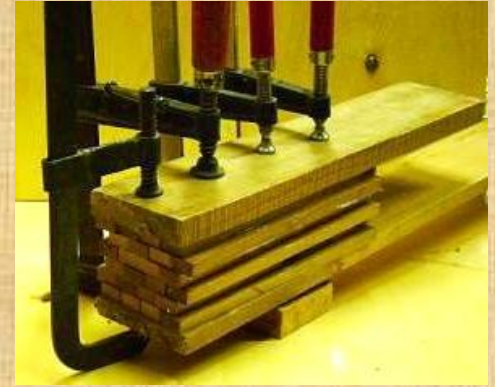
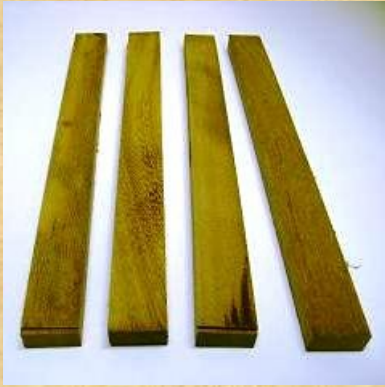


SEGMENTED HULL CONSTRUCTION

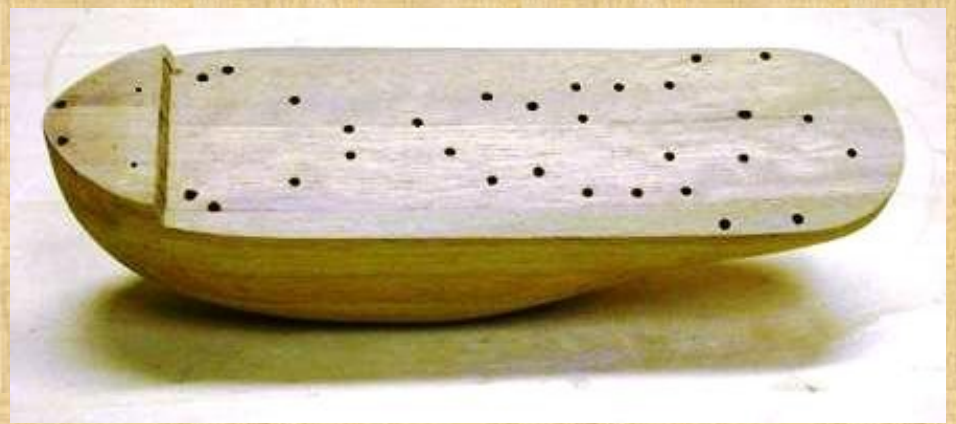
BY Fernando Berretta



Fernando Berretta, of Italy, has shared his system of inserting a ship's hull that is much larger than the bottle opening. The basic component for the hull is several layers of individual strips; the number and size of the wood strips is determined by what can fit through the bottle opening. The first layer of strips is laid out without being glued, then a piece of paper (Fernando uses brown parcel paper), is glued over the first layer using PVA glue. Apply just enough glue to attach the paper as it will be removed later with a damp brush.

The next layer of strips is then glued to on the top side of the paper, staggering the joints. This process is continued until enough layers have been built up to complete the hull. The layering and gluing should be done all at once, then clamped and allowed to dry overnight. You will then have what is effectively a solid block of wood that can be cut and shaped as desired.

Once the shaping is complete drill holes through the hull from top to bottom; keep in mind that these holes should be placed so that each strip of wood in each layer can later be pinned back together using dowels made from toothpicks.





After the hull is shaped and sanded, and all holes have been drilled layers can be separated. This can be done by wetting each sheet of paper with a damp brush, then carefully prying between the layers. Any remaining paper or glue should be scraped off.

The last step is to glue pins, made from toothpicks, into the top half of each strip that corresponds with a mating hole on the underside of the strip that goes above it. This allows the hull to be easily re-assembled in the bottle in an orderly fashion.

This article is reproduced from member Greg Alvey's wonderful website FolkArtInBottles.com

Greg Alvey has used a similar construction method in the past using rubber cement. He points out it's necessary to be careful not to prematurely separate the pieces, but it has not been a problem for him yet. When the hull has been shaped the pieces can be twisted apart without soaking, and the residual glue is easily rubbed off. The real benefit of this option is that the rubber cement does not add any thickness that could later result in gaps.

