

Easy Blanket Design Segment



This is just an easy variation on the southwest blanket design made popular by Ray Allen and Malcolm Tibbetts-two of the masters. This is just a quick way to get a cool design with minimum skills (just right for me). This method also allows for adjusting the length of the segment for your particular feature ring size.

I start out this project like many others-laminating a few boards together. I like to use three complimentary woods-one will be the background, and two for the design. I always throw in a few veneers for details as well. For this design I've chosen Curly Maple for the background (hard to beat), bloodwood and walnut for the design, with maple and black dyed veneers.

This is just one way to accomplish this design. I'm sure there are better ways, but this is how I did it today and it works ok. Some steps you will surely alter for your own style and that's great and will probably turn out even better than mine.

Here are my strips of wood laid out ready to be glued. I always try to laminate way more than I think I'll need, because I always need more than I think. I've been around myself long enough to know how I am, and it has served me very well.



Below you can see my clamping jig and the boards being glued. I use an applicator roller bottle for an even coat of Titebond Original glue.

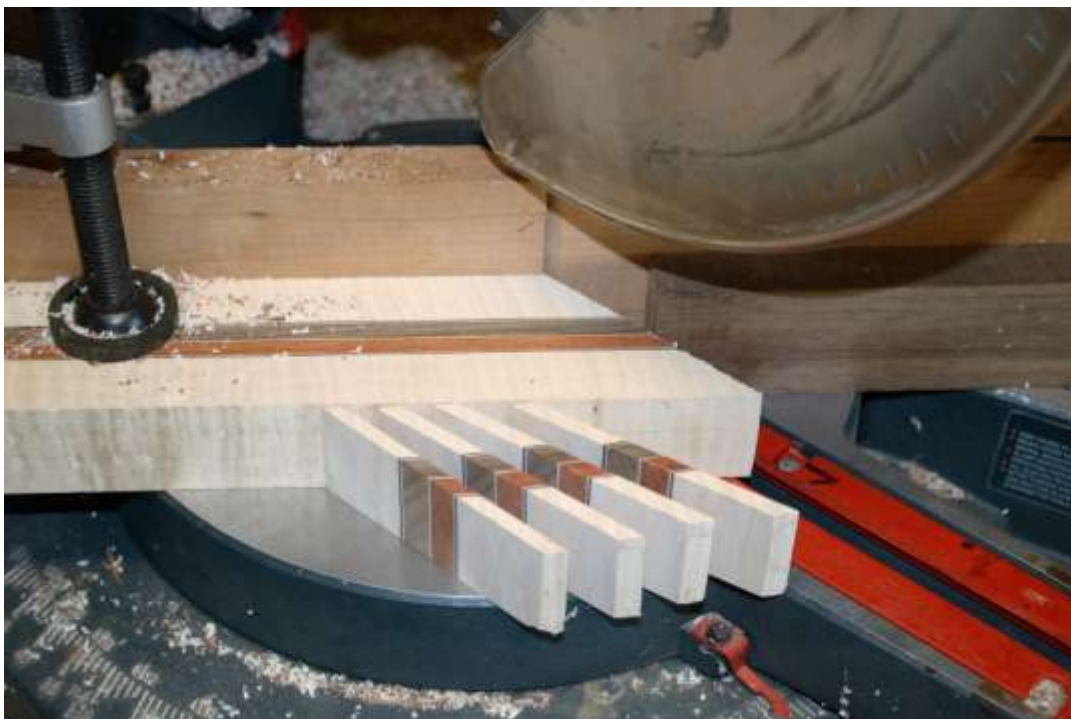


And here are all the strips glued and clamped.



