

Stylish Dining Chair

There's nothing like a set of comfortable chairs to complement your dining room table. And don't be intimidated by the woodworking. By taking it one step at a time, great results are easy to achieve.

A set of matching dining chairs offers a surefire way to enhance the look of the dining table on page 22. Of course, a good set of dining room chairs not only has to match the style of the table that they'll go around, but they also have to be comfortable to sit in. And that's where getting all the right angles and curves, as well as dealing with some difficult construction techniques, comes into play.

However, there's no need to be concerned about trying your hand at building these. In the design for the chairs, you'll find that I've taken most of the tricky tasks out of the job. A couple

different types of mortise and tenon joints, combined with easy-to-use steel braces, ensure the chairs will be solid enough to stand up to all the use they're sure to encounter in a lifetime of service.

HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? The key to the design is the back legs. They're simply cut to shape on the band saw. The slats in the back of the chair are bent to shape using the technique of steam bending. If you've never tried your hand at this before, this is the perfect project for giving it a shot. The gentle bend of the slats is not at all difficult to create, so the parts make a great introduction to

the process. And an off-the-shelf steam bending kit makes it easy to get started.

PRODUCTION RUN. You'll probably want to build several chairs for your table (I made six), so it makes sense to cut all the parts for the chairs at the same time. Making multiple parts while your tools are set up for a particular cut is a great way to save time and guarantee uniformity. Just be sure to mark your pieces carefully. On top of that, remember that there are distinct left and right pieces. I've also found it helpful to keep the parts for each chair together as you cut them to avoid confusion.

