

SHOP NOTEBOOK

Shallow Mortise Jig

One of my favorite features on the tool cabinet are the false tenons that accent the sides (right photo). They really draw your attention and give the cabinet a “hand-crafted” look.

But I didn’t want to knock myself out cutting all these mortises by hand. Routing them seemed like the best way to go. And for this job, I built the simple mortise jig that you see in the drawing below.

The jig is designed to be used with the dado cleanout bit shown on the left. Since this bit will cut flush to the template, the guide opening is sized to the mortise.

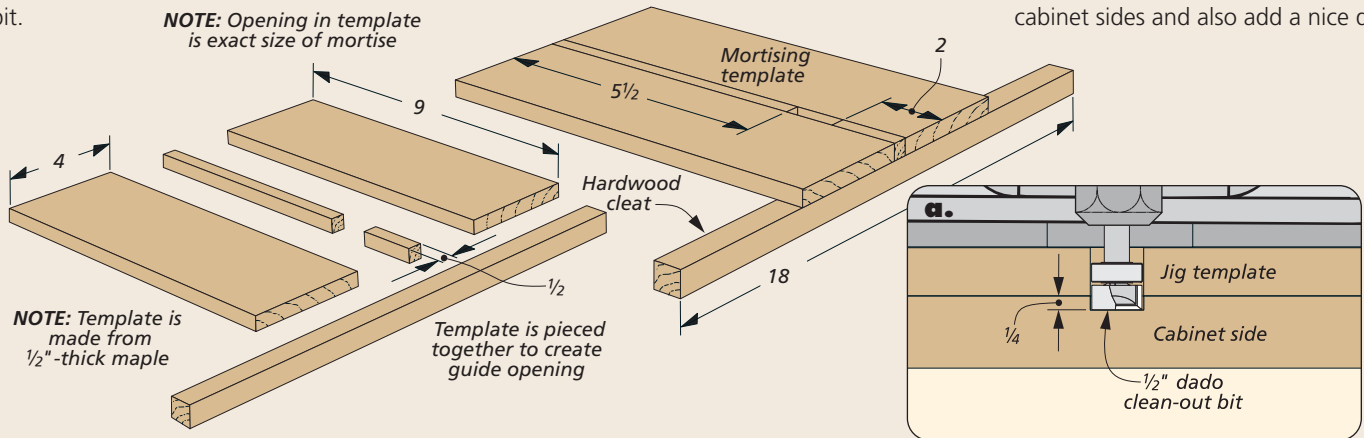
The easiest way to create an accurate opening is to piece the template together, as shown in the drawing below. When you glue the pieces together, you can leave an opening the exact length and width of the mortises. A cleat fastened to the template spaces the mortise at the correct distance from the edge of the cabinet sides.

To use the jig, just clamp it in place with the opening over the position of the mortise (detail ‘a’). After routing the mortises, I left the jig in place while I used a sharp chisel to square the corners. **W**



▲ The dado bit is guided by a top-mounted bearing and has a longer cutting length than the clean-out bit.

▲ The false tenons hide the screws in the cabinet sides and also add a nice detail.



How-To: Make Chamfered False Tenons

The challenge to making the chamfered false tenons for the tool cabinet lies in their small size. Once they’re cut to their final $\frac{3}{8}$ " length, there’s just not much to hold on to when trying to chamfer the ends. The solution is to chamfer first, then cut them to length.

I started with a blank of wood sized to fit the mortises and long enough to make all 16 tenons. At the router table, I chamfered all four edges of both ends (Fig. 1). Then I took the blank to the table saw. Here I set up the fence with a stop block in front of the blade (Fig. 2) to gauge the length and cut each end off of the blank. Now repeat the process until all 16 tenons are completed.

