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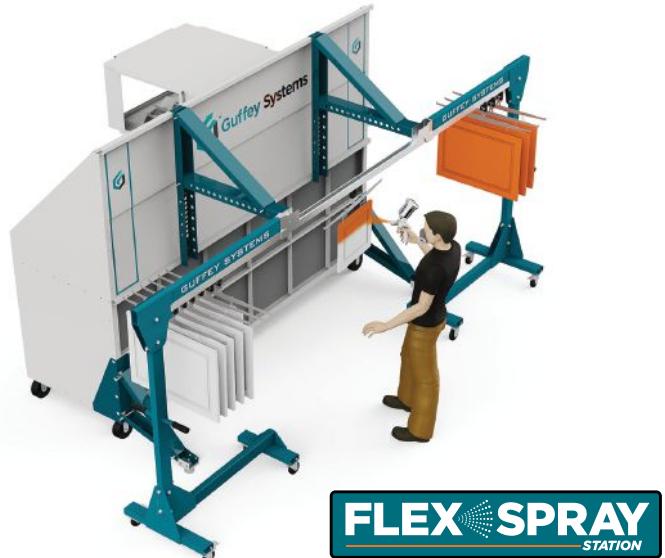
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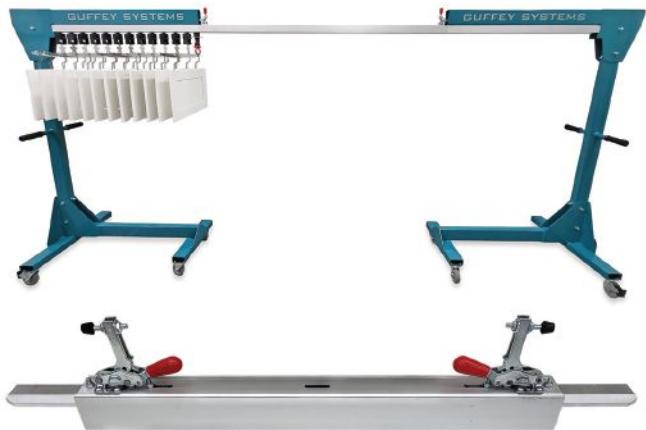
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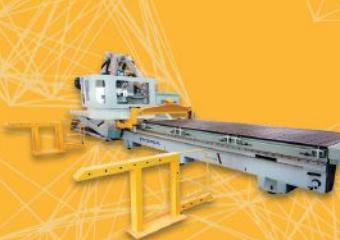
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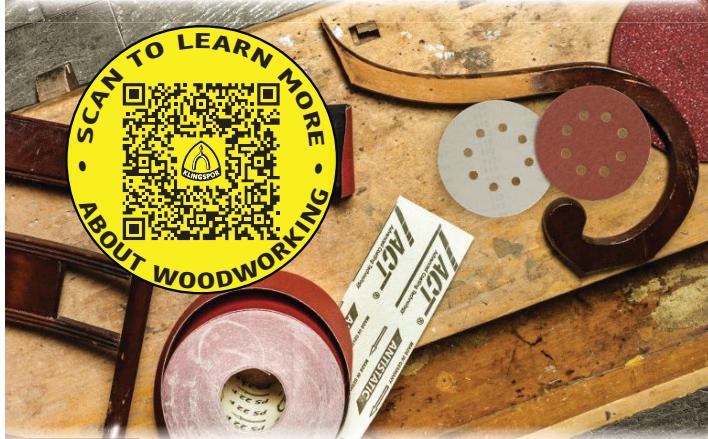
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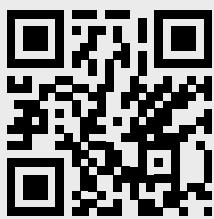
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Over the Workbench

Talkin' shop with former editor A.J. Hamler

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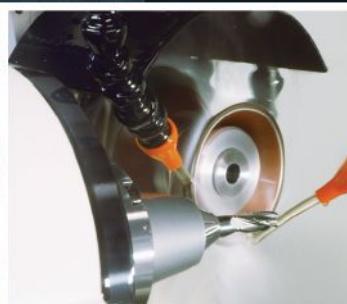
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AWFS Fair changes 2027 schedule

By Tod Riggio

DECEMBER 2025

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WOODSHOPNEWS

The Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers (AWFS) has changed the day pattern for the 2027 AWFS Fair, which will now run from Tuesday through Thursday on July 13-15.

"This decision came as a result of changes we've seen in buyer behavior over the course of several shows," according to Angelo Gangone, Executive Vice President of the AWFS. "Attendees have more tools at their disposal to research products and plan their events than ever before. Buyers are conducting their business with greater efficiency and returning home to their shops and families with little downtime in between."

"Eliminating a show day also brings down the overall cost of exhibiting. Based on the research we conducted immediately following the 2025 Fair, we expect this move to be well received by exhibitors, many of whom expressed their opinions on this subject and others. As a result, this is just the first of several exciting changes AWFS Fair will be introducing in the very near term and into 2026."

The AWFS, in collaboration with the Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD), Taber Co., and Carbide 3D, also hosted a recent two-day teacher externship designed to connect educators with the modern wood products industry.

The program gave teachers firsthand insight into advanced

manufacturing, career pathways, and real-world applications of STEM education in woodworking.

On the first day, Taber Co., an architectural millwork, upholstery, and metal fabrication company based in Irvine, Calif., welcomed 10 AUHSD teachers and staff representing subjects including wood technology, engineering, physics, construction, and mathematics.

Participants toured the facility, learning about Taber's custom millwork processes, advanced machinery, software applications, and company growth from a small shop to a 300-plus employee enterprise.

The following day, teachers reconvened with AWFS Education Director Tovi Spero and Society of Wood Manufacturing President Saúl Martín, also representing the Architectural Woodwork Institute, for a full-day workshop translating industry experiences into curriculum.

Teachers collaborated on lesson plans and projects, ranging from physics and engineering challenges to wood product design, that integrate modern manufacturing tools, software, and career awareness.

This two-day externship is part of AWFS's ongoing efforts to bridge education and industry through teacher tours, student visits, and professional development during Manufacturing Month each October. **W**

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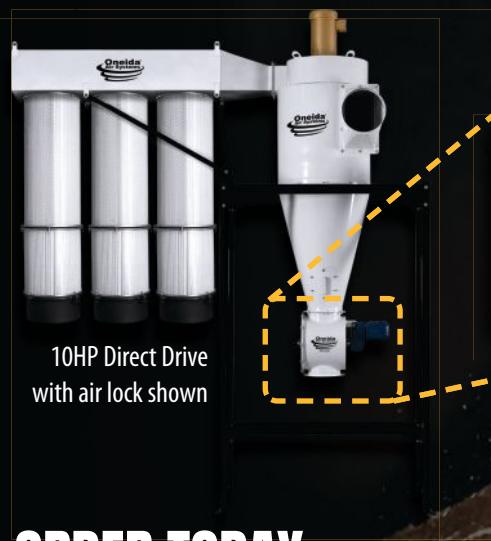


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Society of Arts + Crafts to close and transfer assets

By Jennifer Hicks

The Society of Arts + Crafts (SAC), a Boston-based craft organization, announced in October that it will be bringing a close to its operations. The SAC is in the process of transferring assets to the North Bennett Street School of Boston, which is expected to establish an endowed scholarship in SAC's name and take over administration of the annual John D. Mineck Fellowship award.

"Since the loss of our Newbury Street Store and gallery, SAC has struggled to find a sustainable business model. The end of CraftBoston, brought on by the rising cost of venues and the pandemic, was a loss from which we could not recover," the organization said in a statement.

"Working with limited resources, the board and staff worked to reinvent this legacy organization, launching new programs and seeking to modernize and diversify. Despite great effort, these activities have not generated enough funds to keep the SAC alive."

SAC has determined that transferring its remaining assets to North Bennett will best serve its objectives, as

both organizations share a strong commitment to craft advocacy. North Bennett provides training and support for fine craft artists, with a mission to prepare students for careers in traditional trades that blend hand skills with modern technology.

The transfer of assets requires approval from both the Massachusetts Attorney General and the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, which are expected in 2026.

"Once that occurs, North Bennett Street School will establish an endowed scholarship in SAC's name, providing an important resource for promising craft artists. In addition, the school will take over the prestigious Mineck Award of \$25,000 to a contemporary furniture artist," SAC said.

