David constructed his family's black oak dining table with lazy susan from a tree that fell near his home

Massive Oak Table Constructed From Single Tree

David Buchsbaum gave an excellent slide show illustrating how he constructed a dining room table from a felled tree is his neighborhood at the January pre-meeting. A black oak tree more than three feet in diameter succumbed to wet soil and wind and fell just a few doors down the street from David's house.

David and a friend spent two days sawing the tree into 2-3 inch thick slabs using Woodmiser and Alaskan Mill saws. After researching the subject thoroughly, and some wise counsel from John Ming, David decided to kiln dry the lumber over a six-month period. Air drying or accelerated kiln drying would result in excessive cracks and splits.

The lumber was taken to David's garage where it was stacked with stickers. Using 2 x 4's, clear plastic sheeting, pink board insulation, a dehumidifier, and fans, a kiln was constructed around the stacked lumber in David's garage. By measuring water content and monitoring the amount of water removed in a day's time, the drying process was controlled so as to remove water at a slow rate.

Approximately half of the black oak was sold and the proceeds were sufficient to cover the cost of sawing and drying, including a $50 per month increase in David's electric bill. The balance of the wood was used to build a 12-sided dining table for David's home.

The 12 segments and other components were milled on David's Shopbot CNC router. Wood movement, design changes, and a desire to feature the live edges on the finished table caused a considerable amount of re-work. David initially planned to make the table using no steel fasteners; instead opting to use wooden fasteners milled from the same black oak tree. In fact, the bolts used were machined from the oak with the aid of David's Shopbot. In order to avoid the use of glue on the end grain of the table top segments, the top was "permanently clamped" using a steel cable and turnbuckle.

Just about the time David thought his job was done, Mrs. Buchsbaum lovingly decided she wanted a lazy susan added. Back in the shop David made a lazy susan that appeared to be large enough to serve as a table in a smaller dining room setting.

The table was finished with Waterlox (tung oil) and wax. As concluded by all who saw the slide slow, the table is very heavy. The lazy susan alone will support the weight of a man. Construction took 200 shop hours shop time plus 150 hours at the computer with Autocad. As David said in summary, truly the project of a lifetime.

Buchsbaum describes designing his 12-sided table