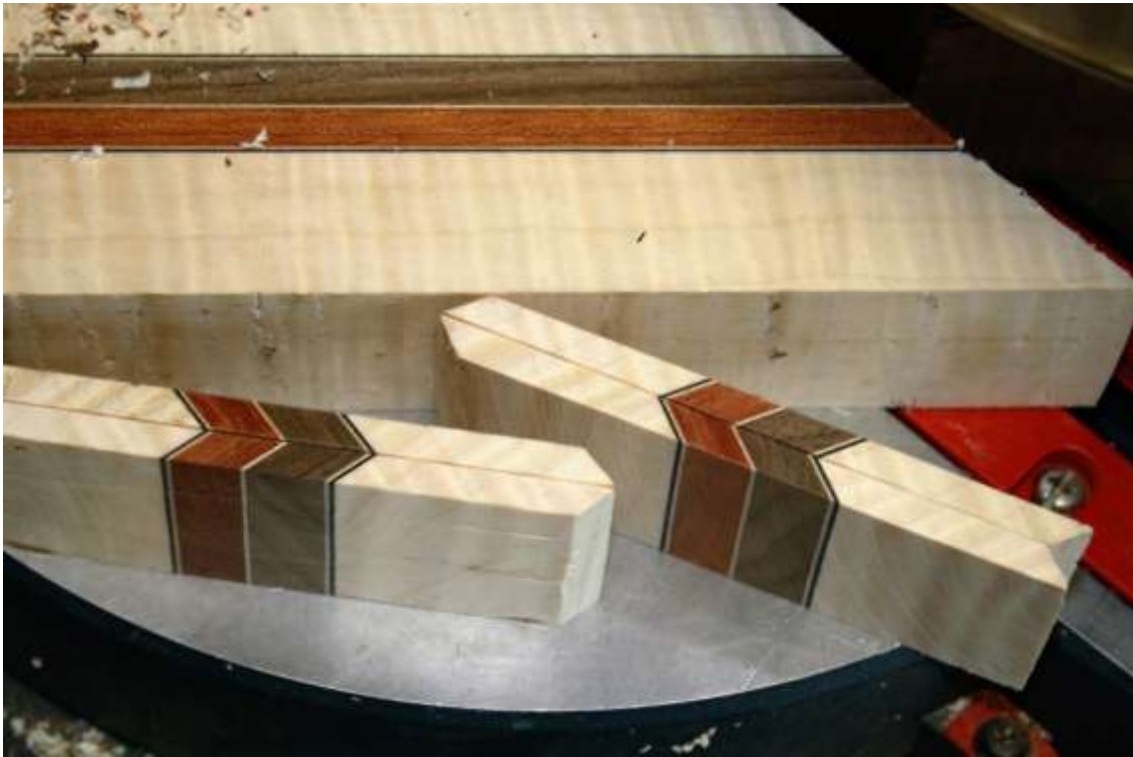
I like to use lots of screw clamps for nice tight even pressure. My clamping jig is just a couple of straight boards screwed together. I've also coated the jig with packaging tape to facilitate easy clean up of excess glue and if it gets to be too much trouble I can just peel the tape off and reapply.

After running the board thru a jointer and table saw to true up the sides, I go to the miter saw.



Above you can see the pieces being cut-lots of pieces. Each blanket design will require twelve pieces. These are about ¼" thick. That is just the thickness I use for this design. Your design may need something other-but thinner cuts than that can be trickier to sand and work with.

Here you can see four consecutive cuts and the start of the blanket design.



My next step is sanding one side of each piece. I don't sand both sides because after gluing the two pieces together I'll sand them both flush at the same time.





Here are two halves glued together. Make sure you align the woods on BOTH sides of the segment and check them again after clamping to make sure they didn't move.

In the photo below I sand the edges flat. You can see that my two halves were glued a bit skewed to keep the woods and veneers aligned.





Above are the first two pieces of the design ready to be cut to create the middle section. And below I have cut the end off one piece and marked another. This is where you have the option of lengthening or shortening your pattern. Just cut off what you need for your design.



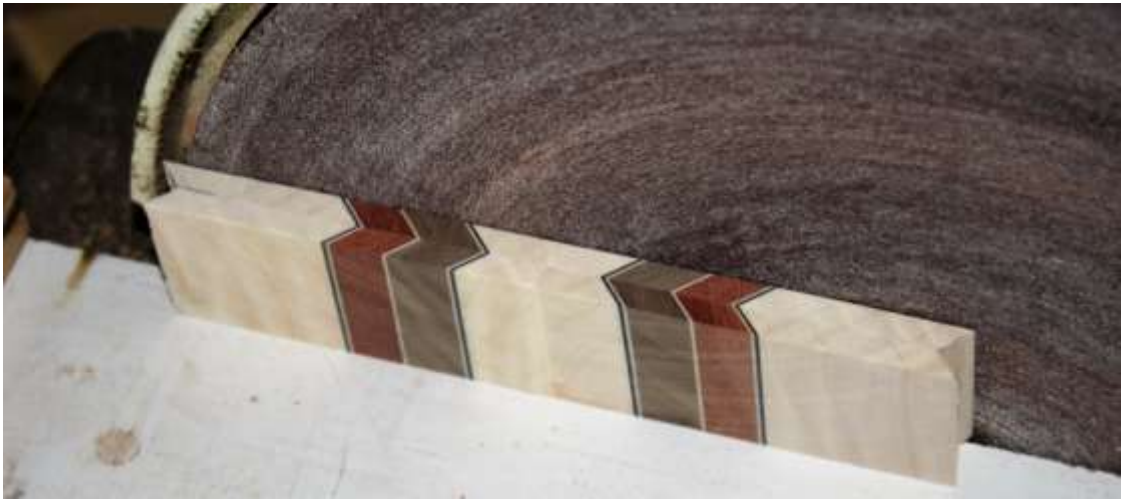
I cut these on the band saw. I think it's a bit safer to cut smaller pieces this way and then sand the edges to the desired length as shown below.



