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RouterCentric

Fish shaped platter

When **The Editor** came up with his next project it smelt a bit fishy to us. We think he had better explain himself or risk getting into hot water...

This idea is really for anyone who loves 'fruits de mer' – anything edible from the sea or stream; it's probably not sensible with a chicken wing sitting on it! I chose maple (*Acer campestre*) as a stable, safe timber with a dense grain and easy to clean after use. Two pieces

were glued together with waterproof glue and thicknessed. After that it was down to a bit of artistic licence.

1 The board needed to be large to accommodate its tasty, well cooked occupant. It needed to be a reasonably convincing looking fish

shape too. The dark mark in the top right is in the grain and will get cut away in a while.

2 I usually allow plenty of relief slots, especially with a tiny 6mm skiptooth bandsaw blade, so it doesn't get jammed anywhere during the cutting. It is particularly important to have relieving cuts in harder to reach places.



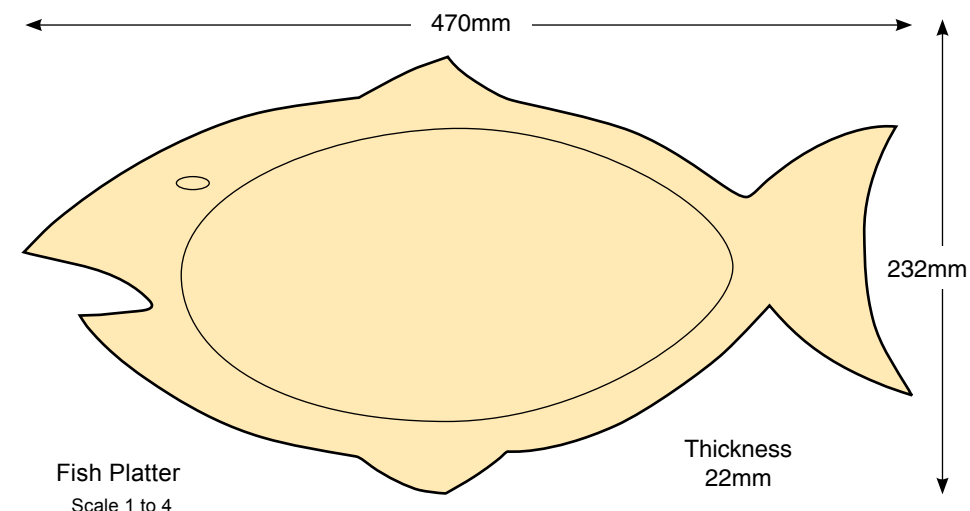
1 Choose a piece of maple which is of the correct shape and size to make the fish shaped platter



2 When bandsawing, allow plenty of relief slots so the blade doesn't get jammed during cutting



3 Allow the bandsaw blade to follow your line and not deviate. Also, do not force the wood



4 When working on tight inner curves, remove the bulk and use a sideways 'nibbling' action to tease away the remaining wood



5 For cuts that can't be completed due to throat restriction, mark on the reverse of the workpiece and complete from that side

3 Don't force the wood, and 'learn' the angle of 'lead' the blade has, so it will follow your line and not deviate unexpectedly. Only attempt to do the cut that is possible with throat width limitation.

4 Tight inner curves like this cannot be negotiated, instead remove the bulk and use a sideways 'nibbling' action to tease away the remaining wood. Keep on working gently sideways eventually working along the marked line.

5 Any cuts you cannot complete because of the throat restriction can be marked on the reverse of the workpiece and completed from that side. If done with care, the shaping should match up quite nicely.

6 Mr Fishy is looking quite okay, now for the dish shape that will hold our supper! This is marked freehand again, missing the eye and front of the head.



6 Next, mark the dish shape taking care to avoid the eye and the front of the head

7 To shape the dish I used a Wealden groundwork cutter with curved corners and a small Trend single blade corebox cutter for the eye.

