



CARVEWRIGHT™

WOODWORKING SYSTEM

TIPS & TRICKS

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Pattern Layering & Composition in Designer

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The CompuCarve and CarveWright machines have ushered in a new era for woodworking hobbyists!

Making woodcarving projects with either device allows you to express yourself quickly and with relative ease. The result that can be achieved by the 'average' woodworker are often quite remarkable.

The great success of the machines is due in part to the freedom the user has for laying out project designs with the easy-to-use Designer software that is included. A nice variety of stock relief patterns are also included in a 'pattern library'. The patterns are brought onto the software's 'virtual' board display by simply clicking and dragging them into position on the board. Patterns can be repositioned or resized and the carving depth and height of each pattern can be adjusted at will.

Many owners of the machines are expanding their choices by adding patterns from www.carvebuddy.com and other companies that specialize in making relief patterns for the CompuCarve and CarveWright machines.

There are some basic, yet powerful, tools in the Designer software that can help you maximize your creativity to compose design layouts. These tools allow you to layer and position patterns to make unique project designs that you can call your own.

For this tutorial, I will be using patterns from CarveBuddy.com to create a simple forest scene using some easy layering techniques in the Designer software. (You can use whatever patterns you like - the process is the same.)

Patterns used:

Elk6x725_1

PineTreeSet_1

OakTree75x11_1

STEP 1

Start the Designer software and create a new project board with these dimensions: 11.25" x 11.25" x 0.75" thick.

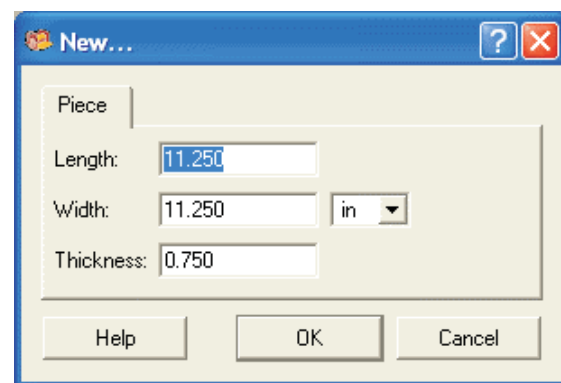


fig. 1

STEP 2

Select the "Square Drawing Tool" and drag out a square measuring 10"x10".

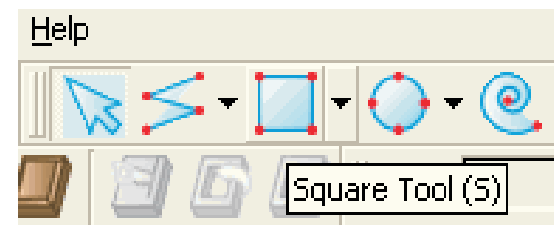


fig. 2

To learn about the CompuCarve and CarveWright machines, please visit the manufacturer's website at:
www.carvewright.com

For Patterns you can add to your Designer software library, please visit:
www.carvebuddy.com

Pattern Layering & Composition in Designer (cont.)

STEP 3

Right-click the square and select Center/Center Both.

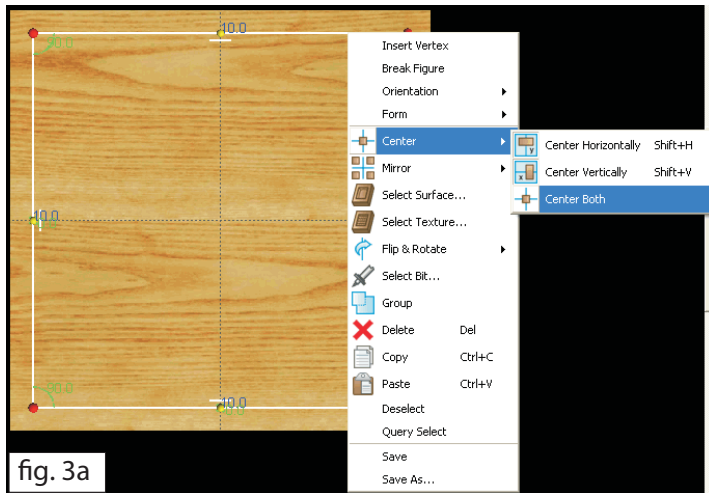


fig. 3a

Now, click the Carve Region Tool. The default depth of the region is 0.25". Leave that for now.



fig. 3b

STEP 4

We now have our board with a centered 10" x 10" x 1/4" deep carve region. You can now drag-and-drop whatever patterns you want, onto the board. In my example, I'll drag the Elk and some trees to the board from my own pattern list.