Now that I have two halves cut and sanded I can glue these together. They will be sanded flush after the glue dries so if they are of slightly different thicknesses it's not a big deal-just make sure the centers are aligned.

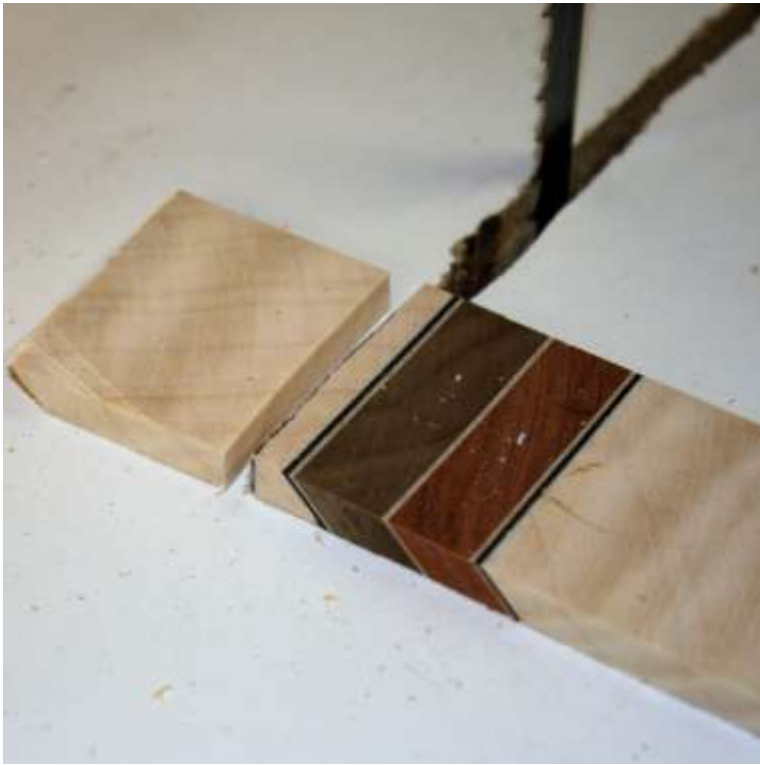


Below-sanding the section flat on both sides. Now this piece is ready for gluing the next layer.



You can see the slightly different design from the photo above and the one below. Now you can to adjust the pattern some. In the feature I'm making, I chose something in between.





Here's the next piece cut and then sanded.



For the blanket pattern I'll need four of these pieces for each design. Two will be glued to the top of the middle section and two will be glued to the bottom.

Below is the next layer glued to the top. I glue these two into place before I glue the bottom. I've tried to glue them at the same time but it's a bit more trouble to keep both sides aligned properly. If everything is sanded good they should fit well and set up quickly so I can move to the bottom layer.



Here we have added both pieces of the next set of layers on our design.



After these have dried we can sand both sides to ready the assembly for the next two layers.

If you want, this could be the final design. A fine lookin blanket design. Just cut it to length for a segment and put it in a feature ring. I'm going to add one more layer to each side so I'm gonna go on with this a while longer.



Here is one more layer added to the top. I'll add a corresponding layer on the bottom and call it quits on this design. You could always add more if you choose.



Below is the final design layer added. Now after I sand the layers flat I'll cut a couple of pieces of curly maple to sandwich the design and then cut to length for my feature ring.



The photo below shows the final two maple pieces glued in place, completing the design. When the glue has dried I'll sand it smooth all around and cut it for inclusion in my feature ring.

I hope this helps show just a little of some of the possible blanket style designs that you can create with a very easy method of cutting laminated boards. As always-be careful when woodworking. Always wear the proper safety equipment and practice safe work habits.

Getting hurt or killed would really cut into our turning time. Thanks-Robin