8 Hold the router firmly either by the skis or the knobs, or a combination of both. Make shallow passes starting near the outside of the dish shape, moving clockwise in an arc.



7 To shape the dish use a Wealden groundwork cutter with curved corners and a small Trend single blade corebox cutter for the eye



8 Holding the router firmly, make shallow passes starting near the outside of the dish shape



9 Remove the centre of the dish moving the router anti-clockwise into the cut direction



10 The area of 'land' left in the middle will be removed later. Keep the skis resting on the rim of the fish at all times



11 Lift the router off and with the power off push down hard and lock the plunge, then lower the router on the job and do a cleaning up pass



12 As you can see, I forgot there was a chunk missing in the platter, but this can be easily fixed



13 I used the groundwork cutter in plunge mode to create a 'tartare sauce recess'



14 Remove any burn marks and ensure all food recesses and the eye have curved bottom edges

9 Now remove the centre but as the cut is on the inside edge you need to move the router anti-clockwise into the cut direction. Do not go backwards or the router may run away.

10 Burning is inevitable at this stage and extraction is essential to remove the chippings. Note an area of 'land' left in the middle which will get removed. Keep the skis resting on the rim of the fish at all times. Go down with each pass by no more than 2mm until you reach an acceptable final depth.

11 For the final pass, lift the router off and with the power

off push down hard and lock the plunge; the slightly sloppy plunge mechanism should mean the extra push will increase the depth of cut by a tiny amount. Now lower the router on the job and do a cleaning up pass.

12 Now to reveal my mistake. I had forgotten there was a chunk missing which the routing had revealed, but not to panic as this can be easily solved.

13 So using the groundwork cutter in plunge mode, I created a 'tartare sauce recess' – yes, I meant to do that all along, didn't I? It just needs a careful run around at full depth to clean the hole up.

14 Any slight burns can now be sanded out. Curved bottom edges are needed for all food recesses and the eye as well, so the platter can be cleaned properly after use.

15 Now the small diameter corebox cutter is once again used for a shallow plunge to create the eye recess for the fish. It needs to be moved slightly to make an elongated shape.

16 A delta sander and medium abrasive makes fairly quick work of sanding this awkward shape. Unfortunately, as you can see from the photo below it deformed one point of the delta pad as it got overheated.



15 Use the small diameter corebox cutter for a shallow plunge to create the eye recess



16 Use a delta sander and medium abrasive to sand the edges of the recess



17 Again, use the delta sander for sanding the dished base including the radiused corners



18 It doesn't matter if you get a smooth but uneven edge as you want the platter to have a handmade effect



19 Use a standard orbital sander to smooth the rim and back of the platter



20 Give the platter a good hand sand to remove any final traces of burning



21 The bandsaw edges can be left as they both look and feel good to the touch

17 The delta sander is perfect for sanding the dished base including the radiused corners. Change from medium to fine abrasive for a soft even finish to the wood.

18 You can even sand on edge to get a smooth but uneven edge because after all, this platter is meant to be handmade and not absolutely perfect, in other words unique.

19 A standard orbital sander is used to smooth the rim and the back of the platter. It now begins to look almost finished.

20 A good hand sanding completes the work and removes any final traces of burning caused by routing.



22 'Break' the edges with abrasive so the platter is safe and pleasant to the touch

21 I wanted to leave the bandsawn edges because they look and feel good, not rough as you might expect.

22 However, the edges of the platter need to be 'broken' with abrasive including the pointed mouth and tail fin so it is safe as well as pleasant to the touch.

23 A last important touch is the addition of a food safe finish. In fact any food oil would be suitable as it is quite safe, so olive oil or cooking oil would do. Oil will help protect and seal the wood but it should be re-oiled at frequent intervals. Now all that's left to do is grill that delicious trout that's been waiting in the fridge! ■



23 Finally, coat the platter with a wood safe finish or any food oil – the choice is yours