

The Well-Equipped Shop

by Brad Holden

Dialed-In Box Joints

PRECISION IS THE KEY to a box joint jig, isn't it? If you've ever tried to build one yourself, you know the joints that it makes have to be right on the money—within a few thousandths of an inch—or they won't go together right. Incra's new iBox guarantees that high level of accuracy, and it's very easy to adjust. Anybody can do it.

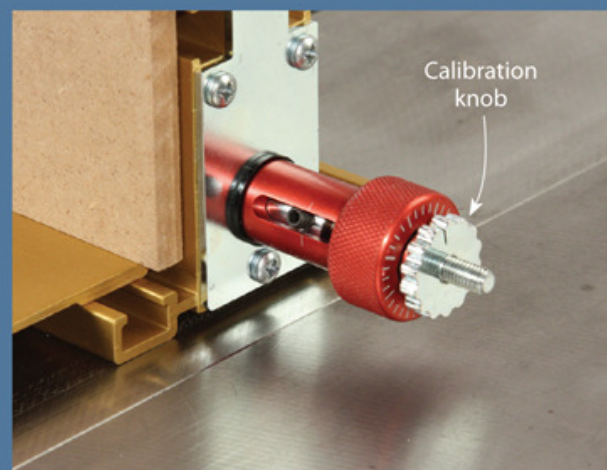
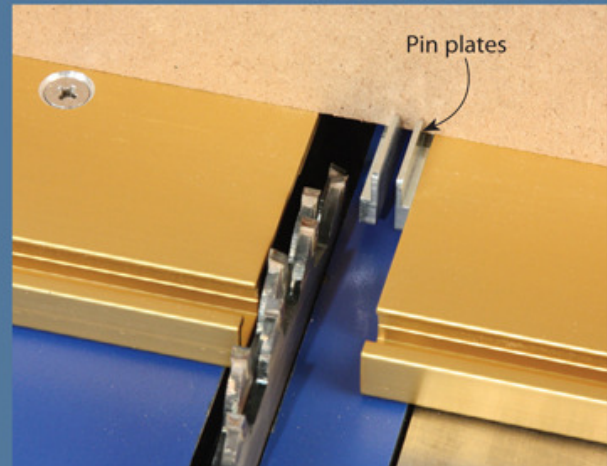
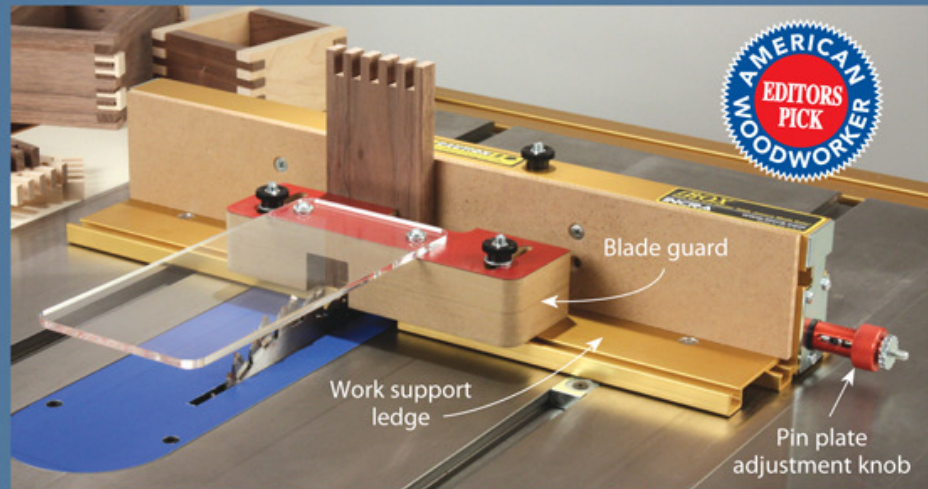
To understand how the thing works, forget about any box joint jig you've seen before. The iBox operates on a completely new system. On most jigs, the key that registers the joint—the doohickey that fits into each slot you cut—is a solid piece of wood, metal or plastic. For 1/4" joints, for example, you'd insert a 1/4" key. Not on the iBox. Here, the key is split into halves (Incra calls them "pin plates"). Turning one of the dials on the jig moves the pin plates closer together or farther apart, so you can precisely fit the key to match the width of the slot made by your dado blades or router bit. If you build up a dado set with shims to cut a slot that's 23/64" wide, for example—no problem.

Setting the distance from the key to the blade is the critical part of making joints that fit right. On most jigs, adjusting this distance is a matter of trial and error. But not on the iBox. Once you calibrate the jig for your saw or router table (and I've got to admit that this is a bit fussy), you cut a trial slot and turn a knob a few times until the pin plates fit the slot. The spacing from the blade is set automatically. If the joint doesn't quite fit to your satisfaction, you can dial a second micrometer-style knob, graduated in thousandths of an inch, to adjust it.

If seeing is believing, check out the iBox video on Incra's website. The iBox system sure worked for me! Once I calibrated the jig for my tablesaw, I was able to make box joints of many different widths simply by turning one dial. It's truly a set-and-go jig.

The iBox is extremely well-engineered. The ledges that support your work can be adjusted side to side to accommodate narrow pieces. The miter bar is adjustable in width to eliminate any wiggling. And the backing board mounts in a T-slot; you can adjust it side to side to get many uses from one piece of material. Safety is built in, with blade guards front and back.

The iBox jig can make pins anywhere from 1/8" to



3/4" wide. It will handle stock from 1/4" to 1" thick, and any width. You can use it on a tablesaw or router table, but your router table must have a miter slot.

SOURCE

Incra Precision Tools, incra.com, 972-242-9975, Incra IBOX, \$170.

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