



*Watertight container.* Klausz's wooden box keeps his waterstone wet for sharpening.

# Waterstone Pond

*Build a watertight wooden holder for your sharpening stones*

by Frank Klausz

Sharpening with waterstones is a lot easier if you have a "pond" to hold the stone and enough water to keep it wet and clean in use. And your bench will stay clean, too. I learned to make this simple box while working as an apprentice in my father's workshop in Hungary. The box is completely watertight, but no glue or caulk is required to make it that way. Good joinery does the trick, along with a little bit of magic based on wood compression and expansion. In Europe, many generations of woodworkers have used these same techniques to build wooden baby bathtubs and washtubs.

I use white pine for my box, but any type of pine other than yellow pine will work fine. Clear stock is preferable, since leaks can develop around knots. If you want to store more than one stone, you can increase the width of your box. The inside of my box is about 2 in. longer than my longest waterstone. This leaves room for a pair of wedges that hold the stone in place.

The joinery is simple. The four sides are held together with tapered sliding dovetails. The bottom is nailed to the sides. To make the sides watertight, the dovetails need to be cut accurately. I recommend cutting the joints with a router

and dovetail bit. To simplify routing, I use two jigs to guide my router: one for the dovetail socket, the other for the dovetail. (See the article on page 80.)

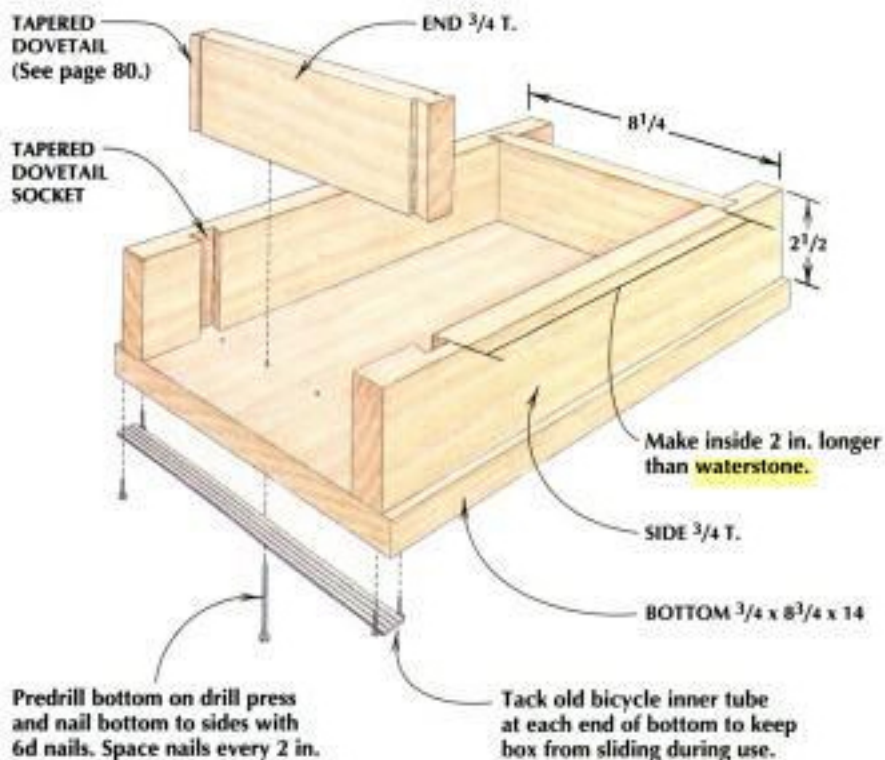
The key to making the sliding dovetail joints watertight is to make each tapered dovetail fit tightly—but not too tightly—into its mating socket. You should be able to assemble the joint about three-quarters of the way with hand pressure, then complete it with a few firm taps from a hammer.

The base of the box is simply nailed to the side assembly. The butt joint is watertight largely because of the resilient nature of wood. By compressing the

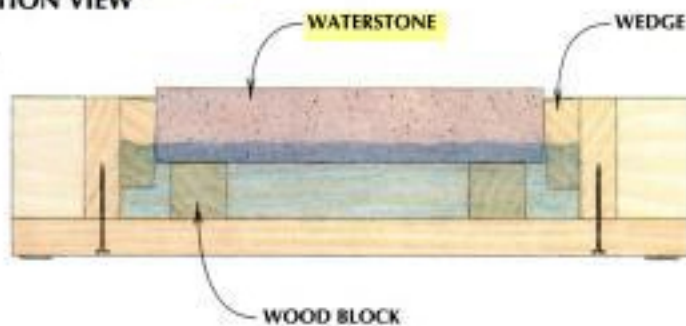


## WATERSTONE POND

No glue is necessary when assembling this box. Once the box is filled with water, the joints swell, making the box watertight.



### USING THE POND SECTION VIEW



wood fibers on the bottom of the box's sides, I create a wood "gasket" that seals the bottom against the sides once the box is filled with water. (See sidebar, right.)

**Putting the pond to work**—Cut two wooden blocks and insert them under your waterstone so that the stone is raised slightly above the edges of the box. Then bandsaw two wedges and push them into position to lock the stone between the sides of the box. (See Using the Pond, above.)

To use the sharpening station, set the box on a sturdy surface—a bench works fine—so the surface of your waterstone is roughly level with your waist. This

height gives you good control and lets you use your upper body weight to bear down onto the tool you're sharpening. I keep my stone wet and clean during sharpening with a homemade mop, which I make by folding a rag and tacking it to the end of a dowel. ▲

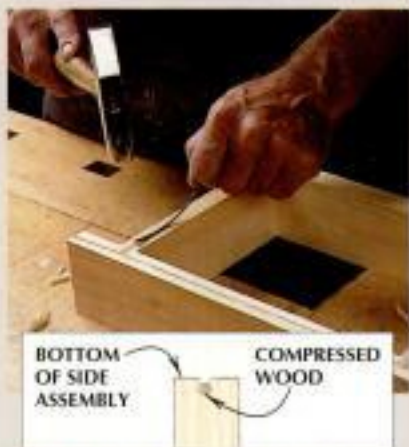


#### FRANK KLAUSZ

is a master cabinetmaker and a contributing editor to AW.

## MAKING THE WOODEN GASKET

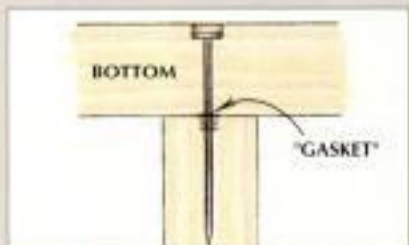
A wooden "gasket" seals the bottom of the box against the sides.



**Step 1: Compress the wood.** Use a hammer and a piece of wire from a paint-can handle to tap a groove along the bottom edges of the assembled sides. Make sure the grooves meet at the corners.



**Step 2: Plane the edges.** Plane the bottom edges until the grooves just disappear. Keep the assembly flat by planing all four edges evenly.



**Step 3: Nail on the bottom and fill the box with water.** In a couple of hours, the compressed wood will swell, forming a "gasket" that seals the sides tight to the bottom.