

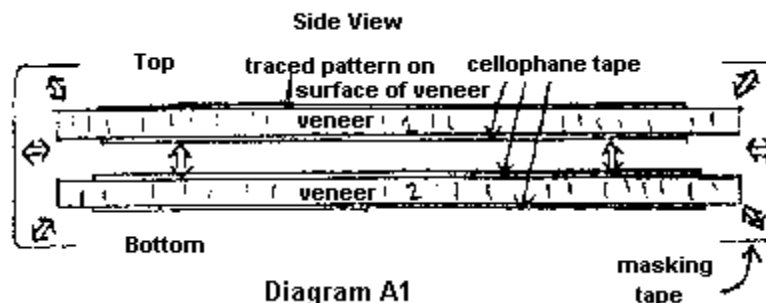
# SILHOUETTES USING THE DOUBLE CUT INTERCHANGE FRET SAW METHOD

by Jim MacKeracher

Silhouettes are one of the simplest ways to learn how to use a fret saw. More complex pictures use similar fret saw methods. Here is one procedure for fret sawing silhouettes.

Select two contrasting veneers and cut them the same size as each other, making sure that they are larger than the chosen pattern. Try to avoid using hard or coarse-grained veneer. Temporarily tape the top of the pattern onto one of the pieces of veneer.

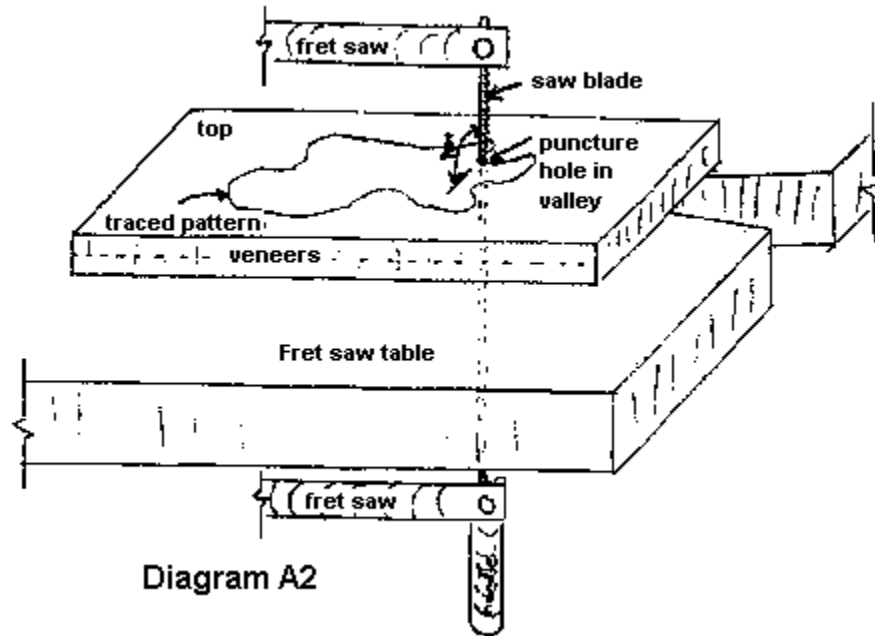
Place transfer paper (graphite, not carbon) between the veneer and the pattern. Trace the outline using a fine-tipped instrument such as an empty ball point pen. Remove the pattern and place cellophane tape over both sides of both pieces of veneer covering the traced pattern. The tape helps support the veneer and minimizes glue staining. Tape the two pieces of veneer together with masking tape, the traced pattern on top. (**Diagram A1**).



Puncture a hole through both veneers with a needle. The hole should be small, just large enough to insert a fret saw blade. Place the hole on the tracing line in the least obvious location, such as the trough of a valley made by the line. Use a thimble or drill the eye of the needle into a small block of wood to help propel the needle through the veneers.

Tighten the bottom of the saw blade in the handle of the fret saw. Size 2/0 special marquetry blades are recommended for a beginner. Thread the loose top end of the saw blade through the puncture hole from the bottom of the veneers. Tighten the top of the saw blade in the fret saw, making sure the blade is under adequate tension. Place the veneers onto the fret saw table. Saw around the shape using the table's edge as a support for the veneer.

Hold the saw stationary, moving it up and down with one hand, and push and rotate the veneers towards the saw blade with the other hand. Short smooth strokes often work the best. Do not force the saw action. It is better to take your time and thereby reduce the possibility of breaking saw blades. Make sure to hold the saw steady and perpendicular to the table top and veneers. (**Diagram A2**).



Once the sawing is finished, loosen the top of the saw and pull the veneers out. Remove the loose pieces carefully and store them. Complex pieces can be taped in place with masking tape until the entire silhouette has been sawn. Saw the remaining pieces using the same technique.

When all the pieces are sawn out, remove the masking tape holding the veneers together. Interchange the pieces and place them in the holes. Tape them in place on one side only with masking tape. Spread white wood glue around the piece and force it into the saw cuts. Wipe off any excess with a paper towel. Set the veneer aside to dry, placing a heavy object on it to ensure it dries flat.

Once the glue is dry, remove the cellophane tape from both sides of the veneer and glued-in pieces. Scrape with a cabinet scraper or sand the picture flat. The silhouette is now ready for mounting and framing.

## CHART B1 JEWELLERY SAW BLADE SIZES

Blade No. Thickness (Inches)

- 8/0 .....0.0063
- 6/0 .....0.0070
- 5/0 .....0.0080
- 4/0 .....0.0086
- 2/0 .....0.0103
- 1 .....0.0120

- 3 .....0.0140
- 5 .....0.0158
- 7 .....0.0189
- 10 .....0.0215
- 12 .....0.0236

(source: Gesswein Canada, 317 Attwell Drive, Rexdale, Ontario M9W 5C1 Tel. (416) 675-9171)