

# 1

## **LOCK-N-LATCH TREASURE CHEST**

More so than any other project in this book, the following list of supplies is a suggestion; you can probably hack this together with whatever boards, hinges, and latches you have kicking around your garage or basement. If you are bereft of these supplies, be sure to hit your local resale shops, garage sales, and hardware store Dumpsters before shelling out for new supplies. This particular design has a double-door lid, a barn-door front, and a mouse door in the back, each with individual latches.



**FIGURE 1-1:** *The finished Lock-n-Latch Treasure Chest*

## Tools

- ▶ a wood saw (Your plain old crosscut saw will work, but a Japanese pull saw will leave a smoother edge.)
- ▶ a keyhole saw
- ▶ an electric drill with bits
- ▶ sandpaper (Any fine-grit paper will work; 150-grit paper—which has 150 abrasive grains of aluminum oxide per inch—is good to keep on hand.)

## Supplies

- ▶ a 1"×8" board at least 5' long.

\* **HINT:** *Pine is cheaper and easier to work than a hardwood like oak (for some important notes on wood sizing and selection, flip to "About Board Sizes" on page 10).*

- ▶ a dozen 1 1/2" wood screws (for building the box)
- ▶ about three dozen 3/4" wood screws (for mounting hardware to the box)
- ▶ a variety of locks and latches (I've used a barrel bolt, a chain lock, and a window latch. These are easy to scrounge at resale shops or garage sales; if all else fails, a barrel bolt or window latch is only a couple bucks new at the hardware store, but a new chain lock tends to run at least \$10 or \$12.)
- ▶ hinges (You'll want to keep an eye out for a pair of narrow cabinet hinges that can close flat in order to make the double door–style lid. Since the hinges are largely exposed, it pays to choose something a little more snazzy; brass screams class.)
- ▶ a few knobs (You can use these to fancy up the doors, but you're well advised to put one on each end; a toddler is going to want to haul this around, and you might as well make it easier to carry, rather than making it easier to crush a toe.)
- ▶ (optional) about a dozen orange juice can lids (These make great "coins" for toddlers—they are free, made of safe, inert stainless steel, make a great sound, have a pleasing weight and texture, and offer no sharp edges or choking hazards.)



**FIGURE 1-2:** *Tools and supplies*

# Building It

- Step 1** Measure and mark four 12" lengths and two 5 3/4" lengths on your board. These will be the four sides and two ends of your box, respectively. Cut the board, then sand the raw edges. Use a pencil to mark the four long pieces "bottom," "top," "front," and "back."
- Step 2** Quickly mock up the box as in Figure 1-3, just to be sure you have a sense of how this is all going to come together. Note that the end pieces are oriented so that their cut edges are at the top and bottom, not left and right.



**FIGURE 1-3:** *The mocked-up box*

- Step 3** Take apart your mock-up. Measure 6" along the edge of the "top" board. Use this as a guide to draw a line across the middle of the board, then saw it in half. These are your double doors.
- Step 4** On your "front" board, measure 4" from one end, mark it, and saw it; this is the barn door.

**Step 5**

Now for the mouse door (shown on the far right of Figure 1-4). Take the “back” board and measure 3 1/2" in from each end and 4" up from the bottom. Use these as guides to draw your back door, and then cut it out using either a manual keyhole saw or an electric jigsaw. If you're using a keyhole saw, you will probably have to drill a hole in one of the upper corners of your door in order to make the last cut across the top. Sand down the rough edges.



**FIGURE 1-4:** From left to right: the top, front, and back, sawed and ready to go

**Step 6**

If you're going to stain or paint your box, do so now.

**Step 7**

Now it's time to start building the box. Stand the two end pieces up on your worktable, about a foot apart, with a cut edge down. Place the bottom (the piece that has no extra cuts) on top of the two ends, as shown in Figure 1-5 (you can also place the front and back in place, in order to help you center the end pieces). Pre-drilling guide holes, rather than driving the screw directly into the wood, will help prevent cracking. Guide holes should be a tad smaller than the actual screws: Find the bit that's the same thickness as your 1 1/2" screws, and then use the next smaller bit. Drill a set of guide holes through the bottom of the box and into one end, and then drive 1 1/2" wood screws through the bottom and into the end piece. Repeat with the other end piece.

**Step 8**

Install the back board and the anchored side of the front board (see Figure 1-6 for the final result). For the back, drill two guide holes along each side edge and two along the bottom edge, then drive in the screws. For the anchored side of the front, screw the shorter length of the board to either the left or right end piece. Don't forget to drill those guide holes first!