

Suits Coaster Kit



Introduction

Welcome to the Suits 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 enough veneer to make either the plain suit designs as pictured or slightly more complex "shaded" versions.

Getting Started

These instructions assume you have worked through the practice design and are familiar with the "window method" for marquetry.

Cut the design sheet into the four designs. Cut a piece of the background veneer a little bigger all round than the overall insert size (check using the clear template). Tape the "diamond" design centrally onto the veneer using a single piece of tape at the top. Note that you can position the design as shown, or perhaps set the suit symbols diagonally across the coaster – the choice is yours.

Mark through the edge of the design. You can use carbon paper (not supplied) or just push your craft knife through the pattern to mark the ends of the lines. Cut along the lines, keeping your knife vertical so the edge of the cut is square. Place a piece of the dyed red veneer under the opening and cut the insert. It will be easier to cut if the grain of the red veneer runs parallel to one of the sides of the diamond – but you may prefer the look with the grain running horizontally or vertically. In this case you will need to take care with the fragile cross-grain points of the diamond insert. Tape the front, clean off any tape from the back and glue in the insert.

Cut out the other three designs using the "window" method. Note that knife marks will be very difficult to see on the black veneer, so use tape on the front of the black veneer to help visibility. Take care to protect the fragile points of both the insert pieces and the background using tape. The areas around the "stalks" of the club and spade are especially tricky.

The "Shaded" Design

You may prefer to make the "shaded" designs rather than the simple version shown at the top of the instructions. These are made in the same way, using the window method. It is usually easier to put in the light and dark areas first, cutting these just a little larger in the areas where they adjoin the main suit colour. Finally cut the main colour, trimming the light and dark areas back to the correct places.

Hint: do not follow the lines delimiting the shaded areas too closely. Use them just as guides and try to make the edges of the areas as smooth as possible.

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 the backing veneer supplied to just bigger than each insert, choosing the grain direction which matches the predominant grain direction of the design. (Crossing the grain would be more likely to cause warping). Apply PVA glue to the backing veneer and immediately glue 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 and sand from the centre to the outside. 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 so that the inserts are protected against accidental spills.

The background veneer provided will vary according to availability.
The one in this set is:

For more help and information about marquetry please contact:

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