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Table of Contents



PHOTOS: PETER YATES/REDUX PLUS (TOP, COVER)

36

Features

- 36 SURGING IN SEATTLE:** Riverside Cabinet Co. has thrived in its niche in the Pacific Northwest through an honesty that draws repeat customers.
- 42 SMOOTH OPERATOR:** Ergonomics is now the guiding principle in the way that we design and function in the shop.
- 46 IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE A STICKY SITUATION:** Researching the right sanding products for the job won't be a grind with these helpful suggestions.

News Desk

- | | |
|---|---|
| 12 New planners lend boost to Philly furniture show. | 18 New WMIA vice president plans future growth. |
| 14 New CMA executive director takes the helm. | 34 WOOD MARKETS: Bright days continue for black walnut sales. |
| 16 Vermont woodworker wins WMMA's Baldwin Award. | |

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Booth #4609





24



51

Tools & Techniques

- 20 You just can't live without bits, blades and cutters.
- 24 Thermwood updates CNC machining center.
- 25 Virutex offers combo saw to U.S. market.
- 26 Kreg Tool updates router table system.
- 27 Martin offers new Hebrock 3000 edgebanders.

Departments

- 7 Taking Stock
- 51 At the Galleries
- 53 New Products
- 59 Calendar
- 61 Classified
- 64 Out of the Woodwork

Columns

- 28 **FINISHING:**
The burn-in process.
By Greg Williams
- 35 **THE CUTTING EDGE:**
Easy digital shortcuts.
By R.W. Lee

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BLOGS



Over the Workbench

Talkin' shop with former editor A.J. Hamler



This Business about Woodworking

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TAKING STOCK

with TOD RIGGIO

Festool's German production leaves little room for error

I'm told that German beer — which according to the Reinheitsgebot ("purity decree") can only be made from water, hops, malt and yeast — does not produce a hangover. After extensive testing, I can say this is mostly true. But the rules change when you throw on your lederhosen and head to a beer festival in Stuttgart.

Yes, that's me in the picture. What you can't see are another dozen or so North American woodworking industry writers and editors in similar dress, part of a week-long invite from Festool to tour its manufacturing facilities around southern Germany.



This was my second visit to Germany at Festool's request. In 2006, we were introduced to the Domino joinery system before it hit the U.S. market. It was love at first sight by the tool junkies that attend these events.

For this trip, like the previous one, we had no idea what to expect. The itinerary was top secret. We arrived in Munich and took a luxury bus to a Stuttgart hotel, where the secrecy continued. For most of the next three days, Festool had our undivided attention, making new product presentations, showing its manufacturing processes and testing facilities, and providing insight to what I can only describe as the Festool way.

For example, we learned that it takes about four years to bring a tool from concept to market, 80 percent of the tools are made in Germany and the company has pretty much perfected lean manufacturing. My quick impressions from watching the assembly line: Productivity and performance is measured around the clock; the employees know this and work hard as a team, assembling and packaging complete tools in a U-shaped work cell; and slackers were nowhere to be seen.

Festool says it will launch 12 new tools in 2015. The Conturo KA 65 edgebander is this year's Domino and it's a great example of Festool's engineers studying what the competition has to offer, creating an entirely new tool and completing a thorough testing procedure before its release.

The Conturo is a hand-held, portable edgebander that can apply wood, plastic and

continued on Page 10

Working with tools and wood is inherently dangerous. We try to give our readers tips that will enhance their understanding of woodworking. But our best advice is to make safety your first priority. Always read your owner's manuals, work with properly maintained equipment and use safety devices such as blade guards, push sticks and eye protection. Don't do things you're not sure you can do safely, including the techniques described in this publication or in others. Seek proper training if you have questions about woodworking techniques or the functions of power machinery.



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melamine edging with a height of 23/32" to 2-9/16" (18-65 mm) and thickness of 1/32" to 1/8" (0.5-3 mm) to straight and curved surfaces. It features a self-contained glue cartridge system that eliminates glue-pit related hassles while allowing for rapid color changes.

Festool has several new cordless tools, starting with the 36-volt TSC 55 plunge-cut saw. It's powered by two 15- or 18-volt batteries, which can be used in any combination or with just one battery to reduce weight. It's also compatible with the company's guide rail and accessory system.

There are two new 18-volt drills — the Quadradrive with a four-speed gear unit and the C 18 — plus the BHC 18 hammer drill that will be available June 1, along with the TSC 55 and currently available Conturo.

This fall, Festool is scheduled to release an 18-volt circular saw, two 10.8-volt compact drills (TXS and CXS) and the ETS EC 150 random orbit sander.

We'll provide more information in upcoming issues. But for now, Bis wir uns wieder treffen ("Till we meet again"). [W](#)



A Festool dealer showroom in Aichstetten, Bavaria.

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NEWS DESK



A new owner held its first Philadelphia Invitational, which opened with the traditional log-cutting ceremony.

New planners lend boost to Philly furniture show

By Jennifer Hicks

The new stewards of the Philadelphia Invitational Furniture Show reported a doubling in attendance over 2014 at an event that showcased a wide range of furniture design types for every taste and style.

The 21st annual show was held April 10-12 at the 23rd St. Armory in downtown Philadelphia. The show is an annual exhibition and sale featuring the works of juried artists focused on furniture and other hand-made custom objects for the home and office.

Stefa Normantas, director of Green Tree Events, which purchased the show from former director Josh Markel last year, attributes her organization's success to strategic planning and networking many months before the show.

"We had just put in such a huge effort into making this show happen and it did pay off. We doubled the attendance, we brought in different media partners and we also had the Audubon Society as part of our preview night. The exhibitors were raving that it was the best preview night they've ever had," Normantas says.

"We also brought in other partners like the American Society of Interior Designers and brought in furniture designers as well, so we had a great mix of partners and I was really excited about the energy on the floor."

Attendance was estimated at about 1,500 and there were about 50 exhibitors.

Normantas says exhibitors were pleased with the quality of potential buyers who seemed to be willing to spend this year.

She also reports an abundance of high-quality and diverse work.

"I saw a great mix from the modern end of things, from straight lines to whimsical, so there were a lot of different influences. What I'm particularly proud of was that there was something for everybody style-wise and there was a really nice diversity. It probably skewed more modern and with a Shaker influence," Normantas says.

"The energy on the floor was really focused on furniture and maintaining the highest quality and a vision of making this the best furniture show in the country. We had feedback from the exhibitors after the show and they're all on board — they can't wait until next year. They're really committed to spread the word about the show and we're just really excited." **W**

Contact: Green Tree Events, 35 Storer St., Saco, ME 04072. Tel: 207-781-2982. www.philaifs.com

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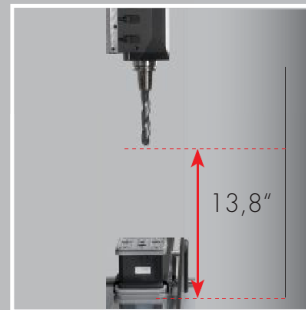
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New CMA executive director takes the helm

By Jennifer Hicks

Jim McDermott is back for his second term as executive director of the Cabinet Makers Association. The founding board member succeeds Dave Grulke, who's moving on after five years at the helm.

McDermott, the CMA's executive director from 2007-2009, owned a shop in New York and resides in Irvine, Calif. He's spent most of the last five years sailing in the Caribbean, but says he's ready to be fully involved in the woodworking industry.

The CMA is a professional organization for small shops to network and share their experiences.

"I've been involved with the CMA since Day One and, on a personal level, I want to see it succeed," McDermott says. "The board of directors and I are interested in improving our member services, to accomplish more of what the association was originally started for, which was to have regional networking meetings and education sessions, where members or potential members can get together and network and share information and go to seminars and shop tours."

The goal is to have four annual regional events, lasting two or three days, with two in the spring and two in the fall. Planning has started for events in the Chicago and New York City areas this fall.

"Cabinetmakers are basically introverts," McDermott says. "They tend to be very independent and they're not very great at networking, so we're trying to get them out to learn by making personal connections with people willing to share information about how they run their businesses. Going to forums and talking to people on the Internet is great, but when you meet them face to face you become friends."

"[Another] goal is to increase membership. We are a very influential association in the industry and we feel that with more shops becoming members we can not only improve their lives, but improve the industry as a whole."

McDermott adds that Grulke laid the foundation for the organization's new direction.

"Dave has done a tremendous job in five years as executive director. The CMA's financial condition is very good due to Dave's work," McDermott says.

For information, visit www.cabinetmakers.org. **W**



Jim McDermott

Bosch beginning six-month tool tour

The Bosch Lead the Charge Power Tour is scheduled to make nearly 500 stops across North America, presenting hands-on demonstration of the company latest power tools, accessories and measuring tools.

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"This is an opportunity for our users to see the full scope of the Bosch power tool, accessory and measuring tool offering in their own backyard," Dave Pizzolato, Bosch group marketing manager for power tool operations, said in a statement. "We have a message to share with users who want to use the latest technology and the best tools. The Power Tour is an easy and fun way to see innovation now."

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New WMIA vice president plans future growth

By Jennifer Hicks

Larry Hoffer recently began his new position as executive vice president of the Woodworking Machinery Industry Association and will now be responsible for running daily operations, implementing programs along with the board of directors and planning for the trade group's future growth.

Though he's new to the woodworking industry, Hoffer brings extensive experience in upper-level management. For the last 15 years he has held senior leadership positions in several industry and professional organizations, most recently as chief of staff for the Association of Science-Technology Centers in Washington, D.C. He says he was fascinated with the WMIA when he saw the job description listed.

"The WMIA seems interesting to me. I had worked at the Industrial Designers Society of America, an association of product designers, so I have some very adjunct experience there. The opportunity to take a position like this in an industry that had a little bit of overlap was exciting for me," Hoffer says.

"I think it's a great industry and it's one like a lot of industries that until you really understand the scope of it and how broad it is, you don't understand what a vibrant industry it is until you're involved in it."

His first order of business is to relocate the association from Milford, Conn., to Washington, D.C. He currently works and resides in Virginia and has been commuting back and forth to Connecticut while negotiating new office space. The idea for the move was part of the executive committee's plans when they initiated a search.

"The move dovetails nicely with one of the goals I have, which is to offer more benefits and services to our members in all three member categories we have, the importers, distributors and associate members. That's going to be a comprehensive effort where I'll be working with our board and committee leaders to ascertain what our members' current level of satisfaction is with our membership and figuring out what more we can do to provide greater value to our membership."

The WMIA has about 120 member companies. Hoffer will also work on boosting that number.

He also wants to get members more engaged in association activities, which he says is the best way to ensure a deep pool of future leaders for the association. That effort started at the Woodworking Industry Conference, which was held April 21-24 in San Antonio.

"WIC works. It's one of the strongest benefits we offer by helping members make business connections and learn," Hoffer says. "We want to figure out how to make it better and more valuable to those who attend and also ask those who didn't attend what might have encouraged them. We already have plans lined up for WIC 2016, which will be April 12-16 in Cancun at the CasaMagna Marriott Resort."

Hoffer officially began his position on March 30 and succeeds Riccardo Azzoni, who served as executive vice president from 2011-2014. www.wmia.org

Contact: WMIA, 27 Main St., Suite 1, New Milford, CT 06776. Tel: 860-350-9642. www.wmia.org



Larry Hoffer

Sherwin-Williams enters prefinished wood flooring coatings market

Sherwin-Williams Product Finishes recently announced it will supply the North American OEM flooring market with a new line of prefinish coatings.

The first product offerings include UV-curable wood flooring coating systems.

The company enters the North American market with systems for residential and commercial applications, including ceramic topcoats, high-Taber sealers, armor coat, UV oil, hydro primers, dual-cure putty, and fillers and sealers.

"This new family of coatings for flooring manufacturers leverages our history in

North America of offering consumers and manufacturers high performance product finishes, and builds upon success and insights we have gained from supporting the flooring industry in Europe," Laura Kelleher, the company's vice president of global marketing, said in a statement.

"Together these traditions will enable us to bring the high level of customer support and product innovation required to serve OEMs in the North American prefinished wood flooring market."

For information, visit <http://oem.sherwin-williams.com/flooring>.

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Vermont woodworker wins WMMA's Baldwin Award

By Jennifer Hicks

John Schultz, a Vermont business owner, inventor and industry supporter, was recently honored with the Wood Machinery Manufacturers of America's Ralph B. Baldwin Award at the annual Woodworking Industry Conference, which was held April 21-41 in San Antonio.

Schultz is president of Super Thin Saws in Waterbury, Vt., and the WMMA's immedi-

ate past president. He graduated from MIT in 1971 and opened Schultz Tool Sharpening, which later became Super Thin Saws, specializing in thin kerf sawing. His company has been a WMMA member for about 25 years.

"Well it's certainly humbling," Schultz says. "It's flattering, too. But it's particularly humbling to get added to the list of [past recipients]."



John Schultz

"WMMA is a wonderful organization for many reasons and different members would probably rate different benefits in a different order. For me, I think the greatest benefit is networking with other small companies that have faced similar issues."

Schultz has been an active volunteer in the WMMA, serving on engineering standards, membership development and manufacturing committee, as well as the board of directors.

