panel of the drawer (I ran the groove using a 1/4" up-cut router bit and edge guide. I ran the groove, full length, in the 1X4" before



Visible inset and overhang.

cutting the sides to length, ensuring that the groove would be uniform for each drawer). The back of the drawer actually rests on the bottom – and the bottom slides into the assembled drawer. Pocket hole joinery came into play, yet again, as the sides were screwed and glued to the front and back. The actual front of the drawers is a false front, sized and screwed to the actual drawer box close to the final steps of assembly.



Door Assembly. The doors on the sideboard are relatively tiny compared to the design, and insetting the panel within the door seemed like a prudent approach to ensure a stable, basic, attractive door. This time, however, the challenge was that I was working with $\frac{1}{2}$ " whitewood – not a particularly forgiving dimension with the Kreg setup. Pocket holes also would've likely made the inset unnecessarily complicated. After some experimentation, and some delicate clamping and drilling, the frames ended up being butt-joined and received a $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " shoulder to accommodate the inset. I opted for hinges that didn't require mortising.

Finish. I sanded – progressing with from 80 grit to at least two final passes with 220 grit sandpaper. As mentioned, the finish is an approximate 50/50 mix of clear bowling wax and Tudor Brown Briwax. The clear wax lightens the brown in the Briwax and makes for a harder, more enduring finish than Briwax alone. The combination also yields a smooth, almost caress-able finish, as it fills the voids and pockets in the surface of the wood. I experimented with the specific ratio on pieces of scrap. Enough elbow grease and its also quite possible to lighten and even out the coloration across the piece.

Thoughts? AA.