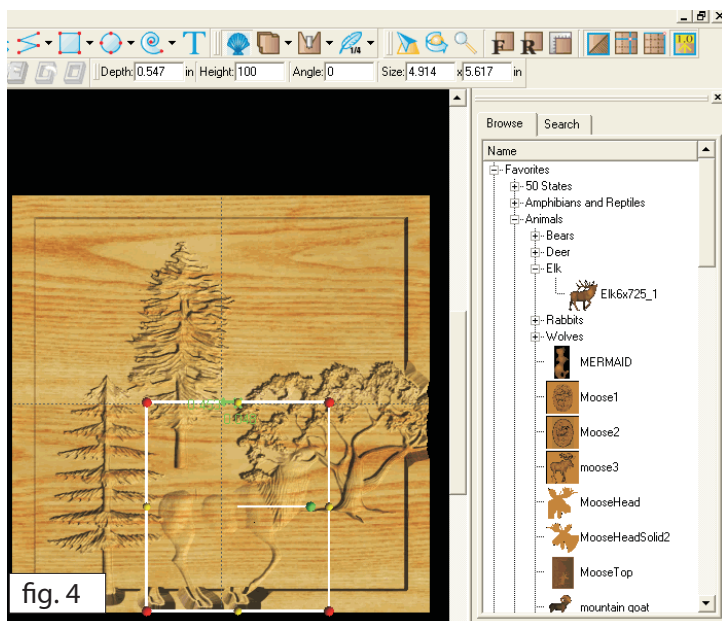


fig. 4

It may look a bit strange at this point, because the carve region sometimes makes some patterns disappear in certain areas, depending on their default depth setting. We'll fix that in the next few steps.

STEP 5

Click on each pattern one at a time and remove the feather-edge from all the patterns by using the Feather Tool.

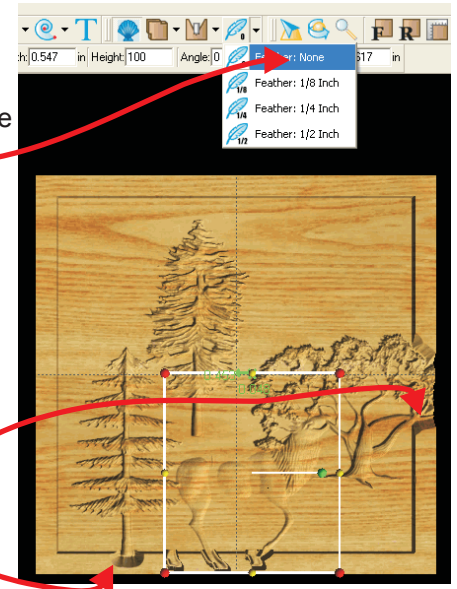


fig. 5

feathered edges we don't want

STEP 6

Now, let's arrange our patterns on the board for a pleasing layout. You can move, copy, paste, angle, enlarge or reduce the patterns individually to get everything arranged and sized the way you want. (Notice I copied the oak tree and positioned it so it looks like a bush in the lower right corner.)



fig. 6

Pattern Layering & Composition in Designer (cont.)

STEP 7

You'll notice that some of the patterns overlap the raised border around the carve region. That's not what we want in this case. There is a very easy way to fix this by using the "Clip Carving" feature.

Select any pattern that overlaps the border, then right-click it to display the menu choices. You'll see the "Clip Carving" menu item. Rest your cursor over that item and a fly-out menu will display your choices.

Currently, the Clip Carving feature is set to "None" by default, but we want to change that, so select (left-click) the **Clip Carving: Inclusive** option. Taa-daa! The pattern is now clipped neatly inside our carve region. Repeat this for each pattern that you don't want overhanging the raised border.