"We are honored to present John Schultz with this year's Baldwin Award," WMMA president Jamison Scott said in a statement.

"He has shown extraordinary commitment and dedication to our association and our industry over the years. I cannot think of an individual more deserving of this honor." 



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New jobsite speaker from Porter-Cable

Porter-Cable will introduce a new 20-volt Bluetooth Speaker, model PCC772B), in July. The four-inch speaker can be plugged into an electrical outlet or run off the company's 20-volt Max lithium ion battery.

It will retail for \$59.97 without the battery. For information, visit www.porter-cable.com.

Stiles Education becomes Stiles University

Stiles Machinery Inc. says that after 25 years, Stiles Education will become Stiles University.

This distinction provides students the opportunity to receive college credit for selected Stiles courses. It also aligns Stiles University to further develop affiliations with government agencies and institutions of higher education, according to the company.

"Becoming a University was the next step for our education program," Duane Griffiths, director of Stiles University, said in a statement. "Continuous learning is

crucial to our industry. It is driven by technological advances and the training needs of our customers to optimize their production. This collaboration opens up many more doors for us to even further grow and develop our education and training to better serve the industry".

Through a new collaboration with Pittsburgh State University, Stiles University graduates will be able to additionally earn credit hours that may be applied towards an associate or bachelor's degree.

For information, visit www.stilesmachinery.com.

Remodeling growth predicted to stabilize by year's end

The healthy gains in residential remodeling activity estimated for 2014 and the first part of 2015 are expected to decelerate, but then gain a little more traction by the end of the year, according to the recently released Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity report from the Remodeling Futures Program at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

The LIRA projects annual spending for home improvements will increase a more modest 2.9 percent in 2015."

"One of the largest contributors to this dampening of remodeling growth in 2015 is the sluggish existing home sales activ-

ity last year," Chris Herbert, the center's managing director, said in a statement. "Housing turnover typically sparks significant improvement spending as new owners customize their recent purchases to fit their needs and, with sales down last year, remodeling will feel the effects this year."

"Moving forward, signs of higher growth in remodeling activity include strengthening retail sales of building materials," added Abbe Will, a research analyst in the Remodeling Futures Program. "Also, rising home equity and still favorable interest rates continue to encourage owners to reinvest in their homes."

Rockler helping to plant 10,000 trees for Earth Day

Rockler Woodworking and Hardware's partnership with the Hardwood Forestry Fund will result in the planting of 10,000 trees this spring.

The Earth Day effort involves two separate planting projects in northwestern Indiana and southeastern Ohio.

The Indiana planting will take place in May on an eight acre portion of a site called the Doak Property, managed by Purdue University. It will feature several hardwood species including black walnut, cherry, northern red oak and white oak with softwood nurse trees interspersed to optimize the health and growth of all 5,000 trees planted, according to Rockler.

A selection of 5,000 trees, including northern red oak, white oak and black walnut, will be

planted this spring on a ten acre parcel of the Gifford State Forest in Athens County, Ohio. The land is managed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and is part of its ongoing sustainable forest regeneration effort.

Both planting sites are open to the public and promote education and awareness of the sustainability of forested land.

"We are very pleased to work with the Hardwood Forestry Fund to plant thousands of trees as a celebration of Earth Day and sustainable hardwood forests," Scott Ekman, Rockler's vice president of marketing, said in a statement. "The life cycle of these trees will continually provide valuable hardwoods for up and coming generations of woodworkers."

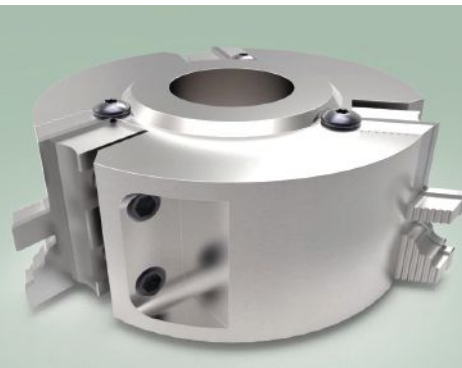
For information, visit www.rockler.com/earth-day.



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TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

You just can't live without bits, blades and cutters

The workhorse tools of the shop are often overlooked, but new advances can make you sharper and more productive

By John English

Clifton, N.J., is known for being the childhood home of David Chase, the creator of "The Sopranos." It's also home to Forrest Mfg. (www.forrestblades.com), which has been a mainstay of the woodworking industry for more than half a century.

The only other thing that Forrest has in common with "The Sopranos" is that they both know the rigors and rewards of a family-owned businesses. The company's newest offering is an 8" diameter thin kerf dado set that was designed for clean-cutting 3/16" wide grooves. These are primarily used in applications such as backer-boards or drawer bottoms. The set is comprised of two 24-

tooth outside saw blades and also comes with shims for making minor adjustments. (These might be needed when dealing with plywood thickness anomalies.) The company also offers the product in a three-component option that includes a 1/16", four-tooth chipper so it can plow exceptionally clean 3/16" to 1/4" wide grooves.

An hour's drive east of Clifton on Long Island, lies the village of Farmington. Here, good carpentry is a longstanding tradition. The first European to settle the land (in 1687) was a rum dealer and later town constable named Thomas Powell. He built a house on what would eventually be known as the Hempstead Turnpike and the structure sur-

vived for more than two centuries until 1931. Powell built a second, very similar home on Merritt's Road about a decade after the first one and that building is still standing proud.

Today, Farmingdale is home to the corporate headquarters of Amana Tool (www.amanatool.com), a company that produces solid-carbide and carbide-tipped cutting tools for the woodworking industry. Founded some 285 years after Powell staked his claim, Amana continues his tradition of excellent construction by producing industrial-quality saw blades, router bits, shaping cutters and boring bits. Among the more recent offerings from Amana is the AMS-139, which is an 18-piece general-purpose CNC router bit collection with 1/2" shanks. Along with wood, the set is designed to mill non-ferrous metals, foams, melamine, MDF, plastic laminates, acrylics, veneers, plywood and other products used in woodshops and sign making.

Also new from Amana is the RC-2247, a planing and rabbeting bit designed specifically for woodshop applications. With its 1-1/4" diameter, this bit is ideally suited to get into tight corners. The design contains two cutting flutes and two up-shear scorers and these four inserts combine to provide a smoother finish at the bottom of the cut than traditional two-knife router bits. The depth of cut is 27/64" and the bit comes with a 1/2" shank. Such an evolution in technology makes one wonder how old Tom Powell got everything done with hand tools and how much an industrious Yankee could have achieved with access to a CNC machine.

Three hours northwest of Long Island, in a sleepy little hamlet in Sullivan County that's a stone's throw from the Pennsylvania line, there's a collection of buildings at the end of a tree-lined, winding side road. Located just outside Barryville, N.Y., on the aptly-named



Among Forrest Manufacturing's new blades is this 8" diameter thin kerf dado set (DK0824316) that was designed for clean-cutting 3/16" wide grooves.



Shown in this photo taken circa 1905 by an anonymous photographer is the first of two houses built by Thomas Powell in the village that is home to Amana Tool.



Among the more recent offerings from Amana is the AMS-139, which is an 18-piece general-purpose CNC router bit collection with 1/2-inch shanks

Sawmill Road, the world headquarters of Esta-USA Inc. has been enjoying rural solitude at its finest for more than 30 years. The company (<http://estausa.com>) is the sole factory-direct source for Dispoz-A-Blade throughout North, Central and South America. The staff has only one goal: to provide woodshops with a planer and jointer knife that anyone can change accurately, quickly and economically. The system replaces original factory-issue products with double-edged disposable knives.

How it works is simplicity itself. The knives slip in place and set themselves. Self-Set knives (available in all lengths up to 36") install in the machine's ordinary stock cutterhead. They require no machine modifications or the use of jackscrews, springs, setting gauges, jigs or measuring tools. No special skills are needed to quickly change knives with precision every time.

A MIDWESTERN MINDSET

Not every old-fashioned craftsman lives in New York. In the woods of northern Wisconsin, surrounded by sawmills and veneer factories, two brothers continue a long family tradition of producing high-quality cutting tools for the woodworking market. Back in 1992, Ron and Mike Serwa got together and created the Vortex Tool Co. In the ensuing decades, the company has become one of the most diversified sources of quality cutting tools in the industry. A lot of its business involves custom tooling and the innovative nature of that process often spills into its standard product line. The Vortex engineering team constantly comes up with really interesting new ideas, which eventually appear in the company's downloadable catalog (found at www.vortextool.com).

One of their most recent projects is a line of XP (Xtreme Performance) cutting tools. After extensive in-house testing and a survey of woodworking customers, Vortex has ascertained that XP series tooling delivers three to five times more tool life than standard tool geometry. Originally designed for cutting high-pressure laminates and melamine, users have found that they also deliver excellent results in particleboard and MDF. They are available in two and three flute compression style geometries, as well as down-cut spirals.

Vortex's team has been so impressed with their performance that several XP products are now included in one of the company's startup packages for new CNC router owners. The No. 5000 Kit is a 26-piece collection of cutters complete with accessories that are designed to get new users off to a running start.

Any woodshop manager thinking of building dovetailed boxes in-



Also new from Amana is the RC-2247 planing and rabbeting bit, an insert tool that is ideally suited to get into tight corners.

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house — or wanting to change the way they're currently being done — might enjoy taking a look at Vortex's flat table dovetail drawer system (Kits Nos. 7500 and 7600). Engineered around a couple of innovative insert profiles, the system allows users to quickly and easily make dovetail drawer components with a nested base format. A single shaft can be used to mount either one of two different insert profiles, delivering a traditional sharp-cornered tail or an elegantly round-cornered one.

There is no word in English that rhymes

with orange and that uniqueness is a fitting way to describe Greensboro, N.C., manufacturer CMT Orange Tools (www.cmtutensili.com). Actually, the U.S. location is a branch of a Pesaro, Italy-based parent company that has been delivering fine European engineering to woodshops since 1962. Because of an intense investment in advanced technology (the company's entire production facility is now completely automated), CMT is able to offer prime industrial tooling in the U.S. at an affordable price.



Vortex kit No. 5000 is a 26-piece collection of cutters complete with accessories that are designed to get new users off to a running start.



Vortex's dovetail drawer system (Kit Nos. 7500 and 7600) allows users to quickly and easily make dovetail drawer components with a nested base format.

In January, CMT introduced several new cutting tools. Its laser-point router bits are designed to make fine incisions so precise and delicate that they look as though a laser cut them. A new pattern/flush-trim router bit with insert knives comes with both top and bottom bearing guides. There are new solid carbide up- and down-cut spiral bits, new V-grooving bits for Alucobond and even new router bits built specifically for Festool's Domino joiners.

Another manufacturer that is heavily invested in state-of-the-art technology is Charles Schmidt & Co. Inc. (www.cggschmidt.com). Its new HSK corrugated cutterheads are constructed from alloy steel with a hardened and ground HSK locking device. Rated for 12,000 rpm, they will run on any HSK machine and are made for 1/4", 5/16" and 3/8" thick knives. The two-knife heads are available with a 12- or 20-degree cutting angle, and custom lengths, cutting angles and HSK arbors are available. They are also certified by Weinig USA to run on its molders.

Since the 1970s, Freeborn Tool Co. (www.freeborntool.com) in Spokane, Wash., has been a leading manufacturer of tooling for the wood-working industry. Now the engineers at Freeborn have come up with a new three-piece cope and pattern insert set that is designed to

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The new HSK corrugated cutter-heads from Charles Schmidt & Co. Inc. are constructed from alloy steel with a hardened and ground HSK locking device.

avoid any loose tongue and groove issues due to spindle misalignment. This set allows a woodworker to adjust the cope side as needed to compensate for any loose fit.

SERVICE AND SILENCE

When those knives get dull and you didn't go disposable, it might be time to get hold of Jim or Dan Povinelli. The father-son team leads what is widely regarded as the Northeast's premier tool-sharpening service. Connecticut Saw & Tool (www.ctsaw.com) has been owned and operated now by four generations of the same family. They and their team of 18 employees precisely grind profile knives for all shapers and molders and ship them nationwide. It carries a large inventory of bits, blades and cutters from manufacturers such as Amana, Freeborn, CNC Tooling, CMT, Freud, Whiteside, Onsrud, W&H, Wisconsin Knife Works and most other leading brands. And Connecticut Saw & Tool provides service or sharpening for every single product it sells.

Lyndhurst, N.J., is home to Ridge Carbide Tool Co. (<http://ridgecarbide-tool.com>), another highly reputable sharpener of blades, bits, cutters and knives. And the team at Ridge Carbide also makes custom tools in a hurry. They build custom router bits, shaper cutters and profile knives so fast that their website claims it's "practically overnight." Just mail, email or fax your drawings to the addresses on the website and they can build router bits (large and small), CNC bits, William & Hussey knives, Shop Fox profile knives, corrugated back knives, groovers and slot cutters.

