

Dala Style Horses

Dala Horses come from the Dalarna area of Sweden. While it is possible to carve them with an axe and a knife, most horses are now carved from a pre-sawn blank. Traditionally made with pine or birch, the blank in this kit is pine. Pine is a soft wood, making it easy for beginners. Since neither this horse, nor the wood or I come from Dalarna, I am choosing to call these Dala Style Horses. You will carve it in exactly the same way, with similar materials as the ones from Sweden. Paired with proper knife grips, a Dala Style Horse makes a great first carving project.

These horses were usually painted a solid color, the rosemaling, or painted, stylized flowers, were painted over that color. To assist in painting I have included a small hole in the bottom of the blank and a skewer. This will allow you to paint the entire horse without worrying about setting it on wet paint.

General Instructions.

Your goal is to remove the saw marks and the corners from the sawn blank. On corner A of the drawing to the right a corner is being removed with a knife. Removing those corners creates a chamfer, or a secondary flat surface as in corner c. This just gives the blank a more finished look. After you have removed the corners you can easily go back and remove the saw marks from the sawn surfaces. Don't be afraid to go over it a few times to get the look you want.

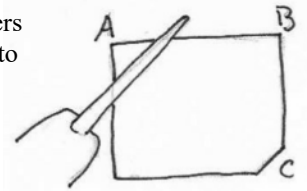
On the side view the arrows show the direction your knife should cut to remove the corners and the saw marks. Cutting in the opposite direction may cause the wood to catch and break off. The nose and the ears are the most delicate parts, so take special care in those areas.

The last picture shows the horse as looking from the front. You will notice that to smooth between the legs you start at the middle of the triangle and work down. This can be tricky to do. It is usually helpful to use the very tip of your carving knife or to use a smaller knife in this area.

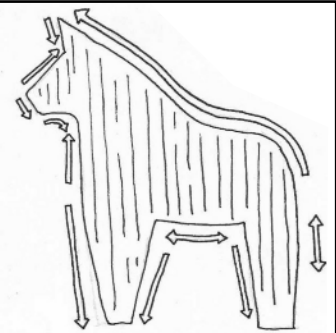
Some people like to round and narrow the nose. The arrows show the best way to do that without breaking the nose.

To cut the ears, make small downward 'V' shaped cuts removing a little at a time until they are the shape you want. Trying to remove too much at once may break off and ear resulting in a one eared horse...or maybe a unicorn.

Removing corners with your knife to create chamfers gives a finished look.



Follow the arrows with your knife to get a clean cut.



Don't forget to carve between the front and back legs to get a nice finish there.