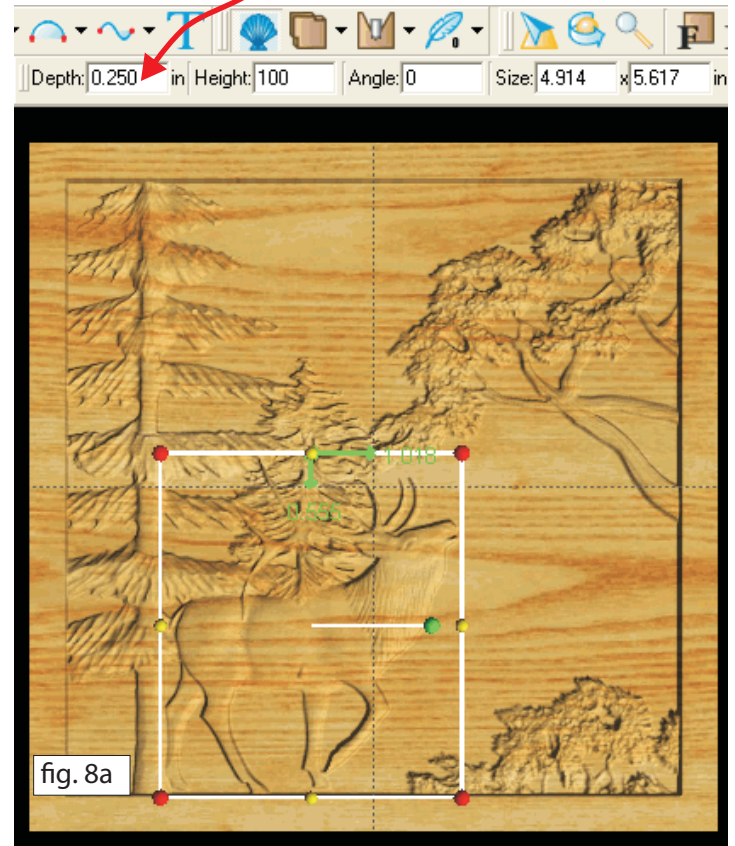


STEP 8

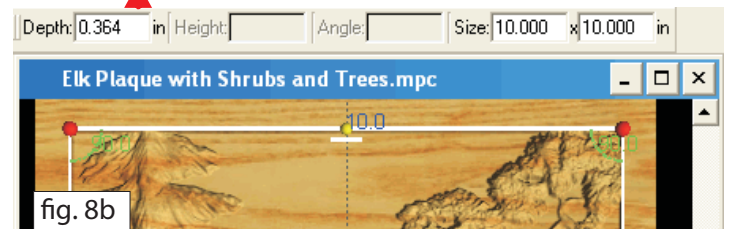
All that's left to do now is adjust the carving depths and heights to finish our design layout.

The elk is the featured item on this layout, so we want to work our way front to back from the elk, to layer our patterns. First, select each pattern and make note of each one's default carving depth. (Deeper carves sit lower in the height plane. We want the elk front and center, so it will have the lowest carving depth.)

Starting with the elk, set the carve depth to the same as the carve region (0.25"). That brings the elk to the forefront of our layout.



To layer the remaining patterns, change the carve region depth to something close to the same amount as your deepest pattern (in my case one of the pine trees had a default depth of 0.364", so I changed the carve region to that same amount).