Founded in 1897 as the first craft organization in the country, SAC has served the craft community and the public with a range of programming, including exhibitions, retail opportunities for artists, publications, studio and museum visits, workshops and direct grants to artists.

Learn more at societyofcrafts.org. **W**

Joyce Lin awarded Mineck Fellowship

By Jennifer Hicks

The Society of Arts + Crafts has awarded Houston-based artist Joyce Lin with this year's John D. Mineck Fellowship, a \$25,000 grant awarded annually to an emerging or mid-career furniture builder.

Lin describes herself as a sculptural furniture maker, especially drawn to deconstructing and transforming traditional furniture forms, mostly chairs, to explore ideas around the relationship between surface and structure and the blurred boundaries between natural and artificial.

"My process is highly labor-intensive and experimental," she says. "I use a mix of woodworking, sculpting, painting, casting, and more to push how materials can behave and interact. At its core, I would say that my practice centers around questioning what it means to be a maker in such uncanny times, while also serving as a kind of love letter to craft."

Lin was selected from a field of 96 applicants by jurors Rosanne Somerson, Jack Mauch and Jomo Tariku. She intends to use the grant to employ a part-time fabrication assistant in her studio.

"I'm immensely honored to be awarded the fellowship from the Society of Arts + Crafts. It couldn't have come at a better time. My ideas have grown increasingly ambitious and physically demanding over the years, and building a sustainable practice around that has been challenging," Lin tells *Woodshop News*.



Lin's Kuszu Chair and Table, and Wood Chair in Oak.

"I make my living producing work and teaching woodworking and design part-time. While fostering community among makers is central to my goals, I've always worked alone in the studio. With the John D. Mineck Fellowship, I hope to make my practice more sustainable by upgrading equipment and space and bringing on a part-time studio assistant to help with the physical demands of my work. The support will allow me to restructure my practice to be more resilient and ready for new challenges and larger projects."

Learn more at joyce-lin.com and societyofcrafts.org. **W**



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Woodworking in America plays to a full house

By Jennifer Hicks

Woodworking enthusiasts flocked to the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines Oct. 10-11 for the second annual Woodworking in America event. The gathering, jointly hosted by Active Interest Media's woodworking brands — Woodsmith, Popular Woodworking, Fine Woodworking, ShopNotes, and Woodsmith Shop TV — featured interactive seminars, live demonstrations, and networking opportunities for craftspeople of all skill levels.

Phil Huber, executive editor Woodsmith and ShopNotes, told Woodshop News he was impressed with the turnout.

"We had a lot of really excited people come in for the open house to kick off the event, which is always really cool, and a big turnout here at the start. We have a beautiful day here in Iowa and we're doing well, and people are still coming in," Huber said on Friday's opening day, prior to giving opening remarks and later conducting a seminar on custom cabinet doors.

"Last year we were in an old school, which I think was cool for the experience of it. But I think this space, it's really light-filled, wide open, people can see what's going on, the classrooms are great. I think we have a great place for people to enjoy what's going on."



On Thursday, Oct. 9, guests were invited to a Woodsmith Shop & Studio Tour where they could meet with television and podcast personalities and other editorial staff and visit the show's woodworking shop. Guests, who traveled from many different states, included hobbyists, soon-to-be retirees, and those looking into professional growth.

Chris McCoy of Appleton Wis., visited with his wife Agnes, after having a great experience last year.

"We came out last year and had a



good time, so we came out again this year. I'm a woodworker, and my wife is along for the road trip. I have a shop in the backyard. Right now I'm making a credenza for my parents. I make things for my family and friends. Every now and then people will ask me to make something. I just wanted to meet some of the voices on the podcast and talk to other woodworkers and see what's all there," said McCoy.

Kent Lenz traveled from Corpus Christi, Texas, to see what the event was all about.

"There were a couple names of people giving presentations that I thought would be neat. I'm just a hobbyist and so, I'm just looking to get a little more inspired, clean up my garage a little bit. I've sold some projects in the past and just need a little more inspiration," said Lenz.

Brent Hanna of Urbana, Iowa, attended to hone his skills and learn how to set up his shop, as he's looking into woodworking as a retirement hobby after a long career in the concrete and asphalt industry.

"I'm looking at how other woodworkers set up their shops, how they place their tools, what they use, and all the functioning in the shop en-

vironment. I haven't spent the time doing that. And I'm thinking of grandkids going into the shop and what I need to do for safety," said Hanna.

Shane Berkland, of Cylinder, Iowa, was another local who attended for general information.

"What brought me out was to see like-minded people to talk to. It's pretty neat to see where they do the show that we watch, the Woodsmith Shop. We fairly religiously watch it every Saturday, and to see where it's filmed and see what's going on in the background. You always see the little shop and the equipment, but to see the background part is pretty neat," said Berkland, a full-time construction worker who does some furniture cabinetry on the side.

Ken Hodson, of Rocky Mount, Mo., wanted to meet others interested in woodworking and attend the courses.

"I'm here to take it all in. I'm old enough that I had shop in junior high and high school. I was in 4-H and grew up very local to Des Moines. I did woodworking projects, and my twin brother and I had a shop in



our backyard for fun. I got back into woodworking after my twin brother passed away and that got me energized and back into it. I hadn't done anything in a long time. I'm getting close to retirement, so I'm sort of in my setting-up-shop stage, which seems to be a never-ending process, and learning techniques so I can apply those. I aspire to build some nice furniture," said Hodson.

Seminars covered gluing, turning, design, production runs and more. Outside, Popular Woodworking editor-in-chief Logan Whittmer presented Quarter Sawing on the Sawmill.

The event was sponsored by 20 companies that exhibited their products and services offered in the main hall of the event center. Kreg Tool and Carbide 3D conducted product demonstrations during breaks in the seminar schedule. Dave Brown, industrial sales manager for Original Saw, showed attendees a radial arm saw and Williams & Hussey molder.

"We're a local Iowa manufacturer, and it was nice to be in our home state and display in front of the woodworking community down here. The turnout was very good. I like the setting. You get waves of people in to check out equipment and things around the show here, and they go and attend classes you've got time to clean the booth back up. It's a nice casual show with people looking for direction or new innovations," said Brown.

Learn more at woodworkinginamerica.com. **W**

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Recent tariff discussions have caused a great deal of consumer confusion, and for woodworkers, the impact on raw lumber is naturally a concern. Exotic species in their raw form have so far avoided tariff impact, according to vendors interviewed by *Woodshop News*.

But several challenges still affect supply of exotic species in the U.S. market. For starters, many exotic woods are scarce to begin with. Secondly, domestic and foreign regulatory measures for sustainable sourcing are expanding, which has further impacted availability. Third, even with no tariffs on raw exotics, those exotics that have gone through a manufacturing process are facing tariffs.

"Everybody's confused, but we didn't get hit by tariffs on raw lumber," says Fabs Corte of Cormark International, a retailer of exotics and domestics in Weaverville, N.C. "If they're importing a finished product or something like that, there may be. It's so confusing at the moment because tariffs are country-specific, product-specific, under a harmonized tariff code. The rate of the tariff can change from one country to the next, from one minute to the next."

"People are confused about the tariffs, generally," says Dave Norman of Parkerville Wood Products in Manchester, Conn. "It's still very confusing to figure out what's tariffed and what's not, until we see an invoice that says it, which for the most part, most of our products are not being tariffed. I'm not sure I've seen it on any of the woods yet."

Zebrawood and yellowheart rank amongst the most challenging exotics to source, according to Corte. Yellowheart has been an issue since 2019, when Brazil imposed a ban on exports. Zebrawood has been hard to find in the

Raw exotic lumber avoids tariffs, still faces hurdles

By Jennifer Hicks



same timeframe due to a global shortage.

"There's a demand for zebrawood and it's not out there. We have a small shipment and have to kiln dry it. We have to limit how much we release out there because we could quite easily sell it all to one person. We have high expectations that every year we're going to find more than the year before, and every year we seem to get less zebrawood," says Corte.

"The exotic world is funny," Norman added. "You can talk to different vendors and it's always different who has what. For example, cocobolo, the last couple of years we've had nothing on it. All of a sudden, we got a call from a private guy that builds hand planes and tools, and we bought a pickup load of it that will probably last two or three years. That's the way the exotic industry works." **W**

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A woodworker's wish list

'Tis the season for these innovative tools, machines and accessories

By John English

December is a great time to take stock of a shop's tool inventory, especially as so many suppliers run sales in January. And looking at all the options available is a bit of a treat. Some new tools simply replace aging forebears, while others approach problems in a whole new way.