The German manufacturer Leuco Tool Corp. (www.leucotool.com) has four U.S. locations with a regional headquarters in Villa Rica, Ga. The company's latest innovation is a line of "no-noise" saw blades. The design of both the tooth geometry and tool body provides excellent quality cuts in almost all conventional wood-based panels, as well as solid woods. Leuco Diamax tips offer very long tool life and guarantee two sharpenings. Smaller chip gullets lead to that low sound level — up to 6 dB less noise when idling — which makes it just a little more comfortable to work on the shop floor.

Machines might do the heavy lifting, but bits, blades and cutters make all the difference in the quality of a job. It's what you put on the arbor that counts. After all, a planer without a knife is just furniture.

As Tony Soprano was fond of saying: "What use is an unloaded gun?" **W**

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TOOLS & TECHNIQUES



Thermwood updates CNC machining center

By Jennifer Hicks

Thermwood redesigned its FrameBuilder 53 series 3-axis CNC machining center, adding rack-and-pinion drives for the X and Y axes and a new gantry.

The FrameBuilder is a roller hold-down machine that was specifically developed for machining upholstery frames and other sheet goods that are not easily held by a vacuum while machining. The rollers keep the material tight against the table while being processed. This system is particularly useful for materials like melamine and lower grades of plywood, according to product manager Jason Susnjara.

"We've been manufacturing the machine for decades," Susnjara says. "It's designed for any type of sheet good that requires rollers instead of vacuum backing because that material is usually a low-grade type plywood

that can't be held with the usual suction of a vacuum CNC machine. Because we've made these particular changes, we can now have faster speeds and also with the bigger moving gantry that is stiffer we can add more options for different types of tooling as well."

The standard FrameBuilder has four rollers positioned in pairs on each side of the spindle. A dual-head option is also available to make simultaneous cuts for two identical parts.

The machine has a stationary table available in 5'x10', 5'x12', 5'x15' and 5'x20' sizes. Larger tables can be custom-ordered.

Standard configuration includes an 18-hp spindle, solid aluminum table and Thermwood's QCore Super Control controller. Other options include automatic tool changers and loading and unloading mechanisms.

For information, call 800-533-6901 or visit www.thermwood.com. 

Virutex brings combo saw to U.S. market

By Jennifer Hicks

Virutex is bringing a combination miter/table saw, model TM33, to the U.S. market. It's been available in Europe and South America and is especially popular with finish carpenters and custom woodworkers for job-site work, according to company president Alex Akavan.

"If you're going to install base molding, you need to have a miter saw and you also need a table saw. And you have to transport two pieces of equipment to the job site because you have to measure the actual situation at the job site and cut there, too. You have to take the two separate tools that are big and heavy," Akavan says.

"This machine is only 50 pounds and you can fold it up and carry it like a suitcase."

The saw features a 2.4-hp, 110-volt, 1,800-watt motor and uses a 12" saw blade, according to the company.

It sells for \$750.

For information, call 800-868-9663 or visit www.virutex.com. **W**



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Kreg Tool updates router table system

By Jennifer Hicks

Kreg Tool Co. introduced its redesigned Precision Router Table System, model PRS1045, featuring updated components.

Product manager Dave Stone says the system offers now offers woodworkers the advantage of a self-squaring fence, a feature-packed tabletop and insert plate and a sturdy stand that provide an all-inclusive routing solution.

"The heart of this system is the new fence. It features a T-square style design that always stays parallel to the miter slot and is adjustable using just one hand. It has a micro-adjust wheel that simplifies setup and dual locks to keep it in position once it's set in place," Stone says.

The fence is made of anodized aluminum for sturdiness. It mounts to 3/4" to 1-1/2" thick tables and includes a dust-collection port and bit guard.

"Another updated component is the new tabletop that provides a 24" x 32" work area. We know it seems like just a simple tabletop, but this is an updated design that features our Easy-Slide laminate surface that allows workpieces to glide easily and has reinforcing struts to ensure a flat table surface. This durable design also makes fence removal easy for freehand routing."

The top is made of 1"-thick MDF and it has heavy-duty insert plates that are easy to swap. It includes a set of four insert plate levelers for a secure fit.



The third component is a multipurpose shop stand featuring legs that can be adjusted to a height range of 29" to 35".

"The individual components of the Precision Router Table System, the fence, table and stand, are also available separately allowing for people who wish to design and build their own router table or upgrade an existing router table can purchase only the components they need," Stone adds.

The Precision Router Table System sells for \$499.99. www.kregtool.com

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Martin offers new Hebrock 3000 edgebanders

By Jennifer Hicks

The new Hebrock 3000 edgebanders, available exclusively from Martin Woodworking Machines, feature the Airtonic system that heats compressed air to produce an invisible glue line.

"I see this as one of the more exciting machines in the panel side of woodworking that has been introduced in the past two years," Martin U.S.A. president Carl Stout says. "The seam is almost visually imperceptible and in order to do that you need special edgebanding. The top is the decorative layer and the layer below is the functional layer, which is the part you heat up and weld to the board substrate."

"Architects and designers are incorporating more high-gloss panels, which has created a need for this zero glue-line concept. The only other option is to paint the edge of the board, which is certainly a less efficient way to complete the job."

The edgebander is manufactured with presets for optimum temperature, air pressure and feed speeds, depending on the edging material used. It has a touch-screen control for easy adjustments.

The series includes four configurations, but Stout recommends the fully equipped model for best results.

"With this type of machine you definitely need to have a feature that's called pre-milling, similar to a scoring saw on table saws. On our edgebanders, it's basically a line of acute cutters that produce an extremely chip-free cut."

The edgebanders heat to operating temperature in about three minutes. "Other machines without Hebrock's technology can take up to 20 to 25 minutes to properly heat up," Stout says.

They can apply edgebanding up to 3 mm. There's an optional ability to process 8-mm solid wood strips. All machines are built from a welded steel frame and have a powdercoat finish.

The fully equipped model AKV 3006DK-F sells for \$115,000. Hebrock also offers entry-level edgebanders through Martin, starting at \$18,500.

For information, call 704-921-0360 or visit www.martin-usa.com. **W**

Scientific updates dust collection manual

Scientific Dust Collectors offers a free second edition publication, "A Scientific Review of Dust Collection," which contains new sections on explosion vents and system design.

The 120-page manual reviews the history, theory and application of all types of dust collection equipment. The publication focuses on understanding the development and history of dust collection technology culminating in a detailed discussion on the current state of the art technologies, according to the company.

To request a copy call 708-597-7090 or visit www.scientificdustcollectors.com.

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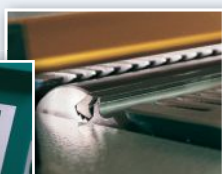


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FINISHING

with GREG WILLIAMS

Burnish your reputation with these burn-in skills

The trait, once mastered, provides the fastest method of doing an effective fill on a finished surface

Burn-in is a process used to fill minor (and some major) voids in decorative surfaces. It is a development of an old process called shellac stick patching, wherein a tool such as a palette knife was heated over an alcohol torch and used to melt a stick of solid-colored shellac. The stick was allowed to flow into the void and was then sanded or scraped smooth, possibly after having been somewhat leveled with the hot knife.

The materials have changed much through the years. We use synthetic thermoplastic resins in a great range of colors and degrees of opacity and with different properties of sheen, hardness, flexibility, heat and chemical resistance.

The tools have also evolved. Virtually no one uses an open flame to heat the burn-in knife anymore, although in the furniture factories many still use small electric ovens to heat a variety of knives. The electric knife — somewhat similar to a soldering iron or wood-burning iron — with interchangeable tips has become the standard for most people. These knives have the advantage of ease of use, safety and that they maintain a constant heat. The latest development in burn-in knives is the butane knife, offering adjustable heat and complete portability.

THE BASIC TECHNIQUE

Burn-in was developed as a technique for repairing wood; it is now used extensively on non-wood surfaces also, such as plastic laminate, molded plastics, raw (unfinished) wood, MDF, particleboard, leather and even tile, pottery and glass. This is the basic technique that we use for doing burn-ins on finished wood, such as furniture, fixtures and flooring:

This is not the only method of affecting a burn-in repair, nor is it necessarily the best in every case. It is, however, the best method that we have discovered to teach a repairman who is not already very good at burning in a method that will work in almost all cases. This method has been tested with tens of thousands of students; many of whom have become experts and have further adapted and developed the basic method. I have personally taught this method to thousands of students. Behlen and Mohawk currently sell the products and tools described. Different results can be expected if different products and tools are used.



Step one: Remove splinters that rise above the plane of the damaged area.

Typically you will select a color of burn-in stick that closely matches the background color of the wood in the area of the damage. Generally, this will be a color lighter than the overall color or appearance of the finished wood. Particularly, it should not be too bright or too intense in any color. If it is a weaker or less intense color, it will be easier to bring to the hue and intensity desired with additional coloring steps. An exception might be in the case of a small burn-in, especially in a darker wood, or in a wood that has a lot of figure or grain or distressing in which a repair can easily hide. In that case, you might select a color that fits in even though it might not exactly match the color of the wood you are repairing.

Use a burn-in knife to soften the fill material.

The damaged area (chip, gouge, deep scratch, hole) should be prepared for the repair in this manner. (To simplify this explanation, we'll presume that the damage is to a horizontal surface.) First, determine if there are splinters or portions of the damaged area that rise above the plane of the damaged surface. If there are, remove them. Use a razor knife, chisel or other appropriate tool.

CREDIT CARD TRICK

When you are first learning, here is a trick that you might find helpful. Slide the edge of a credit card across the damage, holding it down at a low angle and push the edge across the damaged area as if it were

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Apply burn-in balm to protect the finish from the heat of the knife.

a plane blade. If it catches, you know that some portion of the wood or the finish around the damage is raised and will have to be leveled. Gradually you will discover that in virtually all damage into the wood some portion of the wood or finish is raised above the plane of the original finish.

Clean the area around the damage with a cloth dampened with Wax Wash to remove any contaminants that could interfere with the adhesion or drying of any finish you might put on the damaged area.



A burn-in knife should be held at an angle of 30 degrees or less.

Lightly sand the area with 400 waterproof paper lubricated with a 10/90 mix of Wool-lube and water, then test with the credit card. After you have developed some feel for this, the credit card test will no longer be necessary. Sand only as much as is necessary to level the surface. If you are using the Behlen electric burn-in knife, allow it to heat up for three to five minutes.

Holding the knife in your dominant hand as you would hold a screwdriver, rotate the hand thumb outward until one corner of the



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blade is lowermost and incline the hand downward until the burn-in knife, along its longitudinal axis, inclines toward the hole at an angle approximately 30 to 45 degrees from the horizontal. Place the corner of the knife into the hole as nearly in the center of the hole as possible.

Touch the burn-in stick you have selected to the exposed upper surface of the blade, allowing it to melt and flow toward the lower corner of the knife. Do not shake or dab with the knife in an attempt to encourage the burn-in stick to flow into the hole. Add more stick if necessary and let the heat of the knife liquefy the burn-in material so that it flows into the damage. When the hole is slightly overfilled, stir the knife tip around so that the molten burn-in stick contacts all the broken edges of the finish. Do so in such manner that all the burn-in stick remains molten, move the knife to the center of the hole and lift it straight up. This encourages any bubbles that might have formed in the damage to follow the knife out.

Wipe the knife off with a scrap cloth and set it down in a safe place. Immediately, moisten the tip of a finger with Burn-in Balm, or your mixture of Wool-lube and water, and tap gently and tentatively on the top of the burn-in. If contact with the burn-in is painful, or if it seems that it would be painful if continued, gently tap until it cools a bit. If it does not seem hot enough to burn (cause pain to) your finger, gently press the burn-in, flattening the upper surface.

As the burn-in cools, it firms and hardens. Within a minute or so it will be a solid material completely filling the damage. Apply burn-in balm over and around the damaged area, covering all the finish where the burn-in knife might contact the finish. When you are first learning this, be careful and conservative; use a lot of balm and cover the finish for an inch or so around the repair.

The purpose of the balm is to help protect the finish from the heat of the knife and to prevent the burn-in stick from adhering to the finish around the damage. It helps to prevent ancillary damage from the knife, but will not protect against poor procedure.

Next, take the burn-in knife in the same grip as described earlier and, holding it at a low angle (30 degrees or less) over the burn-in, allow the heat of the knife to soften the burn-in stick in the damage. At this point you should not be touching the burn-in with the blade of the knife.

When you have softened the stick for 30 seconds or less (depending on the size of the fill), using a motion like an airplane making a touch-and-go landing, wipe over the burn-in with the edge of the knife (as you would use a putty knife) at such a speed that the heat of the knife will soften the fill and remove a portion of it. Wipe the blade of the knife with your scrap cloth. Repeat this stroke, changing the direction of the stroke occasionally, until you can clearly see the outline of the

original hole or damage. The fill will not be completely level or flush with the original finish at this point.

Wavy lines in the finish corresponding to the direction of travel of the knife, on either side of the repair, indicate too strong a grip on the knife and perhaps too much downward pressure applied to the knife, causing either the toe or the heel of the blade to dig in slightly. It is imperative that you do not stop the knife on the finish at any time. If the stroke is too fast, you will not remove any material. If it is too slow, you will melt or otherwise damage many finishes. Do not press down on the knife as you stroke. The weight of your hand and forearm is sufficient weight.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If, after performing the above-described procedure, you see in the finish lines perpendicular to the direction of travel of the knife, approximately the length of the width of the knife blade, you know that you have stopped the knife on the surface. You must keep the knife in motion, never stopping it on the surface.

