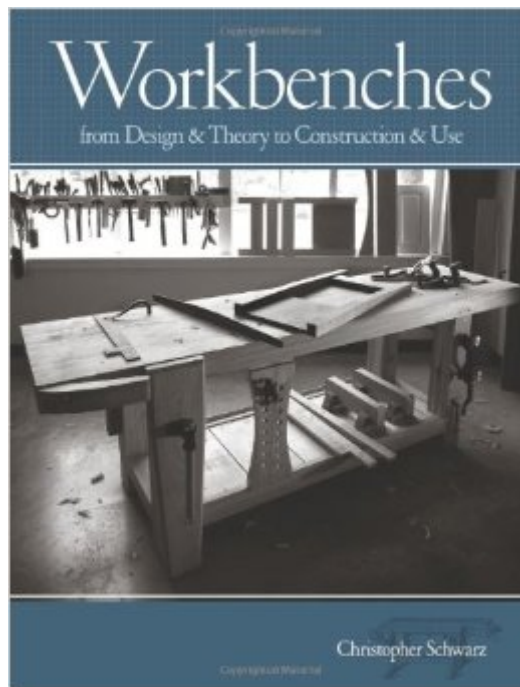


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Workbenches: From Design And Theory To Construction And Use (Popular Woodworking)



Synopsis

Two Centuries of Workbench Wisdom in One Book! With this book, your very first workbench will do everything you need it to do—possibly for the rest of your woodworking career! Encompassing years of historical research and real-world trials, Christopher Schwarz boils down centuries of the history and engineering of workbenches into basic ideas that all woodworkers can use. Learn how to design your own world-class workbench. Learn the fundamental rules of good workbench design that have been largely forgotten. Learn how to build an inexpensive and practical bench that hasn't been in widespread use for over 100 years. Learn how to properly use any workbench. These old-school benches are simpler than modern benches, easier to build and perfect for both power and hand tools. Beginning woodworkers can build either of these benches. The technical drawings are clear and show every detail. Using the step-by-step instructions, you will be amazed at how easily these workbenches can be constructed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Workbenches: From Design and Theory to Construction and Use is an accurately titled, insightful book about craftsmanship in a woodworking shop, written by a prolific young author who happens also to be editor of Popular Woodworking magazine. Workbench design is the backdrop Schwarz chooses this time to set the stage for an energetic discussion about woodcraft, his favorite topic. The author has researched, built and used many styles and variations of the woodworker's workbench, and he shares incisive observations about what works, what doesn't, and why. Building

a really good woodworker's workbench is far too much labor to undertake without first reading a couple of good books on the topic, and this book should be first among them. Schwarz raises several issues that I thought, incorrectly, I had already fully considered based on the oodles of time I had invested in thinking about, researching and drawing bench designs. Before I read this book, I had already resolved to build a certain general style of workbench. Although reading the book didn't alter my basic conception, it did lead to several important design changes. Some examples: Before I read the book, I hadn't considered the benefit of aligning the front of the benchtop with the front side of the front legs. I altered my design a bit to make sure the ends of the vise handles at rest would be slightly below the plane of the benchtop so as not to interfere with handplanes, knuckles and flat workpieces that extend beyond the benchtop. I decided to do more extensive testing of different bench heights, as Schwarz cautions that a couple of inches too high or too low can make a world of difference to a woodworker's lower back and thus to his or her enjoyment of the craft.

As an avid reader of Christopher Schwarz's various articles and columns in woodworking magazines, I've been awaiting the publication of this book with anticipation. Now that I've read it I have to say that it's better than I expected, and my expectations were very high. I've read a number of books and articles on workbenches (notably the ones by Lon Schleining and Scott Landis, which are valuable for what they are: surveys of various styles of workbenches, with info on how to build a few of them). This book is different. Not just a little different. Radically different. Schwarz is not just a good writer. He is an extremely good writer, vastly better than the majority of writers about woodworking; better than most writers, period. He is not merely capable of explaining things clearly, or of organizing his text coherently. His writing is actually enjoyable to read. He has the ability to combine highly technical information with a kind of narrative structure, within which personal experience, historical research and theoretical conceptualization come together almost seamlessly. One could describe the book as almost an essay in the classical, Montaignesque sense: a personal, spiraling account of a particular subject, whose compelling structure takes the reader along on a wide-ranging voyage of discovery, and makes the reader a companion of the author as he works out his own thinking. However, this should not be understood as saying that the book is in any way vague, for it isn't. I mean to underline its powerfully engaging quality. I believe somebody who wasn't a woodworker, who had no plans whatsoever to construct a workbench, would enjoy reading it. Schwarz is also a gifted scholar and theoretician, a trait not typical of woodworkers, of writers about woodworking.

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