Take, for example, **DeWalt's** new Multi-Head Drill/Driver (item DCD803B at dewalt.com). The company's research revealed that drill users wanted a more versatile cordless tool that could handle a wider range of applications. The new 20-volt Atomic tool has a drop-in loading mechanism that quickly switches between a 1/2" chuck, a 1/4" right-angle attachment, a 1/4" offset attachment, and a 1/4" quick-connect attachment. It's available as a bare tool and includes a mountable organizer and belt hooks to hold the attachment heads.

The new GSH06T1 from **Makita USA** (makitatools.com)

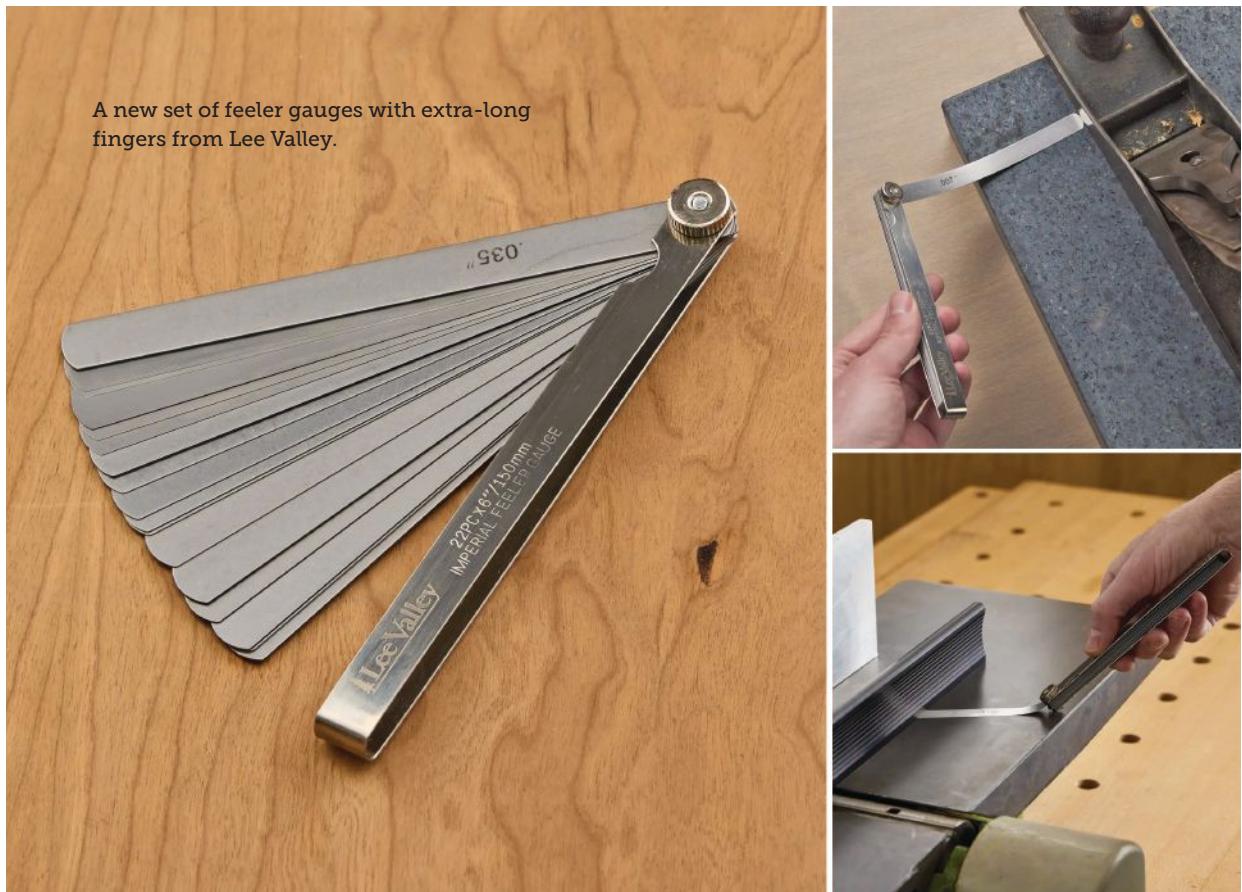
is another innovative idea. This is a 16-5/16" cordless circular saw that can cut 6x material at 90 degrees and 4x material at 45 degrees in a single pass. It comes with a blade stabilizer, an electric brake, and soft start. Makita says this is the world's largest cordless circular saw.

Metabo HPT (metabo-hpt.com) has released several new MultiVolt options, which are 18- and 36-volt power tools that can also accept an adapter that lets them plug into household current. Among these is the Stud, a 7-1/4" cordless circular saw (C3607DBQ4) which automatically switches the saw from high speed to high torque for tougher cuts or thicker wood. It's like an automatic transmission. The saw has a cut-depth indicator and a 55-degree bevel capacity.

New from **Fein** (fein.com) is the Renovator XL Combo, an 18-volt set of three tools that are packaged with a lot of accessories. The tools are a four-speed drill/driver, a



New from FastCap is a clever way to locate crown molding on a miter saw, using bars that slide up an auxiliary fence.



1/4" impact driver, and an oscillating multi-tool. The lightweight drill (ASCM18 QSW AS) features a Quick-IN interface for fast accessory changes. The impact driver (ASCD 18-200 W4 AS) has six electronic torque settings and a 1/4" hexagonal tool mount. And the multi-tool (AMM 700 MAX) comes with an anti-vibration system and StarlockMax tool mounting. These tools work with AMPShare batteries.

WORKSTATIONS

The new Handy Bench from **Rockler** (rockler.com, item 62650) is made from solid beech and has a Moxon-style, twin-screw vise. It can convert sawhorses or Rockler's work stand into a rugged, go-anywhere workbench. The top is 16" x 32", and the vise will clamp workpieces up to 3" thick and about 10" wide. The unit comes with four aluminum bench dogs, and the vise can be moved around as needed.

The T34243 mobile router table/workstation from **Grizzly industrial** (grizzly.com) includes a router table, built-in storage for bits and accessories, and a mobile stand with four locking swivel casters. There are two doors, one on each side, with storage space for bits, wrenches, and other accessories, and routers can be kept below. The aluminum fence is adjusted topside and tool-free with handles, and the T34243 has both fence-mounted and tool enclosure dust extraction. T-tracks on the router table allow for feather-boards, hold-downs, and other work-holding, and there's a 3/8"-thick phenolic insert.

Kreg Tool's Dowel Jig Kit (KHJD345 at kregtool.com) lets a woodworker create clean, consistent dowel joints without measuring or guesswork. It has removable 1/4" and 3/8" drill guide blocks (plus a 1/2" upgrade option), a clamp-ready design, and multiple intuitive alignment methods including dowel alignment grooves, reference lines, and alignment pins. The built-in stop collar setting and measuring scale also simplify setup.

FastCap's new Crown Stop Fence (fastcap.com) has two parallel T-grooves cut into the face of the fence, allowing slide bars to move freely up and down to fit any crown molding up to 7-1/2" wide. When not in use, a woodworker can store the slide bars in grooves on the backside of the

The L5300 pinless moisture meter from Wagner Meters





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The SATAjet X 5500 digital monitors inlet pressure, operating time, and temperature.



Rockler's Handy Bench.



The Leica iCON, combined with a vPen, produces a digital template that can be used to program a CNC machine.

Crown Stop Fence. To install them, remove the existing fences and slide them in.

Two new edge banders from **Maksiwa** (maksiwa.com), the Platinum and Titanium, offer compact designs and lots of extras. The Platinum CBC.PCR model handles EVA and PUR and it has a corner-rounding feature, pre-milling, trimming, glue-scraping and buffering. And the Titanium CBC.TPM model has a compact footprint along with pre-milling, a gluing unit, a multi-function group for end trimming and top/bottom trimming, glue scraping, buffering, and vertical rounding.

PORABLE TOOLS

Jobsite cleanup can be challenging, especially when the work is being done where people live. Exchanging an older, louder and less efficient shop vacuum for one of the four new HEPA wet/dry dust extractors from **Festool USA** (festoolusa.com) could be a significant upgrade. The smallest, the Cleantec CT 26 EI, is a 6.9-gallon unit with Bluetooth start-up when an attached tool or remote is turned on. It has five suction levels, an anti-static feature, clever hose and cord storage, large wheels, and an integrated brake. Other units in this family are the CT 36 EI and CT 48 EI AC with Autoclean, which allows the user to set filter cleaning intervals at 15, 30, 60, or 120 seconds.

