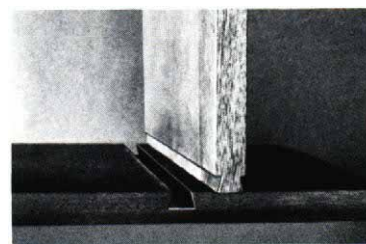


Tapered Sliding Dovetails

Router jig and masking-tape shim make for easy fit

by Brian Donnelly



For carcass construction the sliding dovetail is a strong, attractive joint. With a router it is also easily made. Its problem, especially in wide boards of dense hardwoods, is that it tends to bind when being slid home. The solution is to taper one side (usually the bottom) of both the male and female sections so the joint is loose until the final inch or so, when firm hand pressure completes the job. To taper a sliding dovetail I use a router table, first with a straight bit to

make a slotted plywood jig used in cutting the female section, then with a dovetail bit to cut the male section. Both the slot in the plywood jig (and thus the female section it produces) and the male section are given the same taper on one side by way of a masking-tape shim. My method is adaptable for any size work or joint. The bits, bushing and shim specified below yield a joint in $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. stock that tapers from $\frac{1}{16}$ in. to $\frac{3}{8}$ in. over 12 in. Here's how I do it:

