



In the Workshop with Charles Neil

Monthly Newsletter

No. 19

January 2009

Welcome to all New Subscribers!
...and welcome to a new Video Sponsor.

I'm pleased to announce the addition of a new sponsor for 2009. Join me in welcoming [Horton Brasses, Inc](#) to our woodworking family.



Our history with Horton goes back 14 or 15 years. The quality of their product is excellent and their Customer Service is outstanding.

Orion Henderson heads up the company, taking over from his mother Barb. Barb and Orion stopped by my shop a few years ago while traveling from Connecticut to Williamsburg, VA (the long way) and I had the pleasure of meeting both of them. Horton has been a family owned and operated business for umpteen years and with Orion's newest family member born last year, I'm sure will continue for many more.

Last year, Orion worked with us in setting up hardware packs that we use in our project videos. For instance, the Sugar Chest, you can pick up the phone and just ask for the Charles Neil Sugar Chest Hardware, and their great Customer Service Reps will know what you want!

If you aren't already on their mailing list, go on-line or call them and get a catalog. Call them toll free at 800-754-9127.

My World

Well, I've been doing what I do....working wood and I'm glad to say, still have work to do. I've definitely seen a slow down, but we're still hanging in there and will continue.

I haven't done a lot of filming as I have been cleaning up projects I have had on the back burner and I'm glad to get them done.

Now that we are making progress with the new web site and video players, we have a lot of stuff I want to do. We're getting geared up for that, sort of in a transition, if you will.

Last month we told you about doing some articles and projects for the magazines and that is under way and of course, we did get "The Magic of Routers" DVD set completed and shipped, more on that later. Thanks to all of those who were so patient.

What's the next video? I'm going to re-make the Table Saw DVD. With all of the new video and sound we can improve and expand it. We are also going to re-make the Fundamentals and expand it as well. When we release the re-makes, those of you who have purchased the original version, just contact us and we'll send you the new disc for the cost of shipping.

Another goal of ours, in 2009, is to offer a "Beginning Woodworker" DVD series. Something for folks just starting out and for young people. I want a good, sound foundation for them to build on.

The DVD and Video thing has really gotten popular and we want ours to be as good as we can get them. I also want to be able to lower the prices. I think we can, better put, we're trying to find ways to do this.



That's about it from my world, working hard and brainstorming, The first I'm used to, the other gives me a headache.

In My Opinion....

You Can't Have Too Many TOOLS!

I was looking for a sander, an air powered random orbital and couldn't find it. I've got more than one so I got another one, but the one I really liked was the one I couldn't find.

I sat down to ponder where that little guy might be and the next thing I knew, I heard this voice say, "You've got too many tools! What does one person need with all of these tools? You need to get rid of some of them!"

I turned around and nope, Sherri was nowhere in sight. It was that little voice in my head! Well, to say the least I got mad at myself for even thinking such a thing and I wheeled around and there was my sander sitting, you know, right where I left it and always the last place you look!

Then there are those times when you order a router bit, second day air 'cause you need it but after it's shipped and before it arrives you discover you already had it. Return the new one, no way, gonna need it sooner or later and be sure you don't tell anyone about it.

The more I sat and thought about getting rid of some of my tools, the madder I got and so right now, I'm not speaking to myself.

I've got drill bits that are broke and I've had them for years and every time I grab it I swear and say I'm gonna throw it away, but I never do, because one day I'm gonna get the Drill Doctor out and sharpen all of them.

I've got a lunch box planer, motor burned up, belt gone, blades are rusted in. Three cordless drills burned up, batteries missing, but I got 'em. So hope this explains how I arrived at my opinion.

Now that I think about it, the same applies to how much wood one may have on hand. There should be a law against uttering the question, "What ya gonna do with that?" because most of the time, we don't have a clue.

I go to a saw mill and I drag stuff back to my shop that I haven't a clue what I'm gonna do with it, but it surely is pretty. The whole drive back to the workshop I'm trying to come up with an answer to that inevitable question.

Here's a tip. Have the mill give you a receipt but not itemized; stack the treasures on the bottom of the pile, maybe no one will notice.

The Finish Line

WoodRiver HVLP Spray Guns



[Woodcraft](#) has finally gotten the **Gravity Feed HVLP** guns in. A lot of you have asked about the. I wrote a little about them in my blog a few days back. I have tested them and can say that they performed as well

as any gun I have used so don't let the price scare you. The larger gun comes with a 1.4

needle/nozzle which will work for both solvent and water base finishes. A 2.0 is available for heavier fluids like paint but expect to thin the paint a little, 5% to 10%.

The small gun is a sweetheart for close-in, small projects, dyes and stains. It has a .8 needle/nozzle which is quite small. Nice for thin dyes and light touch-up. For water base and heavier stains I suggest the 1.5 accessory needle/nozzle

Gravity fed HVLP guns like the ones [Woodcraft](#) has are one of the oldest and most trusted HVLP designs and have proven themselves time and time again. Now, you will need an air compressor to use these guns.