Scratches or ridges across the burn-in and finish, in the direction of travel of the knife, indicate a dirty, burred or scratched knife blade. A dull, smeary look across both the burn-in and the adjacent finish generally indicate too high a heat and/or too slow a stroke across the burn-in.

To complete the leveling process, wrap a small piece of 400A wet or dry sandpaper around a felt, cork or rubber block and lubricate the paper with a mixture of Wool-lube and water (50 to 90 percent water).

Sand gently in the direction of the grain, if any, with several strokes. Check for levelness with your finger and repeat as necessary. If it takes more than 20 strokes or so, then you will know that you could have leveled more completely with the burn-in knife. The ideal is to have the burn-in sufficiently leveled with the knife that it takes a minimum of sanding to make the fill perfectly smooth and flush with the original surface. Excessive sanding should be avoided.

Once the burn-in is perfectly level or fair with the original finish, you are ready for additional color, graining and topcoating. Many techniques and products can be used to replace lost color, grain and topcoat.

While real skill at burning-in is considered a mark of a craftsman, the technique is not difficult to learn, requiring only attention to detail and a lot of practice on scrap. The skill, once mastered, still provides the fastest method of doing an effective fill on a finished surface. **W**

Greg Williams, formerly senior touchup and finishing instructor for Mohawk Finishing Products, is now a freelance instructor and consultant.



Sand with 400A wet or dry paper to complete the leveling process.



Touch up after the burn-in is complete.



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- Precision-ground cast iron table with wings measures: 40 1/2" W x 27" D
- Table height: 35 1/2"
- Footprint: 21" L x 19 1/2" W
- Arbor: 3/8" • Arbor speed: 3450 RPM
- Capacity: 3 1/4" @ 90°, 2 1/4" @ 45°
- Rip capacity: 30" right, 15" left
- Overall size: 57 1/4" W x 35 1/8" H x 37 1/2" D
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- Scoring blade size: 3/4"
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- Max. rip capacity: 33"
- Approx. shipping weight: 688 lbs.



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12" EXTREME TABLE SAWS

- Motor: 5 HP, 220V, single-phase, 18A or 7 1/2 HP, 220V/440V*, 3-phase, 19.5A/10A
- Precision-ground cast iron table size with extension: 69 1/2" x 78 1/2"
- Arbor: 1" • Arbor speed: 3600 RPM
- Max. dado width: 3/4"
- Max. rip capacity: 52"
- Max. depth of cut: 4" @ 90°, 2 3/4" @ 45°
- Approx. shipping weight: 854 lbs.



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TRUNNIONS

5 HP, Single-Phase

G0605X1 \$2495⁰⁰ SALE \$2395⁰⁰

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G0606X1 \$2495⁰⁰ SALE \$2395⁰⁰



14" SLIDING TABLE SAW

- Main motor: 10 HP, 220V/440V*, 3-phase, 25A/12.5A
- Sliding table size: 15" x 126"
- Main blade arbor: 1" • Main blade speed: 3000, 4000, 5000, 6000 RPM
- Scoring blade motor: 1 HP, 3A/1.5A
- Scoring blade size: 4 3/4"
- Scoring blade arbor: 22mm
- Scoring blade speed: 8000 RPM
- Scoring blade tilt: 0–45°
- Depth of cut: 4" @ 90°, 2 1/4" @ 45°
- Max. rip capacity: 52 1/2"
- Max. sheet capacity: 126" x 126"
- Approx. shipping weight: 2932 lbs.

126" LENGTH
OF CROSS CUT



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AUTOMATIC EDGE BANDER

- Required power supply: 30A, 220V, single-phase, 60 Hz
- Feed motor: 3/4 HP • Glue and edge motor: 1/4 HP
- End trim motor: 1/4 HP • Flush trim motor: 3/4 HP
- Buffering motor: 1/4 HP
- Heating element: 1455W (6.6A)
- Table size: 10 1/2" W x 78 1/4" L
- Min. panel dimensions: 4 3/4" W x 9 1/2" L
- Compressed air required: 86 PSI
- Glue pot capacity: 34 oz
- Roller width: 2 1/8" • Roller diameter: 1 3/8"
- Edgebanding coil capacity: 31 1/2"
- Approx. shipping weight: 875 lbs.



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- Max. jointer depth of cut: 1/8"
- Max. width of cut: 12"
- Planer feed rate: 22 FPM
- Max. planer depth of cut: 1/8"
- Max. planer cutting height: 8"
- Planer table size: 12 1/4" x 23 1/4"
- Approx. shipping weight: 704 lbs.



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- Max. depth of cut: 1/8"
- Max. rabbeting depth: 1/2"
- Cutterhead dia.: 3"
- Cutterhead speed: 4800 RPM
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15" PLANERS

- Motor: 3 HP, 240V, single-phase, 15A
- Precision-ground cast iron table size: 15" x 20"
- Min. stock thickness: 3/16"
- Min. stock length: 8"
- Max. cutting depth: 1/8"
- Feed rate: 16 & 30 FPM
- Cutterhead speed: 4800 RPM
- Approx. shipping weight: 675 lbs.



PRECISION-GROUND
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SPIRAL CUTTERHEAD
G0453PX ~~\$1795.00~~ **SALE \$1750.00**



20" PLANER with SPIRAL CUTTERHEAD

- Motor: 5 HP, 240V, single-phase, 19A
- Max. cutting width: 20"
- Min. stock length: 8"
- Max. cutting depth: 1/8"
- Feed rate: 16 FPM & 20 FPM
- Cutterhead diameter: 3 1/8"
- Cutterhead speed: 4800 RPM
- Number of cutter spirals: 4
- Table size: 20" x 25 1/4"
- Table size with extension: 20" x 55 1/2"
- Overall dimensions: 55 1/2" L x 39" W x 45 1/2" H
- Approx. shipping weight: 932 lbs.



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INFEED AND
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2 HP SHAPER

- Motor: 2 HP, 120V/240V, single-phase, prewired 240V, 18A/9A
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- Maximum cutter diameter: 5"
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- Spindle travel: 3 1/4"
- Spindle sizes: 3/4", 1", and 1 1/4"
- Spindle speeds: 3600, 5100, 8000, and 10,000 RPM
- Max. cutter diameter: 5 1/8"
- Approx. shipping weight: 613 lbs.



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- Conveyor feed rate: variable, 2-12 FPM
- Max. stock dimensions: 36" W x 4 1/2" thick
- Min. board length: 6"
- Min. board thickness: 1/8"
- Sanding drum size: 4"
- Dust collection port: 2 1/2"
- Overall size: 35" W x 50" H x 24" D
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15" WIDE-BELT SANDER (OPEN END)

- Sanding motor: 5 HP, 220V, single-phase, 1725 RPM, 30A • Conveyor motor: 1/4 HP, 220V, single-phase, 1.8A
- Air requirement: 57-75 PSI, 2 CFM
- Sanding belt size: 16" x 48"
- Surface speed of sanding belt: 2050 FPM
- Max. board width: 15" single pass
- Max. board thickness: 5 1/2"
- Min. board length: 12"
- Conveyor speed: 13.1 & 16.4 FPM
- Overall size: 32 1/2" W x 61 1/4" H x 35" D
- Approx. shipping weight: 908 lbs.

5" DUST
PORT

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Quartered black walnut

Bright days continue for black walnut sales

By Jennifer Hicks

Used for making fine furniture, cabinetry, flooring, musical instruments and more, black walnut is selling regularly, but the price is concerning both sellers and buyers, according to hardwood dealers interviewed by Woodshop News.

Sam Talarico of Talarico Hardwoods in Mohnton, Pa., says walnut has been an extremely hot seller during the last two years.

"It's hard to keep it in inventory. You need to find it and dry it or you're behind. It's hard to keep up. I've got some nice boards that need to go into the kiln soon because my supply sold so fast," Talarico says.

"It's harder to find the longer black walnut logs and that's what people want. The shorter ones are available, but the really long ones, around 14', are hard to find. They want them especially for large one-piece tabletops for book matching and that sort of thing. Most people want them thick too, around 3". So instead of 6/4 or 8/4 sizes, they want 12/4 and they're harder to find."

Talarico adds that the color of walnut is evidently what makes it so appealing to his customers. Many customers express that dark is what they want, making walnut and fumed oak very popular. While he only sells black walnut, he also mentions that it is much easier to fine larger logs of claro walnut (*Juglans hindsii*), a related species found in Northern

California and Oregon. Claro walnut is highly figured with a rich brown color, but it's a tougher wood that moves a lot and is harder to dry.

Rob Lamoureaux of Parkerville Wood Products in Manchester, Conn., says walnut sales are up.

"We've been ordering a lot to keep stock up in the last three to five months. Customers are using it to build tabletops, countertops and moldings. Usually they want 4/4, 5/4 and 8/4 boards," Lamoureaux says. "Walnut is nice to work with. It machines well and sands well. One of the things [customers] are surprised with is the waste factor. It's a knotty, branchy tree so they have to buy more material to get what they have to get for a product. Generally, wood has a 35 percent waste factor, but this has about 50 percent."

Lamoureaux says supply isn't an issue for short boards. The most readily available boards are around 6'8" in length whereas maple, mahogany and cherry average around 10' to 16'.

Terry Baird of Baird Brothers Sawmill in Canfield, Ohio, says walnut sales have begun to slow.

"It's probably slowed down more than anything with the way pricing has been on it. Most of it's sold for general building, build-outs and flooring. We don't get into the live-sawn tabletops here but we have done some

work for some other companies that have done a lot of that," Baird says.

Retail quotes for FAS 4/4 walnut are just under \$8/bf; 8" and wider boards start at about \$9/bf, while large flitches fetch \$15 to \$30/bf. [W](#)

DeVilbiss sponsoring race team

Finishing Brands, manufacturer of DeVilbiss industrial finishing equipment, is returning to racing with the sponsorship of the DeVilbiss CRP Audi R8 LMS Ultra.

The sponsorship brings a brand new look to the car's exterior, complete with DeVilbiss logo and spray gun on the DeVilbiss orange finish, according to the company.

"We are very excited to be representing DeVilbiss this season," CRP Racing owner Nick Short said in a statement. "They are a highly successful company and their products for industrial spray finishing and automotive refinishing are a perfect match for a race team. We look forward to representing DeVilbiss up on the podium."

DeVilbiss Racing is competing in Indy, World Challenge and Vintage race events.

For information, visit www.devilbiss.com.

THE CUTTING EDGE

with R.W. LEE

Easy digital shortcuts are worth the time and money

SketchUp and its extensions are a good place to start

Many woodworkers are intimidated by digital fabrication, scared away by the prices of hardware and software components and the amount of training required. But there are some inexpensive shortcuts.

SketchUp, an easy-to-use design program, is one option. The basic version, SketchUp Make, is free, while SketchUp Pro costs only \$590. SketchUp is a powerful tool, particularly for a cabinetmaker.

At www.sketchup.com and YouTube, you'll find plenty of tutorials and general information about the programs. But my advice is to start with the SketchUp blogs at Fine Woodworking (www.finewoodworking.com) and Popular Woodworking (www.popularwoodworking.com). Both sites also offer DVDs with lessons using the building-block method of teaching and input from expert users.

SketchUp also has several extensions, beginning with CutList that generates a cut list from a 3-D model. It takes a bit of patience to use at first, but your learning curve will improve with a visit to the Google Code website (<https://code.google.com/p/cutlist/>) for help with issues regarding installation and general use of this free extension. CutList can be exported into spreadsheet programs such as OpenOffice and Microsoft Excel to increase a shop's productivity between its production and accounting functions.

CutList Bridge and a commercial offering, CutList Plus fx, are easier to use and more versatile than CutList.

The website for CutList Bridge (www.srwv.com/my_plugins/cutlist_bridge.html) presents two excellent video tutorials and three SketchUp 3-D models with which to practice.

CutList Plus fx is available in four versions and can be used in concert with several CAD programs. It's a very straightforward program, something woodworkers will appreciate, and the product web-

site (www.cutlistplus.com) is filled with helpful information.

CabinetSense is another commercial extension for SketchUp. It's very sophisticated, yet surprisingly easy to use. The extension provides preset SketchUp drawing templates for cabinets and parts. After the users enter room dimensions, it's as simple as selecting components from a dropdown menu and placing them in the room. CabinetSense can be exported to CutList, CutList Plus fx, OpenOffice and Microsoft Excel and produces CNC-ready files.

The product's website, www.cabinetsensesoftware.com, is also well-designed and easy to use. It has numerous educational videos that are short and informative, many of which deal with the characteristics and capabilities of SketchUp in general and relevant to CabinetSense.

There are three versions of CabinetSense and, unlike most software that requires a single payment license fee, it's available on a month-by-month basis. There are a variety of opinions about this method of software purchase, but for a cabinet shop this option seems to make the most sense. Any upgrades and bug fixes are taken care of by the software company and the user does not have to be bothered with this often time-consuming and confusing task.