Measuring for casework or countertops is a whole lot easier with digital templating (using a laser on a tripod). The new **Leica** (leica-geosystems.com) iCON iCS20 and iCS50 models, combined with a vPen, can capture any contour, no matter how complex. Hidden points, glossy surfaces or even glass are no problem, and setting up target plates on edges is no longer necessary. By touching the pen at critical spots, a woodworker can complete a 2D or 3D jobsite drawing with

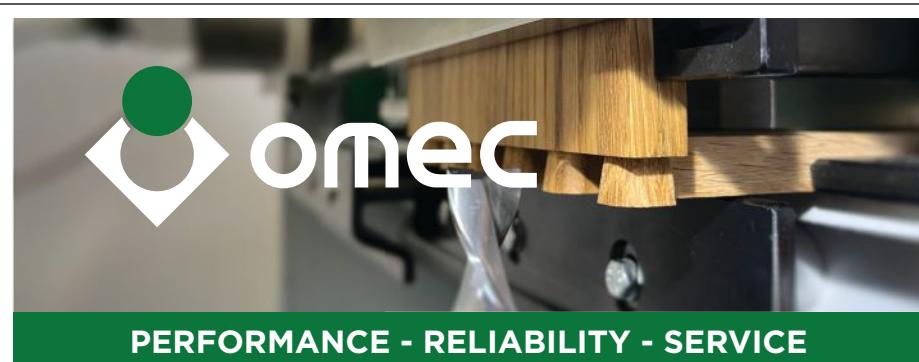


Two new 3/4" triple flute down-cut pattern bits from Bits & Bits.

offsets, profiles and cut-outs. The digital template can then be used to program a CNC machine.

Lee Valley (leevalley.com) has just released a feeler gauge for woodworkers, which can be used when adjusting items such as plunge routers, fences, or planer knives. Referenced as item 86K9902, it has 1/2"-wide by 5-1/2"-long fingers. This lets a woodworker see what's going on and also use combinations of two or more fingers without distortion. The set runs from 0.0015" to 0.035".

Anyone who has ever installed a kitchen knows how it feels to wish there was a jack around. Lining up base cabinets or raising wall units is a two-man job — well, it was until **Irwin** (irwintools.com) introduced its Quick-Lift. This is a jack that has a 10" lifting height and a capacity of up to 330 lbs. Use the no-load Quick Release feature to slip



750CN-C Dovetailer

The Omech 750CN-C features a powerful 4 HP, 18,000 RPM spindle engineered for optimal performance and durability. Its advanced spindle cover enhances workplace safety by minimizing sawdust and noise, ensuring a cleaner and quieter working environment. Additionally, the Omech 750CN-C pre-scores workpieces to achieve precise, high-quality finishes in every production run. Designed for efficiency, the Omech 750CN-C processes single or simultaneous male and female workpieces, achieving output rates of up to 60 drawers per hour. It accommodates drawer widths up to 20.86" and material thicknesses up to 1.18", making it a highly versatile solution for dovetail production.

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The Dowel Jig Kit from Kreg Tool.



The Grex 21-gauge nailer features a nose cover that reduces jamming and an edge guide.



Grizzly's new mobile router table, model T34243, features side and bottom storage, and top and bottom dust ports.

the lift plate under an object, and then squeeze the trigger to raise a cabinet, door, panel, or countertop.

The new L5300 from **Wagner Meters** (wagnermeters.com) is the manufacturer's most advanced industrial-grade moisture meter. Powered by Wagner's IntelliSense pinless sensor technology, it measures 1" deep into the wood, not just on the surface. It also integrates seamlessly with Wagner's L722 Lumber Stack Probe, which lets users detect moisture deep within stickered stacks. And it stores up to 1,000 readings across 100 groups.

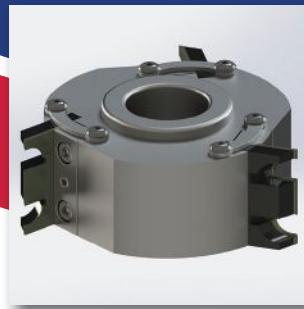
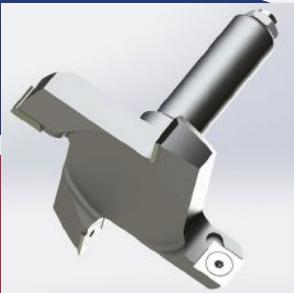
A couple of new 3/4" down-cut pattern bits from **Bits & Bits Co.** (bitsbits.com) are AstraHP Coated for extended tool life. These are triple flute router bits with 1/2" shanks, and they're now available in 3/4" and 1-1/8" cut lengths. The triple flute down-cut pattern bit delivers clean top edges and a smooth finish at any depth.

FASTENERS

Grex (grexusa.com) says that its H850LX is "the most advanced 21-gauge nailer on the planet." The gun drives



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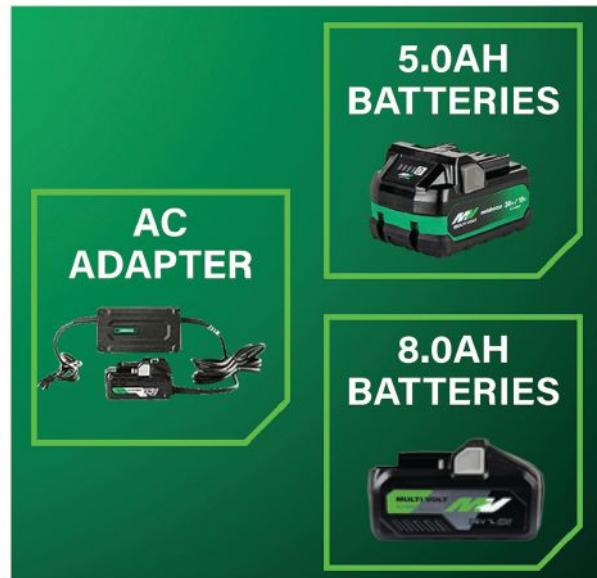
Bosch's new cordless 16-gauge crown stapler.



Irwin's Quick-Lift.



Metabo HPT's new 7-1/4" circular saw has three power options.





Makita's 16-5/16" cordless circular saw.

2" brads into hardwood and offers a middle ground between the small hole size left by a 23-gauge pin and the holding strength of an 18-gauge brad nail. It comes with lots of new features including an integrated edge guide, a swivel connector, a hardened steel one-piece driver, a Posit-Lock nose cover that dramatically reduces jamming, a one-touch lockout override, rear exhaust, and a narrow nose design.

Adding a digital gun in the spray booth can help reduce errors by monitoring inlet pressure, operating time, and temperature. The SATAjet X 5500 has SATA's (sata.com) new X atomization system, which handles all paint systems and increases both control and consistency.

Bosch Power Tools (boschtools.com) has a new cordless 16-gauge (7/16") crown stapler, the GTH18V-50MN. It comes with a thumb wheel for quick, stepless depth changes, quick toggling between single and bump-fire modes, low recoil, and pneumatic-like performance. There's tool-free jam clearing, a quick-load magazine, and an LED light. And it works with AMPShare, which is a multi-brand compatible battery system.

Kyocera Senco Industrial Tools (senco.com) has introduced a new cap stapler for jobsite work that will fire without plastic caps when simple stapling is required. The CS61H1 has been awarded a 2025 Pro Tool Innovation Award. **W**

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New Rebel pocket-hole joiner from Kreg

By Jennifer Hicks

Kreg Tool presents the Rebel 20-volt Ionic Drive Pocket-Hole Joiner, a cordless joinery tool powered by the company's new Blue-Ion battery platform.

The Rebel is a mini pocket hole machine with an easy-to-use design for fast, one-motion drilling.

"The Kreg Rebel is designed around the fact that you can make pocket holes wherever you want with our battery platform, so you've got a small portable system," says Andy Young, Kreg's regional sales manager.

"The other thing is you don't need to take a drill with you wherever you go, you can do everything all in one. This will allow you to do pocket holes to between 1/2" to 1-1/2" material anywhere you want, with no clamping needed. It just sits on your material."



Kreg's Andy Young demonstrating the new Rebel pocket-hole joiner at the Woodworking in America event in Des Moines, Iowa, in October.

The Rebel features a brushless motor, metal frame and folding handle. It offers fast and repeatable settings for fence and bit-depth adjustments and adjustable support feet on the rear of the machine for added stability on surfaces that are not level.

The Kreg Rebel 20V Ionic Drive Pocket-Hole Joiner kit sells for \$349.99, which includes a 4-amp battery and charger, and narrow rail guide for smaller materials.

Learn more at kregtool.com. **W**

JET gets smart with latest 20" drill press

By Jennifer Hicks

JET Tools, a woodworking machinery manufacturer and division of JPW Industries, introduces the 20" Smart Drill Press.

While it can be operated as any traditional drill press, what makes it 'smart' is the intuitive controls of its major functions.

"We've seen a huge rise in intelligent tools. We've seen it from our great competitors out there making some great products, but through talking with end users, there's more information we can provide. We can take every user to expert level drilling with this drill press," says Jimmy Uttley, product manager for JPW Industries.

"With our new Smart Drill Press, it's all touchscreen controlled, like an iPhone or Android kind of screen. There's an auto start mode, which if you turn on and start bringing



down the drill press, it starts for you, which helps if you're drilling holes repeatedly. Another feature of the automation is the depth stop. You can set it to your depth on the screen, turn the auto drill on and it starts for you, and once it gets to your chosen depth, it stops and goes backwards to clean out the hole," he adds.

"One of the coolest features on it is the recommended rpm, because that's one of the things people are checking on speed and feed charts, to know what rpm to use with drill bit and material being used."

The floor machine features a 1.5-hp motor, 20" swing, 20" x 14" table that rotates a full 90 degrees, and lock-out function that requires a four-digit code.

The Jet 20" Smart Drill Press, model JDP-20S, sells for \$2,399. Learn more at jettools.com. **W**

Axiom debuts a new desktop CNC

By Jennifer Hicks

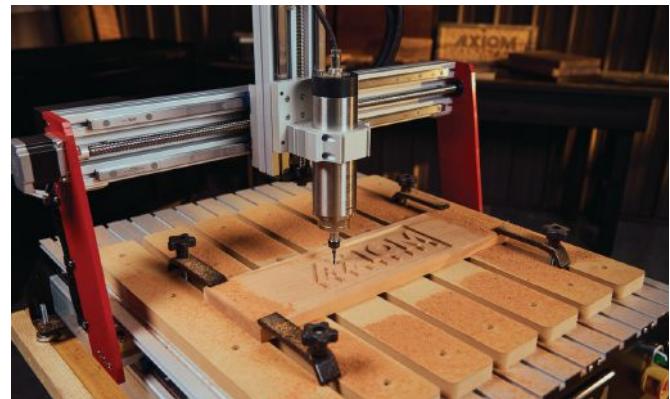
Axiom Precision, a division of JPM Industries, presents a new 2x2 CNC with a 1-hp air-cooled spindle.

"With the Axiom brand, we have a range of 2x2 machines all the way up to 5x5, so we have a wide variety already. What we're doing with this machine is creating an all-in-one machine, so this shows up and you're ready to go. You just need to get some bits and some clamps, and whatever accessories you want," says product manager Jimmy Uttley.

The Axiom 2X2 CNC delivers full-scale performance in a compact footprint, ideal for professionals, educators, and small shops looking to maximize precision in limited space, the company said.

"This can go anywhere from just adding to the woodworking you're doing, to going into full production for pieces that fit that size. It's beautiful for furniture applications, sign making, prototyping, cutting boards, personalization and more," adds Uttley.

The machine features a steel frame, extruded aluminum gantry, and precision ball screws with prismatic linear guides on all axes.



The new desktop CNC from Axiom Precision is designed to bring professional-grade power and an unparalleled user experience to the workshop, says the company.

"A powerful 1-hp air-cooled spindle delivers speeds up to 24,000 rpm, matched with a generous 24" x 24" cutting area and 5.5" of Z travel for deep, clean cuts," the company explained. "With 200 inch per minute travel speeds, this machine keeps your workflow fast and efficient — whether you're working with wood, foam, or plastic."

The Axiom 2X2 CNC sells for \$4,699.99 with UCCNC machine control software and Vetric VCarve Desktop software. Optional accessories include bit sets, hold-down clamps, and collets.

Learn more at axiomprecision.com. **W**

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Old Masters adds Apex HPP clear finish

By Jennifer Hicks

Old Masters, a manufacturer of wood stain finishes, has launched a new professional-grade clear spray finish, Apex High Performance Polymer (HPP) clear finish.

"With Apex Clear, it's a spray-only clearcoat, so it's going to be great for a lot of different applications, and great for pro shops," says Kandace Poland, sales and product support manager for Old Masters.



"A few key attributes I like about Apex Clear, is one, it's self-leveling. Even if it's sprayed with a battery-operated spray gun, it's going to level out any spray imperfections and give you a nice smooth finish. Another great thing about Apex is it is a self-sealing system, so users don't have to worry about a vinyl sealer or a sanding sealer, shellac, etc. It is able to take care of itself, so you have less products to buy."

The water-based finish emits very low odor, offers fast dry and stacking times,

and meets KCMA and ASTM performance requirements when applied according to manufacturing specifications.

"It has excellent chemical and wear resistance, but an optional hardener is available to increase durability," the company explained. "The technology also creates a minimal grain raise on finished products, with very little change to raw wood," the company said.

Apex HPP is also available in flat, satin, semi-gloss and gloss sheens. Learn more at myoldmasters.com. **W**

STILES SCHEDULES NEXT MANUFACTURING SOLUTION SEMINAR

Stiles Machinery invites manufacturing professionals to the upcoming Manufacturing Solutions Seminar (MSS) on Nov. 5–6 in High Point, N.C.

"This two-day event will feature live work cell demonstrations and expert-led presentations exploring current trends, technologies, and challenges in the industry, bringing together manufacturers, business owners, and professionals from across North America," the company said in a statement.

The Manufacturing Solutions Seminar will be held at Stiles' High Point facility, offering attendees a deeper dive into live equipment demonstrations and informative panel discussions and breakout sessions. Day one (Nov. 5) will highlight surface and solid wood technologies, while day two (Nov. 6) will focus on innovations in panel processing.

A lineup of guest speakers will join representatives from Stiles for engaging panel discussions. Featured participants include Matthew Cathy, Co-Owner of CFX Products, Winfried Dell, CEO of imos, Greg Easton, Vice President of Lumber & Millwork at Woodgrain, Tyler Nay, President of Trim Art, and Brett Warriner, Operations Manager at Powell Valley Millwork. Attendees will benefit from expert perspectives on emerging technologies and strategic approaches that are shaping the future of wood manufacturing with an emphasis on automation and scalable solutions."

The Manufacturing Solutions Seminar is free to attend. Learn more and register at stilesmachinery.com/mss.

REMODELING EXPECTED TO CONTINUE SLOW BUT STEADY GROWTH INTO NEXT YEAR

Annual expenditures for improvements and maintenance to owner-occupied homes are projected to remain steady through the end of this year and into the middle of 2026, according to the Leading Indicator of Remodeling Activity (LIRA) from the Remodeling Futures Program at the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

The LIRA projects that year-over-year spending on home renovation and repair will rise by 2.4 percent in early 2026 before easing to 1.9 percent in the third quarter of next year.

"Upward trends in both remodeling permit activity and single-family home sales suggest that demand for home improvement will remain stable in the coming year," said Rachel Bogardus Drew, director of the Remodeling Futures Program. "Despite the modest pace, total homeowner remodeling spending is expected to reach \$524 billion in early 2026, a new record high."

"If the housing market begins to show signs of momentum, remodeling could be poised for stronger growth into 2027," added Chris Herbert, the Center's managing director. "However, sluggish housing starts and uncertainty in the broader economy, which are factors in predicting remodeling expenditures, are creating headwinds to larger gains in renovation and repair spending."



Understanding abrasive components

By Diane Shattuck

Sanding is critical for coating adhesion, color consistency, and overall appearance in woodworking. Yet choosing the right abrasive requires matching the material, desired result and proper tools.

While grit matters, the type of abrasive and sanding tool are equally important. The right combination delivers desired results; the wrong pairing fails quickly, regardless of grit selection. Ineffective tool contact prevents the abrasive from working properly, leading to frustration with poor results.

