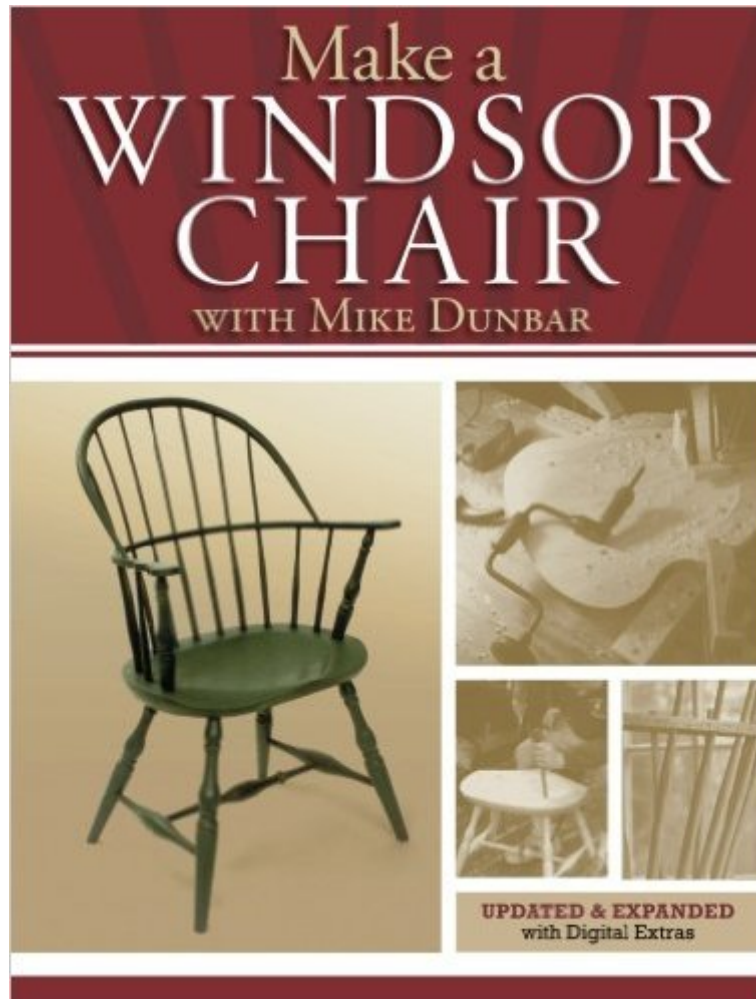


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# Make A Windsor Chair: The Updated And Expanded Classic



## Synopsis

The ultimate guide to chairmaking! Making a Windsor chair is one of the purest forms of woodworking--and one of the most fulfilling. With a few specialized tools, greenwood straight from the forest and some expert instruction, even beginners can craft an heirloom. In this book, chairmaking expert Mike Dunbar will show you exactly how. Dunbar, who has personally taught more than 3,000 students over the last 30 years, details every step in building sackback and continuous-arm Windsors. You'll learn how to: Choose and use the tools you need for efficient work. Carve a comfortable seat. Make well-proportioned legs, stretchers and spindles. Rive and steam-bend a chair back. Assemble joints for a perfect fit the first time. Plus, this expanded edition (with 32 additional pages) includes a chapter on fixing chairmaking mistakes, one of the most common issues Mike's students ask about. Follow the professional tricks, tips, and techniques in this updated and expanded edition and you'll have a chair that will stay tight and true for generations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This new edition is incomplete. A assembly drawing of the " C ' arm chair is not in this edition!!! there is therefore not enough information to "make a "C" arm Windsor chair. This drawing was in the original edition from which I made two "C" arm chairs. The assembly drawing of the saddle back is in the new edition but not the "C" arm. I cant understand how an apparently thoughtful guy like Mike Dunbar could release this book without the " C " arm drawing. Mike Widman Jacksonville, FL.

