

December 2014 Woodworker Guild Meeting Intarsia, with Tom Kaldunski



Tom Kaldunski described the techniques and processes of woodwork intarsia. Tom is a member of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild and has displayed his award-winning work at numerous shows, including the Northern Woods Show.

What is Intarsia? Wikipedia provides this definition: "Intarsia is a woodworking technique that uses varied shapes, sizes, and species of wood fitted together to create a mosaic-like picture with an illusion of depth. Intarsia is created through the selection of different types of wood, using their natural grain pattern and color (but can involve the use of stains and dyes) to create variations in the pattern. After selecting the specific woods to be used within the pattern, each piece is then individually cut, shaped, and finished. Sometimes areas of the pattern are raised to create more depth. Once the individual pieces are complete, they are fitted together like a jig-saw puzzle and glued to wood backing which is sometimes cut to the outline shape of the image, often with the intention of creating a three-dimensional effect..."

A few highlights from Tom's presentation:

- A typical work has about 12 different species of wood, but he has used as many as 22 varieties.
- Tom often works from pictures or photos of the elements he wants to include in his work, e.g. an eagle or a deer. He then draws a measured grid pattern on the photo that is used to accurately scale it up to the desired dimensions.



- Tom stressed the importance of considering the wood's grain direction and how that will affect the look of the piece.

- He rough cuts all the individual pieces and dry fits them into the frame. Then he removes them, shapes the edges and adds details.

- Tom finishes the pieces individually before the glue-up.

- Complete works take him from 32 to 120 hours depending on the size and complexity.