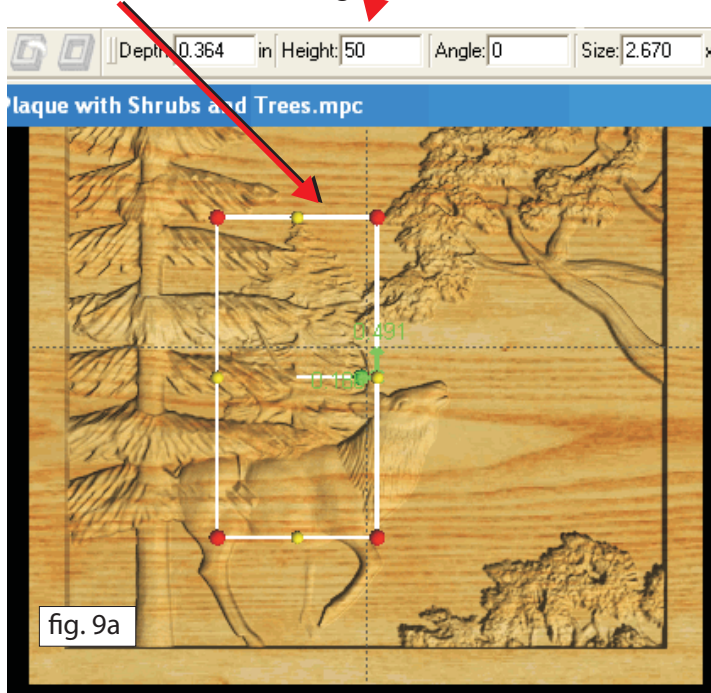


Now, select each pattern, and raise or lower the depth setting until your composition is layered as you wish. Just type in new values in the Depth box. Don't be afraid of experimenting with various depths and change them if necessary to avoid interference with other patterns on your layout.

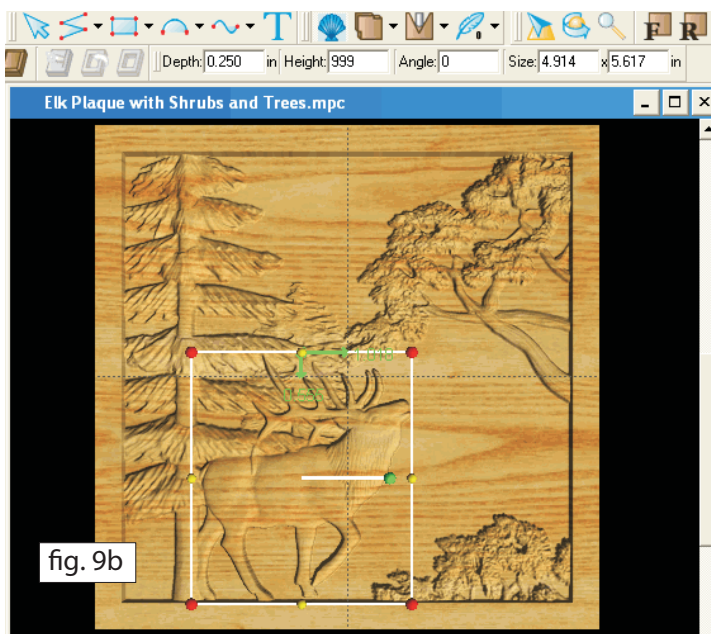
Pattern Layering & Composition in Designer

STEP 9

You may need to change the Height setting on some patterns to achieve the look you're after. (I changed the background pine tree to 50% height so that it was set back farthest in the carving.)



Lastly, I changed the elk's Height setting to "999" to make absolutely sure it remained in the foreground and no portions of patterns behind it would "poke" through. I was able to leave all the other patterns at the normal "100%" default height, in this particular example.



We're finished with the layout, but there is one final thing you always want to be sure to do before saving the project for uploading to your memory card. That is, selecting Bit Optimization: BEST for every pattern on your board. You do this by selecting a pattern, then right-click, hover over "Bit Optimization" to get the fly-out menu of options, then select "Bit Optimization: BEST"

Repeat this for each pattern. If you skip this step, then your carvings will lose details, and not look as good as they are designed to be! Don't forget...always set "Bit Optimization: BEST" for your patterns as your final step in the design process.



IN CONCLUSION

It's really fun to create your own custom layouts with the Designer software using the layering techniques we've reviewed here. I hope you've enjoyed this brief tutorial from your friends at CarveWright.com !

Watch for next month's issue of **CarveWright Tips & Tricks** where we'll explore the "mysteries" of grouping patterns and objects along with the merge features of Designer.

Happy Carving!

Special thanks to Michael Tyler of www.carvebuddy.com for providing the content for this wonderful tip.