



Paper templates laid out on the walnut board

*Insight*



The bandsawn legs were left to settle after cutting



Hand woodworking

Both halving joints were cut by hand



The legs were set up on the rod board and the joints marked out

# Making a console table

Student **Adam Burtenshaw** wends his serpentine way through a console table project

The process of designing and making a bespoke piece of furniture takes a series of ever demanding steps. The entire process begins with a design brief or an initial concept sketch.

Adam Burtenshaw, one of my nine-month professional course students, is now well on the way with his current project, a console table. The drawings are done, the construction decisions have been worked out and the timber has been selected and paid for.

## Console shape

Adam is making a console table in walnut with a pair of cross frames in serpentine-shaped legs. Getting the four legs cut from one board is preferred to keep the colour consistent throughout the structure, so a large board of 50mm walnut was selected, about 250mm wide, which needed to be sap-free for the legs. An MDF template was produced by hand, taken from a full size drawing and then replicated onto four pieces of

large paper to form layout templates to be placed on the board. We carefully worked around the knots and natural defects within the board and all pieces were laid out to produce the grain direction running along the length of the leg for strength.

The legs were then bandsawn before being left to settle. Following this they were planed and thickened, and profiled on the spindle moulder with a spiral block to reduce breakout while working both with, and against the grain. Once the profiling of the four legs was complete, they were cramped together and the ends planed in by hand to the same length and angle, to match the full-size MDF template.

One of the trickiest jobs was marking out the cross-housing joint as the legs form their crossover; this was done on the MDF rod again, but set up with tulipwood blocks, temporarily fixed with double-sided tape to hold the legs in position.

One leg was held flat on the board,

while its mate was sat straddling it, again sitting between tulipwood location blocks and supported on the offcuts of the legs to hold it level.

The profile of the curved leg was scribed onto its partner before they were swapped and the process repeated on the other leg. With a good tenon saw and a sharp chisel the halving joint was formed on both pairs of frames – the initial sketch then came to life! ■

## Peter Sefton

Peter Sefton is a well-known furniture maker who runs courses in fine woodworking, teaching and mentoring students at the Peter Sefton Furniture School. He also owns Wood Workers Workshop and is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers.  
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