Think of abrasives like table saw blades. The blade size and speed remain constant, but blade type, tooth count, angle and gullet configuration determine cutting results. Similarly, a 60-tooth rip, crosscut or combination blade each cuts differently despite identical tooth counts.

With abrasives, disc size, sander RPMs and grit can match, but the mineral composition and other components determine cutting action, efficiency and appearance.

SANDPAPER COMPONENTS

Sandpaper contains four basic elements: backing, adhesive, mineral and size coat.

Backing materials include cloth, paper, fiber, film, or combinations. Paper backing comes in different weights for specific applications. For instance, 80-grit sandpaper with A- or B-weight paper backing flexes better for sanding spindles, while C- or D-weight backing suits flat surfaces.

Cloth backing, used mainly for

belts and discs, provides durability and strength. Performance varies based on weight quality and adhesive-mineral selection.

Film backing appears on discs and fine-grade sheet sandpaper, delivering consistent wear and appearance due to uniform mineral application.

Adhesives include hide glue, glue over resin, resin over resin or waterproof formulations. Heat-resistant applications require resin bonds; wet sanding demands waterproof adhesives.

The size coat anchors minerals to the backing. Additional options include open coat (40 to 70 percent mineral coverage) for sanding raw wood to prevent clogging, and closed coat (90 to 100 percent coverage) for longer life when sanding between finishes. Stearated coatings reduce loading.

GRIT MEASUREMENT

Two methods measure grit size. Sieve size counts minerals per square inch on the backing. Micro size measures sinking speed during sedimentation — smaller numbers indicate coarser abrasives; larger numbers produce finer scratches.

The Coated Abrasive Manufacturing Institute (CAMI) and Federation of European Producers of Abrasives (FEPA P) scales are industry standards for grit-size accuracy. The difference is that the CAMI grade is coarser than the P grade in coarse grits and finer than the P grade in the finer grits.

COMMON MINERALS

Aluminum oxide, a tough synthetic mineral available in pink, white and brown varieties, wears slowly and produces even scratches. It works well for sanding, leveling and shaping but may not suit finish sanding.

Silicon carbide is sharp and hard but brittle, producing fine scratches ideal for sanding between finish coats and reducing orbital sander swirl marks. It also sands glass, plastic and metal.

Garnet, a natural mineral, suits sappy, resinous softwoods. Other options include emery, ceramic, and zirconia alumina.

MANUFACTURING PROCESS

Sandpaper manufacturing starts with applying base coat adhesive to the backing. Grit travels on a conveyor belt beneath the coated backing and adheres through an electrostatic process, ensuring even distribution with sharp points facing down.

Paper and cloth backings allow minerals to penetrate fibers at varying depths, causing initial prominent scratches before even sanding patterns emerge. Film backing creates uniform mineral depth and consistent scratching from the start. **W**

Diane Shattuck is a finisher, consultant, guest speaker, writer and teacher. She can be contacted at dianeshattuck@msn.com. Questions, suggestions and comments are always welcome.

DATES SET FOR IDAHO ARTISTRY IN WOOD SHOW

The 2026 Idaho Artistry in Wood Show is scheduled for March 21-22 at Jack's Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) in Boise, Idaho.

Competitors from all skill levels, novice to expert, may submit their wood carving, turning, scroll work, fine woodworking, CNC creations and pyrography entries for public

display and judging.

The show will feature demonstrations, vendors, raffles, an auction and banquet as well as the opportunity for artists to sell their work.

Learn more at idahoartistryinwood.org.

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WOODPECKERS

presents the new Cal-ZILLA accessory for its Woodworking Rules. "The size, shape and engraving accuracy of the Woodworking Rules have made them a customer favorite for decades," the company explained. "Cal-ZILLA expands their versatility by adding a set of caliper jaws with just two simple machine screws. Mounted on a 49-1/2" Woodworking Rule, Cal-ZILLA eliminates the guesswork about start and stop points on measurements up to 46", inside or outside." Learn more at woodpeck.com.



HARDWARE RESOURCES

has expanded its line of organization solutions to include a Charging Drawer that features two fast charging USB-C ports and two AC outlets. "In addition to being able to charge four devices simultaneously, the Charging Drawer discreetly stores cables and other accessories, so countertops are kept clutter-free," the manufacturer explained. Learn more at hardwareresources.com.



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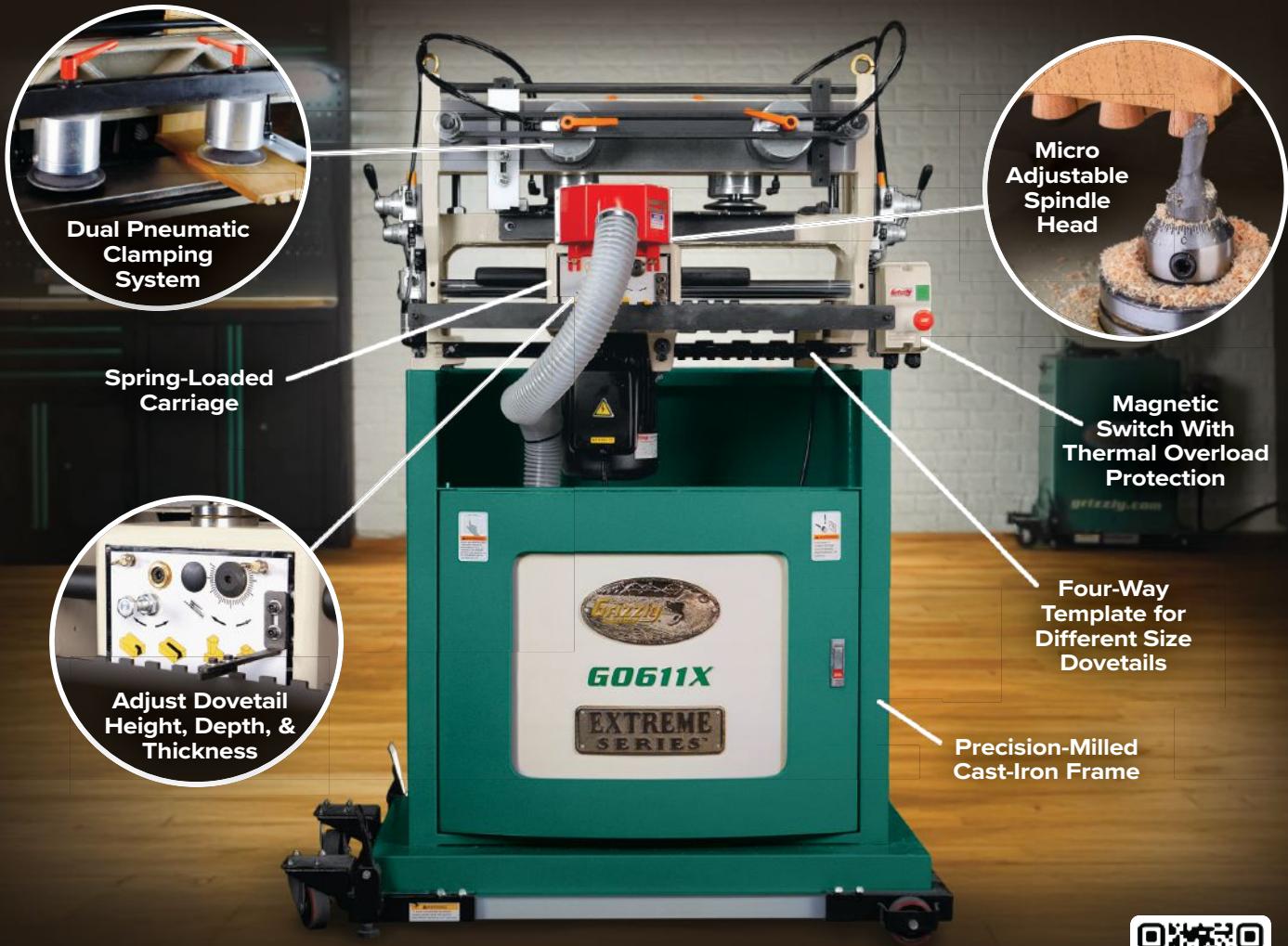
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Founder Raymond Smith built his company's reputation on creating elaborate kitchens for clients in the Atlanta metro-area.





The family business is led by Junior, Neal and Cassie Smith.

ROOTS RUN DEEP

Five decades of cabinet making connect the Smith family to clients in Peachtree City, Ga., and beyond

By Jennifer Hicks

Established in 1972, RS Kitchen & Bath, a.k.a. Raymond Smith Cabinets, in Grantville, Ga., is a time-honored custom woodworking shop that offers top-notch cabinetry and furniture to residential clients. Nestled in a quiet rural setting just south of busy downtown Atlanta, the well-equipped shop is quite large at 35,000 sq. ft. and has an average of eight to 10 employees ready to tackle the most challenging and unique projects.

Owner Neal Smith, who fills the shoes of his late father Raymond Smith (2024), can be found there any day of the week, wearing his signature overalls, ready to help clients and staff. Lately, he's been on his toes with a hefty backlog.

"Sales are up tremendously, last year and this year. This year is better than last year. We're backed up more than I've ever seen in my 45 years here. It's amazing," says Smith.

For over five decades, the shop has worked on thousands of cabinetry projects ranging from starter to high-end homes. With jobs sourced through builders and homeowners, the company offers design services, custom and semi-custom cabinetry, refacing, accessories, installation, and more.

A family-owned operation, Smith's wife Cassie handles the books and son Brian Neal (Junior) runs the projects.

FAMILY START-UP

Raymond Smith was born and raised in nearby Henry County, where he started a cabinet shop out of his garage following a forklift accident on a previous job.

"It was a long recovery," says his son. "He was told he'd never walk again after he got both legs run over. He spent a long time in the hospital and rebroke his legs afterwards in a fall. I had just been born, and he needed to do something."

Raymond was self-taught and very proficient at acquiring jobs.

"He just had a knack for woodworking. He was from a family of farmers. He built a building behind the garage less than five years after he got started and that just kept getting bigger and bigger. He started out with one employee, and kept adding from there," says Smith.

The shop found plenty of work within a 60-mile radius. The initial clientele was ideal.

"Early on, dad got a lot of work in Peachtree City, and that essentially started out as a home for a lot of Delta pilots. So, to this day, a good 70 percent of our business is in that area. In the state of Georgia, Peachtree City has always been in the top 10 cities with highest median household income."

Jobs were generally for newly constructed homes, and included full kitchens, baths, laundry rooms and other areas.

JOINING HIS DAD

In 1979, Neal started helping with odds and ends at the age of 10, and gradually learned to build drawer boxes, then cabinets.

"What got me kind of hooked on it was Mama always made us go to church every Sunday. To me, that was very boring. Daddy stayed home and worked in the shop. I begged and begged and begged, and one Sunday, they let



The company offers specialized custom details from finishes to unique components.

me stay home," says Smith.

The family also focused on racing mud dragsters as a side hobby, which entertained Smith and his two brothers throughout their adolescent years.

"That was a big interest to all us boys and dad. The cabinet shop sponsored our first race car. We worked our way up through the lower classes, got up to the professional class, and did that about 15 years."

After high school, Smith attended Georgia Tech Community College in Americus, Ga., where he majored in diesel technology to learn how to build engines and service the family's race cars. At age 19, he started working full-time at the cabinet shop.

By 1989, the same year Smith married Cassie, his dad appointed him shop manager.

"He wanted to semi retire. He'd been diagnosed with emphysema and wanted to slow down, so I've been essentially running it for him since '89," says Smith.

That same year, the father and son built their new building in a field across the street with more space and better equipment layout. There were eight employees when they moved.

"The most we've ever had is 22 employees," says Smith. "Most of the time we stay between 10 and 12."

By the early 2000s, the Smiths began offering semi-custom cabinets. They had started getting into higher-end homes and wanted a quality product for medium- and lower-income customers. They saw a significant return on that investment when the Great Recession hit in 2008.

"The only homes being built after that were \$400,000 and down. We were used to the \$600,000 and up, which kind of went away for a while."

"We had to come up with something. We had to make a



decision. It was either cheapen our product or carry someone else's semi-custom, and I didn't want to compromise what we were making," says Smith. "We added our touch and we only sell semi-custom that we assemble now."

Prior to 2008, about 90 of work was always new construction. Then, Smith says it was like someone flipped a switch and 90 percent of the work was remodels.

The shop does occasional commercial office projects. "Dad did a fair amount of commercial when he started in '72. Somehow, he got into doing a lot of Dairy Queens in Atlanta, in combination with the pilots in Peachtree City."

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Cabinet sales are about 70 percent custom, 30 percent semi-custom. The shop has a backlog of 20 to 22 weeks.

"It means I get fussed at from the customer a lot for being behind, but it's a lot better than looking for work. So, we'll take it," says Smith.

A current dilemma is finding low-skilled labor for tasks like sanding, sweeping and toting cabinets.

"The low-skilled guys used to be abundantly available. In the last two years, it's kind of reversed. I'm good with high-skilled guys, but low-skilled guys I'm having a hard time keeping and finding them, which is odd, so it slows things up a lot. I have to take my high-skilled guys and have them do low-skilled stuff. It really starts slowing us down a whole lot."

Smith rarely works in the shop nowadays. He spends most of his time meeting with clients, estimating and designing with Cabinet Vision software.

"I got into using design software because I was having more meetings with customers and they wanted to see



Neal and Junior Smith working with Andrew Peacock, the shop's design assistant, on CAD drawings.

something in 3D, so I had to come up with something instead of just hand drawings."

Smith continues to explore ways to enhance company offerings, such as through his metal fabrication shop.

"While we were in the racing, I got into metal fabrication and built a lot of roll chassis. After we quit racing, I still wanted to work with metal and decided to integrate that into the cabinet side of things. I make panel inserts for cabinet doors. It's worked out well, and we've started selling them nationwide."

Neal Smith Designs, the metal shop, offers 130 customizable designs.

Smith is elated to continue working in the same market in which his dad got started and sees a prosperous future for the company.

"Peachtree City has gotten built out, but the cool thing about it is everything that was built 40 years ago. It's time to get remodeled, so we're getting to do a lot of the same houses we worked in."

"A couple years ago I took out a set of cabinets that dad installed in '72. We don't take them out a lot. This customer just asked us, and she didn't have any idea Daddy did them originally. I put them in his old shop for fabrication. He couldn't get around well before he passed, but I got to show him, and he said they looked like the day he put them in. That was a special moment."

Learn more at raymondsmithscabinets.com. **W**

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WalzCraft offers a sample set of its architectural-grade, paper-backed reconstituted veneers.

Veneer made simple

A shop-friendly guide to grades, backing, edge banding and gluing

By John English

Beyond the fact that it's a renewable resource, there are several design and budget reasons to use veneer. On a plywood or MDF core it's relatively unsusceptible to expansion, contraction, warping or splitting. Veneer can deliver the look of an expensive hardwood, or a more costly cut such as quartersawn or rift, at a lower price. And it offers a woodshop design choices such as book-matched or sequenced panels.

The first step in working with veneer is to decide whether to lay up panels in the shop or buy veneered sheet goods. Those can be full sheets or cut-to-size, which costs more per square foot but saves shop time. Smaller panels are also easier to load on a CNC or table saw and move around the shop.

GRADES OF VENEER

When ordering custom panels, keep in mind that there are different grading regimens for raw sheet veneer as opposed to a product that has already been laid up on substrates.

Veneers on ply, MDF or lumbercore/blockwood are

graded four ways. The best is A, which is essentially knot-free and has a sanded surface that will require very little processing before coating. B can have a few defects and even some repair patches, but it's still a high-quality grade. C can have defects such as filler, knots, and discoloration that can work for a more rustic project, but not high-end cabinetry. D is a good choice for balancing veneer on the back of a panel where a premium grade has been used on the front. It imparts a measure of physical equilibrium and helps moisture move through both faces at about the same rate.

For shops that want to lay up their own panels, buying veneer in rolls or sheets can involve a different set of grades. AA is premium that's virtually clear, while A or Custom can have a few minor imperfections. AA is sometimes called Select because it is selected for both grain and color, while A can be called Uniform when it's matched for color only. Next up is unbacked B/BB, which has a high-quality face and usually a slightly less desirable back. There's a 'best' face, so the woodworker needs to orient this veneer correctly. BB/BB veneer is going to



The new MVP 31.14 flex from the Felder Group is a flexible (vertical/horizontal) membrane vacuum press for shape gluing.

have a decent quality on both faces, so it's often used in applications where it isn't showcased, such as the back of a door or the inside of a cabinet. Again, certain rustic designs like to highlight minor flaws, so BB/BB can be a cost-saving choice on jobs such as panels in 5-part rustic hickory doors. And a BB/CP veneer grade means that one face of the veneer is quite high quality while the other can be significantly less desirable.

