Floral Coaster Kit

Introduction

Welcome to the Floral Coaster kit from QJS Marquetry. In addition to the materials provided you will need a sharp craft knife, a metal straight-edge or ruler, masking tape (clear sticky tape will do) and some PVA wood glue. For finishing your coaster inserts you might want to use some medium grade abrasive paper and a coat or two of clear lacquer or varnish.

The pack includes a range of veneer suitable for making any of the designs provided.

Getting Started

These instructions assume you have worked through the practice design and are familiar with the "window method" for marquetry. You don't have to use any of the designs supplied. Any design, perhaps a picture from a magazine or even something you have drawn yourself, can be interpreted in marquetry.

Background

Two larger sheets of veneer are provided and these are for use as the background to your designs and the backing layer. You can use the same background for all four coasters, or a mixture.

Always make your picture slightly bigger than final size to allow a little spare for final trimming. This allows you to centre the design in the coaster to ensure a good result. The designs included are drawn at the size of the visible window of the coasters, but you should make each insert to at least the size of the dotted line around each design.

The Designs

In general, the pictures can be tackled in the same way. Cut in "background" stems and leaves, then the various flower parts, working from those at the back to those in front. In the picture at the right, the lily design is part made, with two of the back petals already cut in and a third part made. The petal has been cut to fit the window, then split into two pieces so that these can be shaded separately, and darkened along one edge, to enhance the petal's shape. Leaves can also have the edge on one half darkened to indicate the central leaf vein, but the two halves should be made with different grain directions, indicating the run of the finer leaf veins (as you did with the leaf exercise).

Finishing Off

For a quick result you can simply leave your work taped on the back, trim to size and seal in the small clear pouches supplied with your coasters. However a better, and more durable, method is as follows.

Trim each finished design to size (use the clear template to ensure correct positioning). Keep tape on the front, but remove any tape from the back. Cut a piece of plain veneer to just bigger than each insert, choosing the grain direction which matches the grain direction of the picture background. (Crossing the grain would be more likely to cause warping). Apply PVA glue to the backing veneer and immediately stick on the design. Clamp firmly between flat pieces of wood, using a piece of plastic to prevent the inserts sticking to the boards. Note that for good adhesion considerable pressure is needed. Commercial firms use vacuum presses which exert atmospheric pressure - 14 lbs/sq.in. Even on our small coaster inserts we need upwards of 80 lbs, so a couple of books won't do the job! Use screw clamps or similar.

Once glued, the design can be trimmed to size and sanded with a medium grade abrasive sheet (something around 150-250 grit). Take care when sanding – hold the insert down flat on the table, wrap the abrasive paper round a small block and sand from the centre to the edge. Sanding the other way it is easy to catch the edge and damage your work. You may find a small nail file or emery board useful for shaping the edges and corners. Give the inserts a coat or two of clear lacquer or varnish, being sure to varnish both sides and the edges so that the inserts are protected against accidental spills.

Push your inserts into the coasters and you are finished!

For more help and information about marquetry please contact:

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