A Bit about Air Compressors

You want one that has about 4 to 5 cfm at 90 psi. If you want to run an air sander you will need about 13 to 15 cfm at 90 psi. An average HVLP gun uses about 45 psi at the compressor; 10-20 psi at the gun.

The issue is rarely pressure, even very small compressors will pump the pressure. It's the volume, or better put, how long it will sustain the needed pressure. Be sure to check the cfm needed for any air tool and insure your compressor will handle it. Just a note....the typical "nail gun" compressors (Pancakes) are too small and do not have the volume (tank size) to sustain a spray gun very long.

A 2 HP, 20 gallon compressor will do okay for a spray gun but will not handle the air sanders. For the sanders, the smallest you want to go with is a 5 HP, 80 gallon.

Belt drives are better and last longer than direct drives, cast iron pumps are better than aluminum.....and.....BIGGER is better when it comes to compressors. They don't run constantly and have time to cool down under

hard use. In my shop, I have a 7.5 HP, 80 gallon upright with a cast iron pump. It is about 12 years old and has powered my entire shop, even when we had three people sanding.

The Weather Report

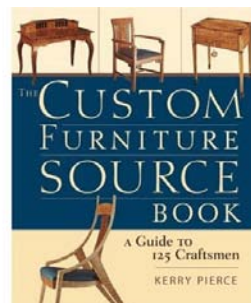
Between cool and cold here. We have had a very mild winter thus far but a lot of you guys have been getting slammed with cold and snow. We haven't seen any snow yet but winter surely isn't over. It's January and there isn't much nice you can say about it because next is February....not a fan of it either! In March at least you can look forward to April! January and February are kind of like two full months of "Mondays."

What if Your Water Base Finish Freezes?

It usually will not affect it. It's kind of like milk freezing, it can separate some, but a good stir and it is fine. Always do a small test panel. As long as it lays down and dries, it will be fine and there will not be adverse reaction later on.

Storing: Do NOT store them in a freeze...thaw ..freeze...thaw environment. They won't take that but if they accidentally freeze during shipping or something like that, they should do fine...Again, test an area, if you are going to have a problem, it will show up immediately.

Photographing Furniture



A few years back, Charles' furniture was included in a book published by *Taunton Press*. The book authored by Kerry Pierce and titled *The Custom Furniture Sourcebook: A Guide to 125 Craftsmen* made it necessary for us to have

some professional photography done of the pieces that were to be included in the book.

We were fortunate enough to have a client who was a professional photographer and was honored to do the photos. [Bernie Boston](#), a renowned newspaper photographer shared a few tips with me and I thought I'd pass them on to you.

#1 - Lighting is everything. Be sure the piece is well lit and that the details are visible. Don't have the light shine on the piece, it may cause a glare or create unnecessary shadows. Light the area and natural light is always best.

#2 - Details are everything....pay attention to them.

#3 - Make sure the furniture is clean, not only dust free but remove fingerprints and smudges as well....the camera will pick them up.

#4 - Always photograph furniture at an angle, never straight on. The photo is two dimensional and you want to be able to show the third dimension and texture.

#5 - Keep the background simple and avoid distractions such as other furnishings and general background color.

Hope these tips help you when you photograph your next piece.

The Tool Crib

This month I want to tell you about some more bargains on tools waiting on you to act.

You guys know I like routers, but ya got to have those bits! and one of the leaders in router bits is [Eagle America](#) and they have recently merged with [Price Cutter](#). The

difference between the two brands is explained [here](#), on Eagle America's web site.

I have used both of these brands and can attest to the superb quality and they are one of the dominant brands of bits in my router bit tool box.

When Eagle and Pricecutter merged on January 1st, one of the things they have been able to do is allow you to shop out of just one catalog and be able to choose from over 2,000 router bits. You can choose from the American Made Eagle Brand or a lower priced import, Pricecutter brand all on the same page.

Many Eagle brand bits were used in the making of the router dvd set as they are a staple in my workshop and they continue to sponsor our on-line videos in 2009.

[Click Here](#) to go to their website and get on their mailing list, just click on the "Free Catalog" button in the right column.

Now one of the things I really like about the Eagle/PriceCutter bits is that besides the quality, the selection, and they have so many specialty bits that no body else has. The other thing I really like is that they have full size profiles of their bits in the catalog. A really big help.

GREAT STARTER SET from PriceCutter



Here's a special deal for January from Eagle/PriceCutter. To introduce you to the PriceCutter brand, you can **SAVE \$100** on General Purpose Router Bit set, regularly \$199.99, this month for only \$99.99. Available in 1/4" or 1/2" shank. [Click Here](#) to check out this bargain.

Combination Square

Here's a special on an item from [Woodcraft](#) that no shop should be without, talk about handy, if you don't have one, this is an excellent buy on a [Combination Square](#). Regularly \$24.99 but through the end of January, only \$14.99.



From Our Forum

Our forum is really growing and we welcome everyone to be a part.



