

"Portable" Blacksmithing - an Anvil & Vise Bench

One of my many attempts to make blacksmithing portable was the creation of a combination anvil stand, vise post and tool box. Pictured to the right is the beast in 'travel' mode.

It consists of a heavy bench with a hinged post, an anvil base, a set of removable wheels and associated storage. As shown, it can be rolled up a ramp and into a truck or positioned at a demo site.



The basic construction is a set of 2x6 legs, flanked by a set of 2x4's (on either side of the leg and at the top and bottom of the leg set) (see pic to right). All are fastened with lag screws and glue. A pair of 2x6's form the top deck and a sheet of plywood runs from the lower surface of the upper 2x4's and from the upper surface of the lower 2x4's to tie the bench together. Sheet material closes off the sides between the legs (the left side cover can be removed for access to the interior)



Note the flanking blocks on the rear/lower 2x4. The post rotates down and between those blocks and is held in place with a heavy adjustable 'U' bolt that inserts into holes just forward of the rearmost 2x4. The post is a stack of 4 2x6's onto which a post-vise is bolted. The vise mount was modified to fit the post..



In this picture, you can clearly see the flanking

2x4's. The anvil was held on using a set of blocks shaped to fit the base of the anvil. One of the blocks was held down with wingnuts.

Suspended from the upper piece of plywood (seen here just under the deck with the blue strap) was a drawer that was accessible from the left side. The drawer held all the little stuff (matches, rivets, punches, etc) that usually gets left at home.



The area between the front legs had a sliding door and the various bottles and cans of stuff (wax, hand-cleaner, flux, etc.) were stored behind it). The wheels are welded on an shaft and the shaft is held to the bench by a pair of 'U' shaped brackets. When the bench was in the 'use' location, I would tilt it up to rest on the post (which is still folded down on the deck). A couple of wingnut bolts were removed, the shaft dropped free, and the bench placed back on it's feet. The wheels went back into the truck, the post was swung into the upright and locked, and the anvil placed on the bench.



The bench served me well for many years and has only been recently replaced by a trailer assembly. It has the advantage that you can load it with all the tools and bits and pieces you need. You then only need to remember to bring one big item rather than tens of little items. The downside is pushing all the weight up and down a ramp - just make sure the wheels are wide enough to roll over soft ground.