This is an important and useful update of Dunbar's original 1984 edition. It includes many of the improved techniques that Michael and his students have worked out during the past thirty years. I have the impression, perhaps from reading some of the reviews of the older book, that people have actually built Windsors using the 84 edition as a guide, so this book should be helpful if you contemplate building one of these beauties using this book as your only guide. It would also be a welcome addition to the library of anyone who has built a Windsor chair either on their own or in one of Dunbar's classes. Good as this book is, it does have some deficiencies. The main one consists of some gaping holes in the section dealing with the Continuing Arm Windsor. Dunbar has left the working drawing of the C-Arm, that appeared on page 139 of the 1984 edition, out of the new edition. However, he does give boring angles on page 55 of the new edition. Other important information contained in this drawing is absent, though you can probably figure out the missing spindle spacing in the bow simply by eye. In the section on assembling the upper part of the C-Arm (chapter 9 in the old book and chapter 11 in the new one) all of the pictures of Mike marking, drilling and wedging are in the new edition, but the running commentary, that represents 90% of the chapter's text has been left out. Finally, in the chapter on making spindles he dutifully gives the dimensions for the new Sack Back Windsor but does not do the same for the C-Arm. If you use the uncorrected lengths you will end up with eleven spindles that are an inch or two too short to fit in the new chair, a wasted effort, to say nothing of time and materials. I know the correct dimensions only because I made one in one of his classes in 1996 and have the chair as well as his class printout to guide me. Conclusion: I built my first Windsor in one of Michael's classes so I cannot honestly say how easy it would be to build one using this book alone; experienced wood workers: yes, probably; others: probably not. Even experienced woodworkers might, at best, find it would be difficult to build a C-arm just from the information in this book, but, more likely, impossible. I have a few other quibbles with the new edition. Mike has left most of the original book intact followed by information in bold print explaining new techniques developed over the years since the original edition was published. This is a nice feature if you are interested in the evolution of his approach to building a Windsor but it could lead to some disastrous results in actually building a chair if you are not careful. It would also be nice to see a chapter on the specialized sets of tools required to build a Windsor. Dunbar's expert knowledge in this area would be invaluable. Most of the vintage ones are gone or long forgotten and the newer versions are sometimes difficult to find and range from excellent to awful. You can find a few of them on his website, available for purchase, but some; such as spoon bits that can be used, with a bit of touching up, right out of the box; are absent from

his catalogue. Despite these reservations, I recommend this book wholeheartedly. Put quite simply, there is no book on building Windsors that contains so much useful information.

You can glean a few principles from this book such as how the chair is held together by tension and by the use of wedged, tapered tenons; all critical things to know. However, his explanations of many of the key instructions for the continuous arm chair are poorly worded, unclear, and should have been augmented with diagrams. One gets the impression he is just trying to whet your appetite to attend his classes via this book, not actually explain how to do anything. One example is the diagram of the continuous arm bending form. Is it the new diagram for the new 58" arm? Or, is it the old diagram and you're supposed to change the dimensions of the diagram for the new arm length? If so, by how much are we to change it? The only reference is the bold print on p. 88, which says: "Our new c-arm is 58" long. The area in the center for the vertical bend is 3/4" thick by 7/8" deep. The distance from the center line to the drop is 15". When I enlarged my c-arm set, I added 1" to the height and width of the bending form block." Got that? Yeah, poorly worded, and one has NO IDEA whether the form in the book is the new form, or the old one. And, there's no way to figure this out on your own. This is particularly confusing because on the new seat diagram he clearly labels it as the NEW seat dimensions, which would lead one to believe that the bending form, which is not labeled as new, must be the old bending form dimensions since they're not labeled as new? The book is riddled with such examples. Mike knows his stuff but he should hire a competent editor for the next edition, if there ever is one. This edition is disastrous.

This is the best book on Windsor chair making I've ever read. It's great even for first time chair makers. It has excellent explanations of every step in the process. Finally, the photos are terrific in showing the set-ups needed in virtually every phase. Keep it handy near your workbench.

The book has been updated and contains some of the materials from Mike Dunbar's class. Mike has lots of experience teaching Windsor chair building and has had more than 3000 students take his classes. The book seems quite exhaustive to me, considering the book was great to begin with and now there's all sorts of new information and tips. Another reviewer couldn't find a continuous arm assembly drawing in the book, upon a quick inspection, it does appear there is a page missing with a drawing of the chair and all measurements, though there are drawings of the individual elements. All the information is in the book to build the chair, but this measurement cheat sheet is missing. I do highly recommend taking a class with Mike, it's a real treat.

I agree with other reviews that this book is missing important information and that it seems to be written to whet the appetite so that readers will enroll in the author's classes. Many of us simply do not learn a thing in group environments like classrooms, requiring the peace of our workshops or studios to figure things out. With too much rambling and imprecise text, and not nearly enough clear illustrations, this book fails at being a good resource. What would have been an excellent appendix on using perspective to evaluate and modify Windsor design is without a single drawing, rendering it useless. Many of the photos are not terribly useful; no one needs to see the author using a handplane, for instance; as woodworkers, we are familiar with this tool. I regret buying this book.

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