Many of you have followed "The Adventures of Ace Hole In One" as he made a Keeping Chest of pine. Looks fantastic. Now, he's got all of his

questions answered and moving forward to one made of Tiger Maple. If you aren't one who has followed this adventure, check. [Click Here to go directly to the Forum Topic.](#)

Sherri's Update

Website

Hooray! The new web site (splash page) has gone live and we have our "Video of the Day" player working. Still working on the internal pages, but their gonna be a breeze now.

We cannot thank "Kweinert" enough for doing this, it will only get better. You wouldn't believe the ideas we have for making this site more informative and interactive.

Ken sent us a discreet email offering his services when we announced the loss of

Brightcove as a video player. Lo' and Behold, it has evolved into a whole new web site with a new URL as well. The new URL is:

<http://www.charlesneilwoodworking.com>

Our old site will evolve back to our Handcrafted



Furniture but for now, remains both.

Full Length Project DVDs

What's with the Hancock Shaker Clock project? Ready to go, waiting on the video players on the new site to be ready. We expect this to be up by the end of the month and we'll broadcast as soon as we can at that time.

After we get the clock up, we will be moving right along with the next two projects Charles has chosen.

A Classic Queen Anne Lowboy



and a reproduction of Thomas Jefferson's Lap Top Writing Desk (the photo is of the original)



Neither of these projects are difficult and we are going to go slow and easy, no fancy tools, just good ol' simple woodworking. I hope that many of you will give them a try.

Just like Ace did with his keeping chest, you can make your Low Boy with some box store pine and a couple of 2 x 4's glued up to make the legs. Some nice finishing steps and you will have a nice piece without a lot of cost.

Hang in there with us, we're rockin' on and gettin' with it now.

Classes

We have worked out the schedule for 2009 and ask that anyone interested in attending these classes please call or email for more information. They will be filled on a first come basis.

Here is the schedule for 2009:

General Woodworking Class: this class will be determined by the students. In other words, those who are interested and sign up will determine what topics that are covered

Dates: 5/11/09 through 5/15/09 and 5/18/09 through 5/22/09

Beginning Woodworking: this class is for BEGINNERS.

Dates: 5/4/09 through 5/8/09

Finishing A to Z: this class is intense.

Dates: 9/15/09 through 9/19/09

My Daily Blog

For the last month it has kind of been a hit or miss for the most part. Had so much stuff going on, but we are getting back in the groove. We just completed the Highboy and carved the rosettes. Did a little video on it and now I'm getting ready to start a set of kitchen cabinets (painted) and a cherry slant front desk. We will be blogging our hearts out and there will be lots of photos. I think you will enjoy following along. Most of all, I hope you find something new or inspires you....or both. [Click Here to Check Out the Blog.](#)

DVD Special before Release

The Magic of Routers DVD Set

I wish I could post the reviews we have gotten on "The Magic of Routers" DVD set but there just isn't room. Sherri will try to get them up on the web page in due time. I hope that those of you who already own this set will take time to comment on them on our forum. That way folks get an idea of what is in them.

I told Sherri that we should rename it "Routers A to Z" but she said that would be a lot of work for her. Anyway, I have had a ton of folks tell me that the BONUS disc on carving the pie crust table is worth the cost alone.

We have had so many new subscribers, that one last time before we release this set to the retailers, we are going to offer it at a reduced price. It is already in our DVD store for the

regular retail price of \$79.95. For our subscribers, we have set up a special shopping cart that will allow you to purchase this DVD set as well as another new release I'm going to tell you about in just a moment at special prices.

Re-Sawing

We are now releasing a DVD on Re-sawing. This single title has approximately 42 minutes on re-sawing and a bonus of Charles' visit to Good Hope Hardwoods. The later video is on our player as well as youtube, this version is in high quality and full length. The DVD retails on our web site for \$24.95.

By following the link below to our special shopping cart, you may purchase one or both titles at the special price through Sunday, January 18th.

The Magic of Routers set at \$59.95
Re-Sawing at \$14.95

[CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE
SPECIAL!](#)

WOODWORKING 101: Sharpening a Scraper

that among all the economic mess and issues we face you would take the time and extend the effort to drop a donation by the animal shelter. I fully realize that there are a lot of needy folk, but our furry and feathered friends seem to be last on the list and they need our help as well. We can ask for help, they can't. This is an issue near and dear to my heart. Please help.



PS. Buy something you normally wouldn't, WE ARE the ECONOMY! Buying products stimulates it, think on it!

We found a passion for woodworking a very long time ago and now have pointed that passion toward woodworking education based on our experience. We try to simplify woodworking so that even the novice may enjoy the hobby and be proud of their achievement and accomplishments in woodworking.

As we have grown over the past 18 months, there have been so many people, like you, and companies that have supported our endeavor and continue to do so. I have never wavered from giving you the truth about everything I do and will continue to do so. When a product or company is written about in my articles, it is because I have a loyalty to a good product or business, but...it is not a loyalty that is paid for, so please, never be confused on that.

Catch ya next month!