The last notable addition to SketchUp is SketchUp 3D Warehouse (<https://3dwarehouse.sketchup.com>), which offers millions of items that can be used in making 3-D models. Most major manufacturers of cabinet hardware, kitchen appliances and bathroom fixtures are represented in the product libraries.

Finally, SketchUp Pro has an ancillary program called LayOut that converts 3-D models into two-dimensional client presentations, an incredibly useful tool for final design approval. There's also SketchUp Viewer for sharing 3-D models electronically with clients and job collaborators. **W**

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SURGING

IN SEATTLE





Riverside Cabinet Co. has thrived in its niche in the Pacific Northwest through an honesty that draws repeat customers

By Jennifer Hicks

Dan Matheis, owner of Riverside Cabinet Co. in Lynden, Wash., offers this proven advice to his peers: "If you treat people fairly and with respect, do the best job you can, they'll come back."

His customers have been coming back since 1994, often willing to wait about three months while other jobs are completed.

"I used to tell people what they wanted to hear, but it gets you in trouble," Matheis says. "Now when they call up and ask for a project, I will tell them where we are at. If they can wait, we will do it."

Matheis got his start building houses with his two older brothers in the late 1970s. He might still be swinging a hammer had not interest rates skyrocketed in the early 1980s.

"We were doing all this work and then the housing market fell flat on its face, so we kind of split up and went our separate ways. I had just gotten married a month before and had a baby girl and no job," Matheis says. "I knew I needed to do something so I set up a little shop making wooden towel rods, medicine cabinets and all sorts of accessories. I went around to stores asking the owners if they wanted to buy the stuff."

"I sold the knickknacks for a while and then I had a friend who was building an apartment in Emerson who asked me for a price on some cabinets. I had never built a cabinet in my life, but he must have liked my price. That led to another job and suddenly I was a self-taught cabinetmaker. That was like 33 years ago."

He became the go-to shop in the area when interest rates came down.

"People started building houses again," Matheis says. "I still had friends who were in construction and they always came to me for cabinets. We had a good network. It's a very close-knit town. It evolved from there."



Mathies has five employees, including his son, Tyler. He works out of a 3,500-sq.-ft. shop next to his house in the scenic farmlands north of Seattle. Sure, the winters can get cold, especially when a nor'easter swoops in from Canada, but the view is quite spectacular.

Most of his installs are in Lynden or Bellingham, which is only about 12 miles away. He's never really had the need to expand his market any further.

"I have had people call me from Canada who saw my website, but I just don't want to deal with it," Matheis says. "I'd have to be working up there with the right documentation and it would just make it more complicated. Working in another state is one thing, but it's totally different going into a different country."

The website is a fairly recent addition and probably not even necessary. More than half of Riverside's work comes from repeat customers. The rest comes from contractors and referrals.

"This is a very closely knit neighborhood. And when you're in a small business like mine, your business builds off of personal relationships with contractors and to the point where they don't ask you for a price, they just state what their next project is. What we do is we pride ourselves on taking care of the jobs, taking care of all of the little odds and ends. You give people a fair price, you do a good job and they're going to come back," Matheis says.

NEW CONSTRUCTION DOMINATES

Riverside serves the residential market, providing kitchen remodels, storage solutions throughout the home, staircase railings, fireplace mantels and just about anything else the customers needs, as long as it can be made from wood.

Three quarters of the shop's work is currently for new construction as the economy in the Pacific Northwest continues to improve, according to Matheis.

"In the past two years it's really turned around. People are getting things with their money. When things collapsed, people were just holding onto their money. They would still want to improve things and would remodel their kitchens, but they would not build a whole big new house. Lately people are building new houses," says Matheis, adding he prefers working on new houses as they're always level and plumb.

Customers favor a "Northwest design," which Matheis describes as a simple, elegant, Shaker-like style.

"We probably do that 85 percent of the time," he says. "It's a tra-



Dan Mathies (above left and bottom right) and the rest of the crew at Riverside Cabinet Co.



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ditional look with exposed timbers in your house, clean and simple straight lines. People really like that. It goes with anything you bring into the house. People are starting to go back to the darker stains and we also do a lot of painting and glazing. We have a really good finish guy who's got a good handle on that."

Alder is used for about 75 percent of the projects, a local hardwood that can be stained to mimic several other species. Cherry and woods with a rustic appearance are also popular, according to Matheis.

THE CREW

Matheis has been able to keep his current crew in tact for about five years. Tyler is a veteran of 10 years. The shop also has a full-time installer and hires part-timers as needed.

Matheis has assumed the administrative duties, making sawdust only when one of his woodworkers is on vacation. He wishes he could spend more time in the shop.

"When I first started out doing this I was doing the work, but that changes with the more people you hire," he says. "You've got to have someone who knows how to bill stuff and handle the books. I had to teach myself all of that, too, with the help of my accountant. I still struggle with that because I'm not a business kind of guy. I guess I know how to run a business with meeting the people, but the taxes and payroll and all of that I just get lost in it."

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Pricing is typically based on the lineal foot with extras added on. Matheis says he has estimating down to a science.

"If you do this long enough, you pretty much know how long it's going to take you and how much material you need to have. At the end of every job — and at the end of every month — I compile lists of materials used and the hours spent on a particular project so we know exactly where we stand.

"I think a lot of new business owners, especially cabinet guys, don't do that. They think they're making money, but the cost of materials and labor is often underestimated. You have to sit down, itemize everything and see the real picture."

THE FUTURE

"I'm at the point of my life where I want to start slowing down," Matheis says. "My son doesn't really want to take this over. He sees me stress out a lot and he doesn't want any part in that. He's more of a hands-on guy. He's very intelligent and right now he's into making longboards using veneer. He is only 30 and has too many ideas and doesn't want to commit himself to being stuck here."

Matheis doesn't think he'll ever sell the business. The plan is to keep things running whenever he decides to retire, but there are some details to work out.



"We own the building and the land, so we have assets that could be sold. But when you're a small-business owner, you personally are the business. People come to Riverside Cabinet Company because they want Dan Matheis, not his replacement, because he developed all of the relationships with the people."

Knowing that he's still in demand, he carries on. He is thrilled to be at the point where he's actually being asked to replace kitchens that he did many years ago. Competition from other shops has increased, but his customers remain loyal.

"People come here for a reason. They want us for the job and not the big-box stores. There are a lot of shops kind of like mine around here with father-and-son teams. I think there are three of them in this area within a five-mile radius. I know everyone and have a good relationship with them. It's a friendly competition." **W**

Contact: Riverside Cabinet Co., 1145 Polinder Road, Lynden, WA 98264. Tel: 360-354-3070.



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Ergonomics is now the guiding principle in the way that we design and function in the shop

By John English

HUSH!

That's the sound of a Rolair JC10 compressor running. Installers and trim carpenters love this machine because it only generates 60 dB of noise — about the sound level of a normal conversation. Quiet operation pays two big dividends: the customers don't have to put up with a racket and the installer doesn't have to worry about hearing damage.

This kind of engineering is part of a trend toward better ergonomics in the pneumatic tool industry. Merriam-Webster defines ergonomics as "a science that deals with designing and arranging things so that people can use them easily and safely." The woodworking industry has always been a theater of noise, dust, heavy lifting and sprayed finishes. It's the nature of the beast. During the last few years, that has started to change in large part because of endless litigation in the workplace, but also because of the information highway. Workers and shop managers are simply more

knowledgeable and that usually leads to better decisions. With the world literally at our fingertips, there are very few aspects of life, law and labor that can stay hidden or ignored. We're probably not getting any smarter, but hopefully we're becoming a little more informed.

Tool manufacturers are also benefitting from a global economy that has reduced production costs. Even equipment manufactured in the U.S. often incorporates parts made elsewhere. That has enabled engineers to incorporate aspects of design that were once too pricey. One



A 2-hp compressor inside a sound-proof cabinet, from California Air Tools.

of the earliest examples of this in the wood-working world was a fundamental change in the look and feel of Hitachi power tools from cordless drills to pneumatic nailers. The green, almost comic-book superhero look they adopted was designed to look modern, easy to use and to stand out from the crowd.

Other manufacturers followed and soon tools that had maintained a distinct form for decades became streamlined and sophisticated. After that, function followed form and design began to really look at making small changes that increased the tools' utility and ease of use. Mainstream industry hadn't paid this much attention to aesthetics and ergonomics since the heyday of Art Deco between World War I and World War II. And one of the areas that affects woodworkers most was advances in the way that air tools were being tweaked to make our lives just a little easier. The revolution is still happening.

COLD STARTS AND HOT SWITCHES

Oil-less compressors are part of making things easier to use. They've been around for a long time, but now they seem to be the standard rather than a low-price option.

Rolair's JC10, for example, has that quiet 1-hp induction motor and because it's oil-less it's ready to go to work straight out of the box.

The compressor is both lightweight and compact but, according to national sales manager Dan Fox, it's still powerful enough to run up to three trim guns. Even simple things like placing the drain on the side, rather than underneath the tank, make it a little easier with which to work. Being oil-less means it's maintenance-free, but it also can sit at an angle on a roof without running out of oil and it starts faster in cold temperatures because there's no viscosity issue. Rolair (www.rolair.com) even added a cold-start valve to this machine that releases a little head pressure so the motor doesn't have to work quite as hard to get going. That means the installer doesn't, either.

Another small part of ergonomical design here is that the JC10 comes with an electric solenoid, so that if power is shut off without the switch being thrown (for example, if it's unplugged while running), the solenoid actually trips the switch and allows the machine to unload the head pressure. (A lot of hobbyists through the years have discovered that unplugging without switching off can kill a compressor.)

One last design feature on the JC10 is a roll cage. These are becoming more and more popular on small, portable compressors, not only to protect the innards but also as a way to handle the machine on the job site. It's a lot easier

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PneuPower's ReCoiler for managing air hoses.

for a single installer to lift it up and place it on a pickup tailgate than the old-fashioned models with wheels and a big handle. Available through tool dealers (rather than big-box stores) for around \$250, this compressor highlights a transition in the pneumatic tool industry — there is much more merging of serious hobbyist and light professional equipment. One tool increasingly serves two markets. That's happening because small pro tools are getting cheaper and hobbyist tools are getting better.

One thing that isn't changing fast enough is that manufacturers are still allowing engineers

to name things. For example, the AKHL1250E is a futuristic-looking small compressor from Max USA Corp (www.maxusacorp.com) that is the newest member of its PowerLite line. While the moniker is harder to recall than an online banking password, the machine itself is remarkably memorable. Perhaps the first thing most professional woodworkers will like is the easy drain lever. Just flip a switch and the ball valve opens and drains the air and water (this helps prevent air leaks caused by foreign substances). It's also remarkably easy to tote around the job site. Weighing just 41.4 lbs., the body is compact (14-5/8" wide and 21-1/2" long) and comes with two-way grips so one worker can comfortably carry it.

All that technology isn't cheap: Woodshop News found street prices ranging from \$1,600 to \$1,725 for this model. But its high-pressure air tanks can hold up to 500 psi of compressed air, which means the AKHL1250E delivers the equivalent of 10 gallons in a 100-psi model. There are two regular air outlets and another two that can handle PowerLite high-pressure tools. In another nod to ergonomics, it has a DC brushless motor that is more powerful, quieter and lighter than conventional AC motors and it's more efficient because an inverter circuit on the motor adjusts the RPM to extract maximum performance depending on the voltage level. And making it easier to handle the technology is a very intuitive con-

trol panel display that uses LED lights and beepers to tell you when something is out of sync. At 68dB, the AKHL1250E is almost as quiet as Rollair's JC10, even though it has a lot more work to do pumping compressed air up to 500 psi.

SO NEW IT'S NOT EVEN HERE YET

Looking even more futuristic and streamlined than the PowerLite compressors, the newest offering from PneuPowerUS is so advanced that it hasn't even been released yet. Made in the USA, it measures 27.2" x 16.5" x 16.2" and looks like one of those little kneeling pads with handles on the sides that gardeners use when weeding. The chassis is a tough and lightweight Lexan composite and the whole machine weighs in at 48 lbs. It delivers 6.9 CFM at 90 psi with a 1-1/2 gallon tank. The motor is 2 hp. With its rectangular box-like profile, a flat top and a built-in parts drawer, the PneuPowerUS compressor is ergonomic to the highest degree.

The company that developed it, PneuPower, is already well-known for another air power product, the ReCoiler, essentially a housing that stores and manages an air hose. The hose is made of a flexible polyurethane that doesn't stiffen in cold weather (good from -60 F to 175 F) and the high-strength Lexan composite housing is flat, so the case can be stacked and stored easily on top of the compressor.



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A third and also very ergonomic unit, a lightweight control module, will be available shortly. This, too, stacks on top of the compressor and allows an installer to regulate air pressure for tools at the point of work. This means that he or she can actually leave the little compressor outside and work almost silently on the install. At the end of the day, the tangle-free hose simply winds into the box like a fishing reel. Available in both 3/8" x 50' and 1/4" x 100', it's extremely lightweight (about 9 lbs., hose and case), and tough enough for the job site (850-psi burst pressure). The hose is extruded twice as an inner and outer core. A high-strength thread, braided around the shell, reinforces the inner core. The outer core is designed with small ribs to shield the inner core from micro-punctures due to chafing on abrasive surfaces such as concrete or roofing material.

