

Groom Box

In North Carolina I'd been given a description of a groom box: maybe four feet high, two-and-a-half wide, of two shells hinged together, to hold on shelves all the odds-and-ends it takes to make "the show go on," from miniscule mane-braiding-rubber-bands to aerosol sheens and trigger-pump fly sprays.

Damn, that was a heavy box.

And then they packed it with the show stuff.

It must have been a killer to tote, and not much fun to work out of. They probably wasted a bench just to stand it on, just so stuff on its bottom shelf didn't crick their backs to reach.

Fast-forward to Illinois: That groom box had been sold for \$35 (not to my pocket, not that I noticed). And might I, please, I was asked, might I make a new one?

Keri says that at shows trainers stop and ask her about her "groom boxes." So don't kill your back. The stuff is always secure in locked trailers and tack stalls, even if this transport-and-presentation mode looks as insecure as would a cardboard suitcase. She says it needs new paint, but the save-money and don't-spill liquids "concepts" stand out, even so.

I measure this one at about thirty-eight inches high, by twenty-nine wide, with shelves six inches deep. It's made of nominal one-by material, with a quarter-inch back (glued and nailed). Keri says to make it out of balsa wood (and I know what she's saying, but I think her suggestion of better handles could make this trade-off in materials irrelevant). Between-shelves, measures are about nine inches, ten inches, and sixteen inches. Do these measures as you please. You know what you drag around. Analyze

heights (lay a few items out on the ground, as if on shelves). The rope is six feet long between the hooks (which runs through holes just under the top board), and the “over-the-stall-wall” hooks are bent-over landscape spikes (illus. 1).



I'll circle back: this is a “concept” item; I apologize even for the measurements.

Here's how it works:

The hinges are gone: two kids could carry one of these if you use what Keri rightly suggests: stamped metal through-handles for the sides; I'd just used wood scraps, and an adult has to stand behind the box to get the grip to move it.

Item 1: The groom box's cardboard door does not hinge. Hinged stuff takes up wall space (though not illustrated, the lid can sandwich perfectly between the box and the wall). As given, wall depth is six inches, but strips of wood about 2 inches deep have been glued and nailed to the top and bottom front of the box, the lower to hold a strip of shoe molding (1/2 by 3/4 inch), and the top as a both a dust shield and as a (and there is

no word in English for this thought) “holder-for-clips” (clips made of 16-penny duplex nails if you got ‘em, otherwise brights will do).

Item 2: Make sure you make some vertical dividers (illus. 2): As you pack to move your groom box, and as you have odds-and-ends of spillable liquids, pick out the rightly-sized compartment and pack it neatly full of upright items. You put the door in front of them, they’ll be upright when you get home. You see the black marker shape on the cardboard lid here? The second groom box has differently spaced compartments. Figure out what might work for you.



The shoe-mold works well, they say, to hold spray-bottles (illus. 3).

It needs new paint? I’ll bet that doesn’t happen until next spring and show season gets back into peoples’ dreams.

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