A peek under the hood

BY JONATHAN BINZEN

Aled Lewis designed radically different joinery for the two pairs of legs on his "Wish Desk" (see the back cover). The outside legs, which function like breadboard ends, are attached to the desk with eight floating tenons. He glued the tenons at the edge of the desk to both the desktop and the leg; he left the inner tenons unglued in the oversize mortises in the desktop so the top could move with the seasons. To attach the inner pair of legs to the underside of the desktop, Lewis combined a segmented sliding dovetail with a pair of slip tenons. The slip tenons lock the legs in place, while the sliding dovetail—which is glued to the leg but not the desktop—supports the top and keeps it flat without restricting its movement. To assemble the table, Lewis started with the inner legs, gluing them to their rail and then gluing in the slip tenons and sliding dovetails. The outer legs came next, and Lewis glued the legs to the desktop and the rail in one operation.

INNOVATIVE JOINERY KEEPS DESKTOP FLAT AND STABLE

Lewis's novel but simple-looking desk required an unorthodox combination of joints.

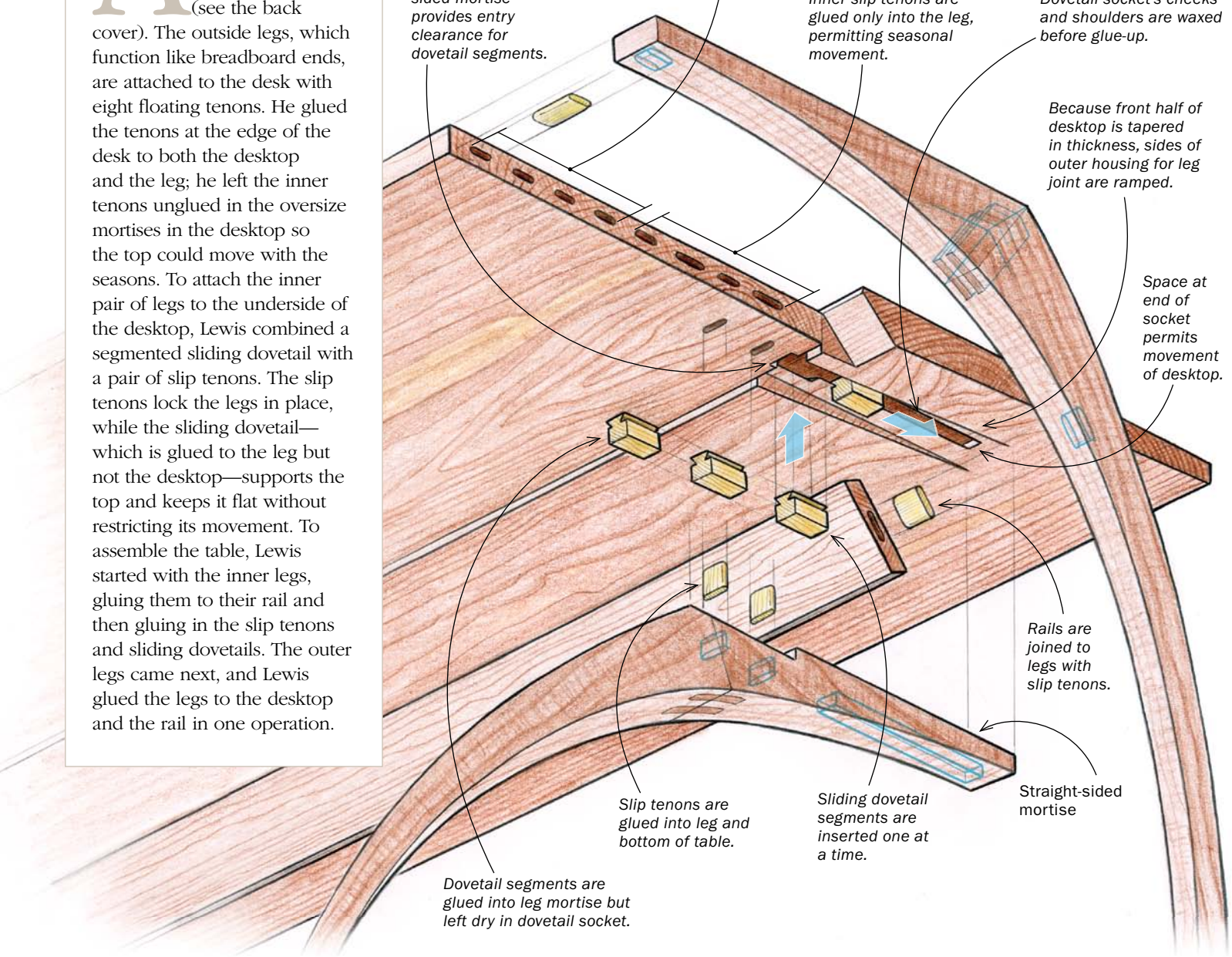

Photo: Jim Dugan; drawing: John Tetreault