Either model of the ReCoiler is available online (www.pneupowerus.com) for \$144.95.

SOUNDPROOF CABINETS

One of the industry leaders in the march toward better ergonomics is California Air Tools (www.californiaairtools.com), which is based in San Diego and distributes through The Home Depot, Woodcraft, Northern Tool and other outlets. In April, the company introduced the 10020SPC model, which is a 2-hp, 10-gallon compressor in its own soundproof cabinet. At 58 dB, it's one of the quietest 2-hp units on the market.

One method that engineers are using to ramp down sound is to slow down motor speeds (in this case to just 1680 rpm). Slower revs also have the advantage of reducing wear. Models from California Air Tools with 'SP' in the name have been designed to increase duty cycle and allow for longer continuous run times. Its oil-free, dual piston pump is built to last — the 10020SPC is designed to have a life cycle before wear of 3,000-plus hours.

The concept of a soundproof cabinet isn't new, but for small compressors like this it means they can be used on job sites such as schools, office buildings, hospitals and restaurants. On the 10020SPC model, the complete cabinet is 190 lbs., so it's on casters. The metal frame has 1/4" thick acoustic insulation that reduces noise by 30 percent, according to the company. The compressor delivers 6.4 CFM at 40 psi and 5.3 CFM at 90 psi. It has one 1/4" connector and draws 14 amps. The Home Depot lists it online at \$1,500.

California Air Tools offers three different sizes in the soundproof cabinet line — 1 hp, 1.2 hp and 2 hp. Each comes as a basic package or with an optional air dryer and aftercooler.

TRIGGER HAPPY

Based in Monterey Park, Calif., Grex Power Tools has been building pneumatic tools since 1995. This spring the company is shipping its first orders for the new P650LX, a 23-gauge, 2" headless pinner. Designed in part to accommodate smaller compressors, the new gun pays homage to the definition of ergonomics: designing and arranging things so that people can use them easily and safely. On the company website (www.grexusa.com), Grex says that the X in the name refers to "extra power even with smaller compressors, extra convenience and most importantly an extra safety." The extra power means that a woodworker can drive longer fasteners into harder woods with smaller compressors and a more robust motor. The extra safety refers to an automatic lockout that was added to prevent dry firing. As installers know, that can cause damage to the tool, but it can also put dents in a brand-new cabinet or molding.

To prevent dry firing, the new feature locks the P650LX with approximately 10 pins remaining in the magazine. Then if you're up on a ladder and popping crown, you can just press the One-Touch override button and the gun will use the remaining pins one at a time with lots of control.

Senco (www.senco.com) introduced a couple of new tools recently that also illustrate the industry's shift toward better ergonomics. The team that designed the FinishPro 21 LXP pinner must have the Merriam-Webster definition on a chalkboard in the office: "Ergonomics arranges things so that people can use them easily." The tool is a 21-gauge pinner that delivers the holding power of a brad nail, while leaving a much smaller indent that requires little to no filling. It bridges the gap between 18-gauge and 23-gauge fasteners, which was a little frustrating for installers on thicker moldings where small pins wouldn't hold and larger ones left dimples. The tool weighs just 2.7 lbs., and at under 9" tall it can fit into tight spaces.

To combat dry firing, the company added a last nail lockout. Plus, the design is such that an installer or cabinetmaker can easily see when the supply of fasteners is running low. Small things can make a big difference during a long workday: the exhaust on the 21 LXP is located at the rear to direct air away from the user, an embedded muffler pretty much eliminates noise and a swiveling 1/4" plug helps keep the hose at bay.

Eighteen months ago, Senco introduced another ergonomics-conscious product, the SLS150Mg 18-gauge 1/4" crown stapler. The main body on this little gun is constructed from magnesium to cut down on weight (it's

only 2.6 lbs.) without giving up any toughness. It feels well-balanced and has an overmolded grip that lets a woodworker hold on — even with sweaty palms on a hot summer day. It takes 1/2" to 1-9/16" staples, so it works well for trim, furniture and building boxes. There's an oil-free motor (which is nice around veneers and hardwoods) and an easy-to-use, 360-degree adjustable exhaust port that can be used to blow away any dust and debris. A switch lets the user select bump fire actuation for quick stapling when precise placement is not required. Flip the switch the other way and you're in sequential fire.

The gun also has a nose-mounted light and a reload indicator that eliminates dry firing. There's a rotatable belt hook and when you need to adjust the drive depth for different species or thicknesses, there's a simple thumbwheel.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND

Some of the earliest recorded references to ergonomics in the workplace date to the Greek physician Hippocrates (460 BC to 370 BC, famed for the Hippocratic oath). He left extensive notes on the way a surgery should be organized so that a doctor did the least amount of moving around and had everything close at hand.

The first glimmer of ergonomics becoming a science happened during the Industrial Revolution, when a Pennsylvania engineer named Frank Taylor (1856-1915) experimented with shovel sizes and shapes and found that they had a big impact on the volume of coal that a miner could handle in a given amount of time. That evolved into the first time-and-motion studies, which were conducted by the husband-and-wife team of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth. They were industrial engineers and efficiency experts: they had to be as they raised 12 children.

A Russian researcher named Vladimir Nikolayevich Myasishchev had a problem with what he perceived as both Taylor's and the Gilbreths' efforts to turn people into machines. He argued that dull work wasn't very efficient and suggested that the scientific world adopt a new discipline named "ergonology." That concept found considerable support in major industries such as car and plane manufacturing and eventually trickled down into the industries that supported those fields.

Today, ergonomics is the guiding principle in the way that we design kitchens, schools, offices and institutional casework. From quiet compressors to manageable air hoses or easy starts in cold weather to guns that do their job without creating more work for us filling holes, we have a lot to thank old Vladimir Nikolayevich for. 

It doesn't need to be a sticky situation

Researching the right sanding products for the job won't be a grind with these helpful suggestions

By John English

Have you heard the one about the cop who tells a homeowner that her dog has been chasing a guy on a bike? "That's ridiculous," the woman says. "My dog can't ride a bike!"

Choosing abrasives to do sensitive sanding jobs is a bit like that. One really has to read carefully to understand exactly what specific sandpaper can do and, more importantly, what it can't do. A few words misconstrued can be the difference between an unacceptable and a great sanding job.

For anyone beginning to research abrasives, Klingspor has a useful frequently-asked-questions section on its website (www.woodworkingshop.com). Scroll down the left-hand menu to Woodworking Scoop and then click on the FAQ link. One of the first gems there is a recommendation for sanding wood: "The best product is aluminum oxide for general-purpose sanding. Alumina zirconia can be used for planing operations and silicon carbide is often used when working with particleboard."



The Biesse Valeria (top) and Opera 7, both manufactured by Viet.



The Timesavers' model 3300 (left) and 3341 with four sanding heads.

Ever been confused about open and closed coatings? According to Klingspor, an open-coat sanding belt is "a coated abrasive product in which the abrasive grain covers approximately 50 to 70 percent of the coated side surface. [This] helps to retard loading of sticky or gummy materials such as softwoods or paint. Closed-coat is better for sanding metal and wood finishes, but clogs easily with sawdust." Other topics discussed include the difference between silicon carbide, aluminum oxide and aluminum zirconia, and a listing of the various grading systems in the U.S. and Europe.

SANDPAPER GRIT GRADES

Grading is an interesting subject for woodworkers who are thinking of switching abrasive brands. Klingspor, being based in Haiger, Germany, uses the European FEPA (Federation of European Producers of Abrasives) standard. FEPA products have the letter "P" prior to the grit designation. There are two systems used in North America, ANSI and CAMI (Coated Abrasive Manufacturers Institute), which are actually quite similar. Ohio-based Gator Finishing Products (<http://gatorfinishing.com>) explains the American method this way on the company website:

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"The size of grit is ... the number of holes per linear inch in a sieve screen. Our Gator sandpaper ranges from 24 grit (Extra Coarse) to 1500 grit (Mirror Fine)." There's a conversion chart on Dieter Schmid's Fine Tools site at www.fine-tools.com and it lists ANSI and FEPA grit sizes (along with several other less mainstream and more industry specific standards). For example, a P220 FEPA grit would equate to 180 in the U.S.

On the Gator website, the FAQ section also tackles the differences between aluminum oxide and zirconium oxide and discusses garnet, ceramic and emery. If you need to know about issues such as, for example, stearate (a soapy substance that reduces clogging) or if you'd like to know when you should use wet/dry paper, cruise the FAQ pages. While the abrasive manufacturers obviously have a vested interest and some of their answers will recommend their own product lines, there's still a great deal of sound information out there that is easy to retrieve and easy to understand.

HAND SANDING TO 100 HP

Speaking of abrasive manufacturers, Shopsmith and Ali Industries have now teamed up to offer a complete line of premium abrasives under the Shopsmith Abrasives banner (<http://shopsmithabrasives.com>). Two of the simplest products from this union share similar technology in an effort to take some of the pain out of hand sanding. Both the Micro Zip and Finishing Block sanders are ergonomically shaped to fit a hand comfortably and grits can be quickly switched because they have hook and loop bases. The Micro Zip is designed to get into tight spots and the larger Finishing Block has a hard, flat plate inside that acts like a platen to provide a smooth and even finish. It works beautifully on large panels between final topcoats.

Shaping the manner in which an abrasive meets a surface is critical. Opti-Sand (www.opti-sand.com) has been manufacturing flexible finger sanders to reach around the curves of contours since 1999. Lo-

cated in West Chicago, Ill., the company started out making molding sanders and now tackles everything from entry doors to face frames. Opti-Sand's model VSA-8 hanging-door line sander will even sand finish and sealer on full-size entry doors. And its innovative EasySand 224 is designed to sand curved parts and decorative trim. It has twin spindles with forward/reverse rotation and double-sided abrasive strips that allow a woodworker to put up to four different grits on the sander simultaneously.

If your shop is looking at large panel production and needs information on wide belt sanding, Timesavers Inc. (www.timesaversinc.com) has a suggestion. The Minnesota-based manufacturer has published a book, "Widebelt Sanding Principles" (\$95, or free with the purchase of a new multiple head machine) that helps make the purchasing decision a thoroughly informed one. With more than 50,000 units in the field, the company manufactures planer sanders, segmented polishers, orbital and molding sanders and a line of rotary brush machines. Timesavers also builds wide-belt sanders, available in top only, or top-

Onsrud Cutter mourns loss of Richard "Steve" O'Brien

Richard "Steve" O'Brien, 78, a former president, CEO and chairman of Onsrud Cutter Mfg. in Libertyville, Ill., died on March 30.

During his time at Onsrud Cutter, he was well known in the woodworking, plastics, and aerospace industries, according to the company.

"Steve led the company to produce cutting tool designs to address the shift from hand routing of wood products to the CNC routing of engineered wood panel products," the company said in a statement. "He established Onsrud's internal training efforts, which continue to this day."

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The Ironwood S124RK (left) and S134RRK showing its three sander heads.

and-bottom configurations, and from 25" to 84" wide. Plus, it will build you a custom sander if that's what you need. For the small shop (or for small jobs in a big shop) there's the SpeedSander that has a top head and a single- or three-phase motor. Top head means the belt is above the workpiece. And for operations that need to process a lot of panels, there are a couple of models that can accommodate up to five different sanding grits simultaneously and can also be equipped with both top and bottom heads, so both faces are processed in one pass. That should save a little time.

Long known as a supplier of state-of-the-art edgework and CNC equipment, Biesse America (www.biesseamerica.com) has now teamed up with Viet, a manufacturer of wide-belt and brush-sanding solutions. Its most rugged offering, the Vareria series, is touted as a solution for

big jobs such as calibrating large, solid wood beams for timber-frame construction. It uses from one to eight operating units (different working heads) and is powered by motors up to an impressive 100 hp. The company's new Opera 7 Sander can handle work up to 86" wide. At the other end of the scale, Viet's S211 VN wide belt sander is designed for solid-wood and veneer applications. Its 44" x 75" abrasive belt will handle work up to 43" wide, and just 3mm (.118") thick.

Stiles Machinery in Grand Rapids, Mich. (www.stilesmachinery.com) now offers four models in the Ironwood series of wide belt sanders. Running on power plants up to 20 hp, these sleek and very European-looking machines are all about precision. Thickness adjustments are quickly and easily made using a programmable controller. The sanders have easy to adjust sanding pads, contact rollers and variable feed

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Here's a sampling



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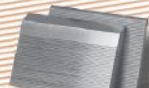
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speeds and the mix of power and infinite control makes them suitable for any task from calibrating solid wood to finish sanding.

GOING BELTLESS

Some small shop wide sanders don't use belts: instead, they are equipped with one or more drums. The advantage to a couple of Minnesota-based SuperMax Tools' machines is that the drums can also be replaced with wide brushes for contour work. The company (www.supermaxtools.com) makes two designated brush-only machines (one single and one double head); seven drum sanders (four of which offer dual heads for two different grits); and two machines that can operate in either mode. The latter come in 13" wide and 19" to 38" wide options (one end is open, so the panel can be sanded halfway across, reversed and then fed through for a second pass to complete the job).

Another small sander got some good press at the IWF last August. Dixon Abrasives (<http://surfpresanding.com>) in Lake Elsinore, Calif., used its ocean proximity in a clever pun to name its product line. There are half a dozen SurfPrep pad sanders and all but one are pneumatic. The Surge electric sander has a small (just 3" x 4") base that is designed to sand into tight areas and corners effortlessly. Surge can also be used anywhere in the world because it reads 100-240 volts, 47-63 HZ and even converts 30-volt DC. The sander is built with two internal CPU boards and a proprietary housing design with a cooling fan to prolong the life of the tool.

Another inspired sanding product is the Ceros line from Mirka Ltd., which is headquartered in Finland (www.mirka.com). There's a detail sander with a pad that is just a hair smaller than a 35mm hinge recess. Called the 150NV, it is ideal for removing small dust particles. One step up and ideal for blending is the Ceros 77mm (3") diameter 325CV and there are seven more models in the line that are either 125 or 150mm

(4.9" or 5.9"). A few are intended for specific countries, and most are equipped for hookup to dust collection systems. All of Mirka's sanders are lightweight, rugged, powerful, very quiet and really well-shaped for a comfortable grip.

We started out with a joke, so let's close with one. A woodworker's wife gave him a beautiful daughter and night after night he stood over the baby's crib, shaking his head in wonder. She finally asked him his thoughts and he said: "I just can't figure out the joinery." **W**

Atlas Copco distributor receives energy efficiency award

Air Technologies, an Atlas Copco distributor of compressed air solutions, has received a 2014 Energy Efficiency Top Producer Award from American Electric Power Ohio.

The company was ranked sixth for top energy savings with more than 5 million kWh hours saved, largely due to its long-standing partnership with Atlas Copco.

"Many of the kWh saved for our customers were tied to energy-efficient Atlas Copco Variable Speed Drive air compressors," Trey Donze, northeast Ohio regional sales manager for Air Technologies, said in a statement.

The VSD compressor was introduced in 1994. Fitted with an intelligent drive system, a VSD compressor continuously changes the motor speed to match air demand and eliminates the compressor running in an unloaded state.

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Philadelphia gallery hosts Wharton Esherick exhibition

By Jennifer Hicks

In April, the Moderne Gallery in Philadelphia opened "Wharton Esherick (1887-1970): The Rose and Nathan Robinson Collection." This major exhibition and sale featuring works from studio furniture artist Wharton Esherick will continue through Sept. 6.

The purpose of the exhibition is to make Esherick's work available for the public to view and purchase, which until now has been a very limited market to only individuals and families who were his patrons.

The pieces at Moderne will include furniture, sculptural objects, sculpture and woodcuts from the Merion, Pa., home of patrons Rose and Nathan Robinson, with additional works from other private collections. Most pieces come from the original owners and have never before been exhibited or available for purchase.

"Our Esherick exhibition comes at an exciting moment with renewed attention focused on the revered artist/craftsman," gal-

lery director Rober Aibel said in a statement. "The Wharton Esherick Museum recently purchased a neighboring property, which includes the farmhouse, the first home of Esherick and his wife. A museum expansion is planned."

The exhibition will feature approximately 40 pieces with most works priced between \$7,500 and \$100,000.

Esherick is credited for having an influence on Wendell Castle, Arthur Espenet Carpenter, Sam Maloof and many other craftsmen of the 20th century. He received numerous honors, including the American Institute of Architects Gold Medal posthumously in 1971. His work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Carnegie Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Renwick Collection at the Smithsonian, and Library of Congress.



Esherick's "Pizzicato," made in 1931.

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Esherick's Wagon Wheel armchair (1939) and his first music stand, commissioned in 1951.

Aibel has maintained a long association with the Esherick and Robinson families and served as the appraiser for the sculptor-woodworker's home and studio, now the Wharton Esherick Museum, in Paoli, Pa.

MAINE WOOD ISSUES CALL FOR ENTRIES

A call for entries was issued for the Maine Wood 2016 Biennial Exhibition, a juried show produced by the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Rockport, Maine.

The exhibition, which takes place at the center's Messler Gallery from January 22 through April 6, 2016, will showcase the breadth, creativity and excellence of wood craftsmanship in Maine.

The submission deadline is Aug. 28. All Maine artists and craftspeople who work in

wood are encouraged to apply, including furniture makers, turners, carvers, sculptors, luthiers and others. Submitted work must have been made in Maine during the last five years. The criterion for acceptance is excellence in design and craftsmanship.

Jurors for this year's biennial are Peter Fleming, professor at Sheridan College in Toronto; Matthew Kenney, senior editor at *Fine Woodworking* magazine; and Emily Zilber, curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. www.modernegallery.com

Contacts:

Moderne Gallery, 111 N. Third St., Philadelphia, PA 19106. Tel: 215-923-8536. www.modernegallery.com

Messler Gallery, 25 Mill St., Rockport, ME 04856. Tel: 207-594-5611. www.woodschooll.org

Weeke builds 500th CNC router

Weeke North America recently celebrated a milestone, completing production on its 500th Weeke Vantech CNC router.

The machine is made in Grand Rapids, Mich., where Weeke also produces ABD CNC drilling and dowel machines.

The factory has 25 employees and is scheduled to build 250 machines this year, according to Weeke.

In an effort to keep up with production, Weeke is building a new 100,000-sq.-ft. facility in Grand Rapids, expected to open later this year.

For information, visit www.stilesmachinery.com.

NEW PRODUCTS

TAYLORCRAFT CABINET DOOR CO. offers a new mitered cabinet-door profile called MW22 with a beaded look on the outside edge and a transitional, flat detail on the inside edge. This frame profile can be paired with 21 different panel profiles, according to the company. TaylorCraft offers more than 80 edge- and panel-profile options that customers can mix and match to create their own designs. For information, visit <http://taylorcraftdoor.com>.



TREND has introduced a new lock jig with adjustable sliding inserts to produce faceplate and mortise recesses. The jig is made of 1/2" thick laminate and is fully adjustable for lock faceplates up to 10" in length, according to Trend. It has engraved site lines for faceplate widths of 7/8" and 1" and mortise widths of 5/8" and 3/4". It is engraved on the bottom for 1-3/8", 1-3/4", 2" and 2-1/8" door widths. The jig can be used on doors 30mm (1.18") to 80mm (3.15") thick. For information, visit www.trend-usa.com.

MAGSWITCH TECHNOLOGY has introduced a work-holding starter kit, including a universal base, two Magswitch MagJig 150 magnets and a reversible featherboard. For information, visit <http://magswitch.com.au>.



▲ **HARDWARE RESOURCES**, a manufacturer of decorative and functional kitchen and bath cabinet elements, is introducing new additions to its closet organizer collection. The new offerings include tri-hooks, a laundry valet, shoe fences and the patent-pending tie and scarf rack, available in a mixture of finishes including polished chrome and dark bronze. For information, visit www.hardwareresources.com.



▲ **DRILLNADO** is a dust collection product for the drill press that surrounds the drill chuck and bit, collecting about 98 percent of wood dust and debris, according to a company study. It works on most floor and benchtop models. For information, visit www.drillnado.com.

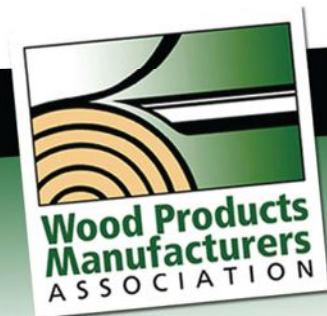
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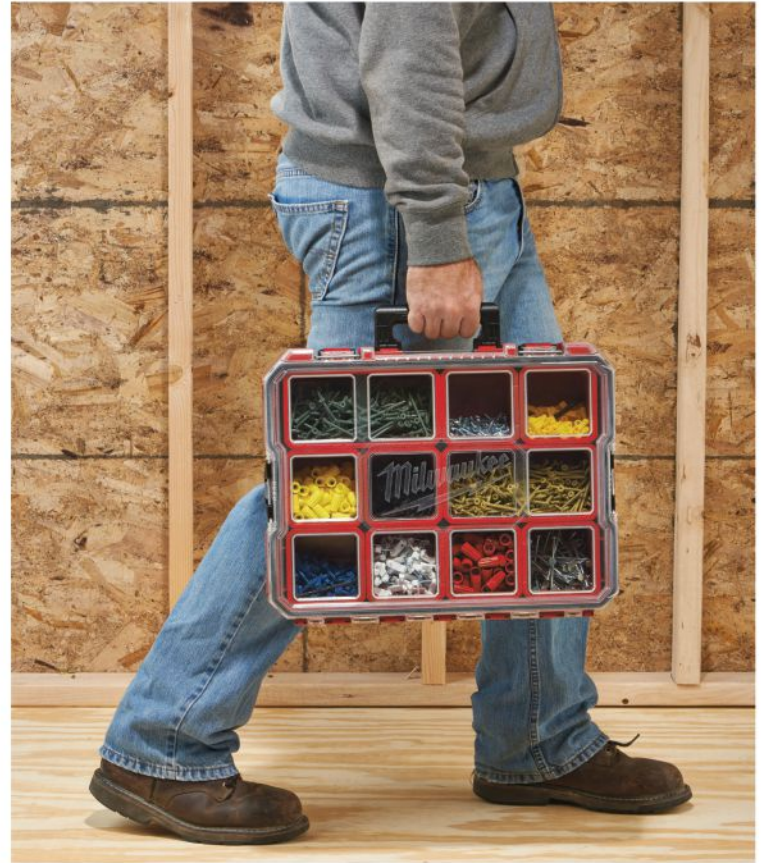
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►► **MILWAUKEE TOOL** has added to its line of durable storage solutions with the introduction of the new Jobsite Organizer. It includes eight small and two large removable bins that can be mounted on common job-site materials, according to the company. A seal around the perimeter of each bin prevents small items from migrating from one bin to the other and the convenient 4"x4" size of the small bins allows them to be easily swapped out with a common electrical box. Multiple organizers can be stacked and attached with side clips. For information, visit www.milwaukeetool.com.



►► **SATA** introduces the Satajet 5000 B spray gun, providing the flexibility to set the inlet pressure from 7 to 32 psi with a gun distance ranging from 4 to 8.5 inches, according to the company. The gun is available in a standard and digital version, in HVLP or RP (reduced pressure), and is finished with a satin-gloss Pearlchrome surface that is corrosion-resistant and easy to clean. For information, visit www.satausa.com.



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▼ **COMPX TIMBERLINE** offers the new Double Door Latch, designed to allow two- or three-point locking for standard or wardrobe style double cabinet doors when used with a lock. The latch eliminates the need for elbow catches or other devices and does not require the user to reach inside to release the cabinet door, according to the company. For information, visit <http://compix.com>.



◀ **OMEGA NATIONAL PRODUCTS** presents floating shelves for use between cabinets, at the end of a cabinet run or freestanding to store plates, glasses and decorative items in the kitchen and bath. The shelves are 2-1/2" thick and 10" deep and are offered in five widths: 24", 30", 36", 42" and 48". Species include maple, cherry, alder, red oak and hickory. For information, visit www.omeganationalproducts.com.

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▶▶ **KEYSTONE'S** Superior Green door offers a new and valuable option for paint-grade cabinet doors and drawer fronts. Made using solid soft maple for rails and stiles, the panels are milled from Plum Creek's GlacierGreen medium-density fiberboard. This combination can save up to 25 percent on material costs and 40 percent on finishing and it yields a superior end product, according to the company. Keystone can also custom color-match with a supplied color sample. For information, visit www.keystonewood.com.



◀◀ **THERMWOOD** has a new app allowing customers to track the operation of their CNC routers using their cell phone, PC or other mobile device. The new automatic alert addition allows the user to instruct the machine to automatically email or text them when certain events occur, according to the company. The free app also allows users to monitor many aspects of their Thermwood smart-router and QCore Super Controls, including programs running, events, cycle times, scheduled maintenance and much more. For information, visit www.thermwood.com.



◀◀ **OUTWATER** offers an updated line of Wood Plus decorative moldings that portray the look, quality and elegance of the finest plaster and wood moldings at the cost of inexpensive, unfinished pine moldings, according to the company. The moldings are sold in 8' lengths. For information, visit www.outwatercatalogs.com.

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The events are also listed at no charge on the Internet: www.woodshopnews.com
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◀◀ CAMFIL offers the new HemiPleat Synthetic dust collector filter, which combines a high-efficiency synthetic media with proprietary open-pleat technology for exceptional performance and long life in harsh, humid environments, according to the company. The washable media is resistant to moisture and can handle heavy dust-loading conditions. HemiPleat Synthetic filters are available for Farr Gold Series dust collectors or for retrofit on most major brands of competitive cartridge dust collectors. For information, visit www.camfilapc.com.



◀◀ FLEXAUST is introducing a new line of swivel connectors for joining long lengths of Flex-Tube hose to help prevent twisting and improve flexibility and user maneuverability in longer applications. The connectors are made from high strength polyurethane and feature a smooth, tapered interior to assure superior material and airflow, according to the company. They are designed to connect multiple lengths of Flex-Tube hose and come in 2", 2-1/2", 3", 4", and 6" diameter sizes. For information, visit www.flexaust.com.

▲▲ COLUMBIA FOREST PRODUCTS presents "Behind the Ply," a bimonthly e-newsletter focused on news and information of interest to members of the specifier community including architects, designers and specifications experts. The first edition was published in March. Five more are scheduled for 2015. Each issue will include articles by editor-in-chief Suzanne VanGilder, the North American organizer of the Decorative Surfaces Conference. For information, visit www.columbiaforestproducts.com.

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CALENDAR

Organizations sponsoring meetings, classes or shows of interest to professional or hobbyist woodworkers are invited to submit items to: Calendar, Woodshop News, 10 Bokum Road, Essex, CT 06426; editorial@woodshopnews.com.

Include name, dates, location, description of event and a contact address or telephone number. Calendar items, which should be typed or printed clearly, must be received a minimum of 60 days before the event.

Please note that fees, as listed, might not include materials or shop fees. Check with a specific class for further details.

The complete national calendar of events is continuously updated at www.woodshopnews.com.

— Compiled by Jennifer Hicks

ARIZONA

Sept. 14-19 — Advanced Finishing. Taught by Jim Altman, this course will focus on surface preparation including distressing. Fee: \$440 with materials. Location: Southwest School of Woodworking in Phoenix. www.sw-sw.org

Sept. 21-Oct. 2 — Build a Sculpted Rocking Chair. Students will build a rocking chair in the style of Sam Maloof. Fee: \$1,360, plus

materials that will vary depending on wood chosen. Location: Southwest School of Woodworking in Phoenix. www.sw-sw.org

CALIFORNIA

Monthly — San Fernando Valley Woodworkers meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Balboa Park Sports Complex, Gym Building, at 17015 Burbank Boulevard in Encino. www.sfvw.org

FLORIDA

Ongoing — The Dunedin Fine Art Center is offering six-week woodturning classes at its Cottage Campus taught by AAW professional member Tony Marsh for beginners and intermediate-level participants. Full day classes are held on Thursdays. Call 727-298-3322 or e-mail education@dfac.org for information.

Monthly — Woodcrafters Club of Tampa meets every third Thursday evening at 3809 W. Broad St. in Tampa. For information, visit www.tampawoodcrafters.org.

MASSACHUSETTS

June 24-28, July 12-16, Aug. 23-27, Sept. 16-20, Oct. 14-18 — Five-day Bare Bones wood carving workshop with David Calvo. Location: Calvo Studio, Gloucester. www.david-calvo.com

June 12-14, Aug. 8-9, Nov. 13-15, Dec. 11-13 — Two and three-day wood carving courses with David Calvo. Location: Calvo Studio, Gloucester. www.davidcalvo.com

Sept. 23-27 — Traditional Timber Framing with Jack Sobon and Dave Carlon. Fee: \$620. Location: Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield. For information, call 413-684-3612 or write to dcarlon01@aol.com.

NEVADA

July 22-25 — AWFS biennial trade show to be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas. Featuring exhibitors offering new tools and products, educational seminars and networking opportunities. www.awfsfair.org

NEW YORK

Monthly — Sawdust and Woodchips Woodworking Association meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Canton Woods Center in Baldwinsville. www.sawdustwoodchips.org

Monthly — Northeast Woodworkers Association meetings held on second Thursday of the month at various locations in Albany area. www.woodworker.org

RHODE ISLAND

Nov. 6-8 — The Providence Fine Furnish-

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SOUTH DAKOTA

Monthly — The South Dakota Woodworkers Guild meets the last Thursday of every month (except August) at various members' shops. The club has hand tool and woodturning groups. www.sdwoodworker.org.

WISCONSIN

Sept. 18-20 — Milwaukee Fine Furnishings Show. Annual show featuring handcrafted furniture and accessories will be held in a new venue this year at the Muellner Building at Hart Park in Wauwatosa. www.finefurnishingshows.com

WYOMING

Sept. 11-13 — Western Design Conference. Brings together artists, scholars, collectors, designers and more with a passion for the West. Handcrafted work includes home accents, furniture, leather, metal, mixed media and fashion. Location: Snow King Resort, Jackson Hole. www.westerndesignconference.com 

Vitap machines available exclusively from Atlantic Machinery

Atlantic Machinery Corp. of New Milford, Conn., has recently become the exclusive importer and distributor of Vitap woodworking machinery.

Vitap SpA of Poggibonsi, Italy, specializes in boring and edgebanding equipment, including manual, semi and fully automatic models.

For the last 10 years, Vitap has also been the original manufacturer of the Eclipse, a semi-automatic contour edgebander and trimmer system that can handle large parts with demanding concave and convex profiles, according to Atlantic Machinery.

Atlantic Machinery is providing machines, spare parts and technical support to distributors and customers for all Vitap machines in the U.S.

For information, visit www.atlantic-mach.com and www.vitap.it

Rockler introduces dust collection's 'missing link'

Rockler Woodworking and Hardware says it has developed a single dust hose kit that fits the vast majority of handheld power tools on the market, despite variations in the size and shape of their dust ports.

The Dust Right Universal Small Port Hose Kit features two sizes of swiveling hose ports with rubber ends that stretch to provide an airtight fit on a range of tool ports. They're also angled to provide hose clearance above the work surface, according to the company.

"The Universal Small Port Hose Kit is the missing link in dust collection for handheld power tools," Rockler's Steve Krohmer said in a statement. "The best way to control dust is to capture it at the source, and with this one kit you can connect virtually any small power tool in your shop to a standard shop vacuum or dust collector."

The kit sells for \$39.99. Visit www.rockler.com.

ADVERTISING INDEX

Accuride International	www accuride.com	6	Mirka Abrasives Inc.	www.mirka.com	17
Amana Tool	www.amanatool.com	C4	Oliver Machinery Co	www.olivermachinery.net	29
American Fabric Filter Co	www.americanfabricfilter.com	30	Oneida Air Systems Inc	www.oneida-air.com	43
AWFS Fair 2015.....	www.awfsfair.org	11	Osborne Wood Products, Inc.	www.osbornewood.com	30, 56
Beaver Tools.....	www.beavertools.com	26, 51	Precision Drive Systems, PDS	www.PDSspindles.com	3
Berkshire Products.....	www.BerkProducts.com	58	Roberts Plywood, Inc.....	www.getwood.com	48
Cantek America Inc.....	www.cantekamerica.com	25	Sata Spray.....	www.satausa.com	56
Castle, Inc.....	www.castleusa.com	5	Scm Group North America.....	www.scmgroupna.com	18
Charles GG Schmidt & Co.....	www.cggschmidt.com	49	Senco Products, Inc.....	www.senco.com	39
Chemcraft	www.chemcraft.com	4	ShopBot Tools, Inc.....	www.shopbottools.com	14
Connecticut Saw & Tool.....	www.ctsaw.com	21	Smart Shop CNC.....	www.smartshopcnc.com	35
Decore-ative Specialties	www.decore.com	8, 9	SMARTECH	www.smartechonline.com	27
Felder USA	www.felderusa.com	13	Smith Woodworks & Design.....	www.niceknobs.com	57
Festool USA.....	www.festoolusa.com	2	Stiles Machinery.....	www.stilesmachinery.com	1
Goff's Enterprises, Inc	www.goffscurtainwalls.com	58	SuperMax Tools	www.supermaxtools.com	22
Grizzly Industrial, Inc.....	www.grizzly.com	C2, 32, 33	Timbercraft Mfg.	www.timbercraftdrawers.com	54
Hearne Hardwoods.....	www.hearnehardwoods.com	50	Vacuum Pressing Systems.....	www.vacupress.com	55
Hoffmann Machine Company.....	www.hoffmann-usa.com	57	Virutex	www.virutex.com	15
KCD Software	www.KCDsoftware.com	C3	Vortex Tool Co., Inc	www.vortextool.com	41
Kreg Tool Company	www.kregtool.com	47	W. Moore Profiles Ltd	www.wmooreprofiles.com	19
Laguna Tools Inc.	www.lagunatools.com	10	Wagler's Custom Wood Turning.....		24
Macoser, Inc.	www.macoserwood.com	23	Williams & Hussey Machine Co.	www.williamsnhussey.com	55
MARTIN Woodworking Machines Corp.	www.martin-usa.com	28	WMPA.....	www.WPMA.org	54
MAX USA Corp	www.maxusacorp.com	44	Woodworker's Supply of New Mexico	www.woodworker.com	22, 40, 59

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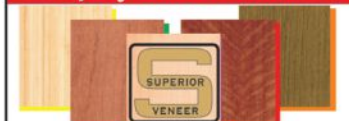
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03WHAT

From Festo to Festool

At the Festool administrative offices in Wendlingen, Germany, tucked away in an outbuilding is the company museum that celebrates 90 years of tool innovation.

The company was founded in 1925 under the name Fezer & Stoll, which became Festo in 1933. It didn't become Festool until 2000.

The company claims more than 350 patents and had its first major success with a portable chainsaw. The saws (Photo A) had a gas engine and required two men to operate. It was rather crude, compared to today's models, but was a welcome change from swinging an ax all day.

In 1951, Festo introduced the first orbital sander, considered a revolution in surface finishing. The world's first combination circular saw and guide rail followed in 1964.

In 1976, the company introduced the eccentric sander with integrated dust extraction. The next generation of compressed air-eccentric sanders arrived in 1982, which Festo followed up with the Rotex, the first geared eccentric sander, in 1984. The Rotex provided three applications — coarse sanding, fine sanding and polishing — in a single tool.

Other significant product introductions include the Systainer, a plastic tool storage case and organizer, in 1993; mobile dust extractors in 1999, and the Domino joining system in 2006.

The museum features a number of stationary tools that the company no longer produces. There are also examples of an early band saw (Photo B), mortiser with a chainsaw cutter (Photo C), and several circular saws with important safety innovations such as a riving knife and retractable blade guard (Photo D).

Today, Festool has about 2,500 employees worldwide. It operates in North America as Festool USA, based in Lebanon, Ind. [W](http://www.festool.com)

— Tod Riggio

An early band saw (Photo B) and mortiser (C).



The company's first chain saws (Photo A, below) and the circular saw exhibit (D).

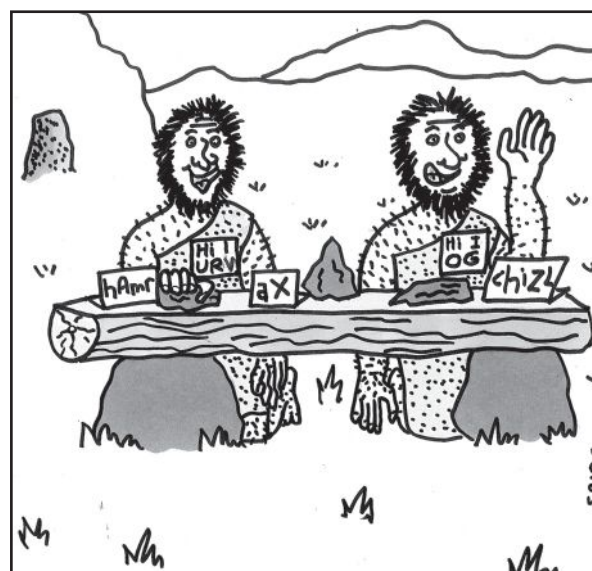


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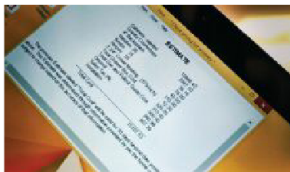
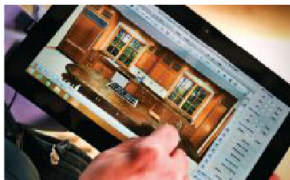


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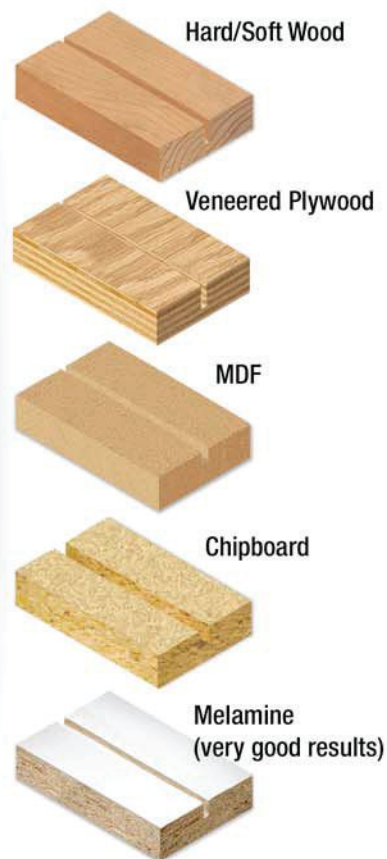
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