Columbia Forest Products has an impressive Veneer Species Guide on its website, columbiaforestproducts.com, that displays common cuts for each species along with its uses, a cost guide, where it comes from, and characteristics.

TERMINOLOGY

Some mills call a veneer with both heartwood and sapwood a 'natural' veneer. Others bypass the grade system altogether and use descriptive words to differentiate among choices. In those cases, select veneers are going to have all heart or sometimes all sap, and a select flitch may be available that has sequential matching. A flitch is basically a stack of veneer sheets (called leaves) that all come from the same log, and if they're saved in the order they fall, then the woodshop can build wide expanses of cabinetry with a uniform, organized look.

A cant is a log that has been squared, and in the veneer mills these are used to create sheets that don't have bark and might not have any sapwood, but they do have relatively straight edges.

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Veneer edge banding from LedgeBand, available without glue, pre-glued, or with a peel-and-stick backer.

Thin veneers (less than 2mm or 5/64") are great for curves, but they can be quite delicate, even when backed with paper, and they're also easy to sand through. Medium veneers (2mm to 4mm, or 5/64" to 5/32") are a little less manageable around bends and curves, but they can offer a deeper, more vibrant and durable finish because the coatings have somewhere to build up and soak in. Thick veneers (above 4mm or 5/32") may show a line at joints and corners if the grains differ, but generally if two pieces meet with the same grain direction, that's not a problem.

Superior Veneer & Plywood (superiorveneer.com) offers an Artisan line of veneers that are 1/16" thick and come in many species including kahya (African mahogany), sapele



Klingspor's Woodworking Shop sells a 12" x 96" peel-and-stick veneer in cherry, mahogany, maple, red oak or walnut.

and anigre, and with a variety of backing options.

In larger shops and mills, slicing layers of veneer to create matching edges for laying up wide panels is done on splicing machines. In small shops, it's often done by stacking the edges and using a knife or a veneer saw.

Veneers can be raw, laid up, backed or reconstituted. Raw veneer is just a thin slice of wood. A laid-up veneer is a sheet made up of several narrow strips to create a larger, more usable product. This involves cutting two edges at once so they will line up perfectly and then securing them with veneer tape on the appearance face before adhering the other face to a substrate. Backed veneer has traditionally had a paper backer, but nowadays it can be cloth or film. For example, **DC Distributing** (dc-dist.com) is a major supplier of edge banding that offers veneer sheets with a paper backer in 5, 10, 20 or 30 mil thicknesses, and also with 3M pressure sensitive adhesive or a phenolic backer. The company also offers book, running, slip, plank, center and balance matched veneers.

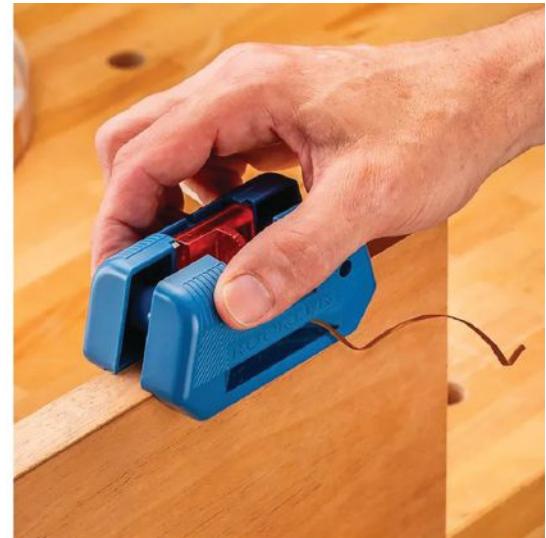
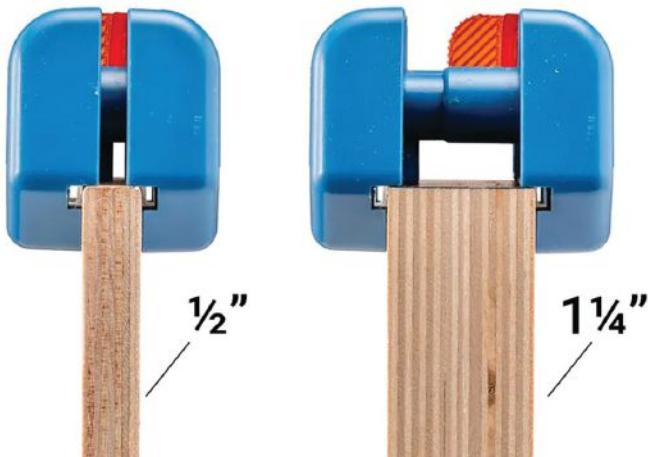
Certainly Wood (certainlywood.com) carries raw wood, full-length veneers from approximately 1/50" (0.02") to 1/42" (0.024") thick, plus a selection of special thickness veneers.

Northwest Lumber in Indianapolis (northwestlumberco.com) sells paperbacked 10-mil veneers and edge banding in more than a dozen species in 24" x 96" sheets, plus maple and cherry in 48" x 96" and ebony and wenge in 48" x 120". Northwest also offers 250' rolls of 7/8" and 2" wide pre-glued iron-on tape, which can also be ordered by the foot.

Decore-ative Specialties (decore.com) offers two-ply phenolic backed veneer sheets in various sizes and spe-



The 23 Series of wide belt sanders from Timesavers has multiple heads and advanced controls for sanding veneer.



Rockler's new 2-in-1 Edge Banding Trimmer will bring two edges of veneer flush to the substrate and clips the ends.

cies that have two layers of perpendicular cross-grain veneer, and this allows it to bend somewhat in either direction. Phenolic backing is an impregnated plastic-like resin, similar to the back of plastic laminate.

EdgeCo (edgecoinc.com) carries more than 50 species of wood edge banding for iron-on or hot air applications, from alder to zebrawood. For shops looking for wider banding, this company will slit to width from master rolls. The tape is fleece-backed and finger-jointed.

Reconstituted veneer is a take on an old cabinetmakers' technique, where thin slices of wood are laminated together and then turned ninety degrees and sliced.

WalzCraft (walzcraft.com) explains it thus: "Reconstituted Veneer is a man-made product using a fast-growing tropical wood species, often Obeche. Veneers are dyed to mimic the look of a particular species and are constructed by laminating a block of veneers together. The laminated block is sliced so that the edges of the laminated veneer become the "grain" of the reconstituted veneer". The result looks like quartersawn grain.

Some suppliers can deliver pre-finished veneer edge banding, which can be a big timesaver. For example, pre-finished veneer coils from **Edgemate** (edgemate.com) can be ordered with a PUR-UV clear lacquer finish in a full range of gloss levels, and these can be custom stained to match virtually any real wood.

TEAR-OUT AND OTHER CHALLENGES

Woodshops with a CNC use compression bits (down spiral for the top of a sheet and up-spiral for the bottom) on sheets that have veneer on both faces. But in shops without a CNC, there are still a number of ways to reduce tear-out on the table saw. Some manufacturers make veneer-specific blades, but if that's not an option, then a sharp, high-quality, 80-tooth or higher blade can work well. A table-saw with a scoring blade is the best choice, but if one isn't available then an old cabinetmaking trick is to raise a fine blade just above the table (about 1/8" exposed) and 'score' the bottom face before raising the blade to make the complete cut. A zero-clearance insert



Matching real wood veneer edge banding, such as this small selection from the Edgemate catalog, can complete panels.

and blue painter's tape on the bottom face of the panel along the cut line will also reduce tear-out.

Another option for short runs is to attach a sheet of inexpensive 1/4" plywood to the expensive veneered panel using blue tape and let this face slide across the table. Laying a straightedge along the pencil/cut line and then scoring with a sharp knife through the veneer before running the panel across the table saw can help, too. It reduces resistance along the kerf line.

Sanding veneer panels can be tricky — 5/64" on thin veneer doesn't leave much room for mistakes. The multi-

ple head 23 series of wide belt sanders from **Timesavers** (timesaversinc.com) is one of the most common answers to this challenge, as it has the ability to provide a very gentle and well-controlled touch. The manufacturer suggests passing the substrate through the machine first, before applying the veneer.

Veneers come either raw, or with pressure-sensitive adhesives, or with heat-activated glues. For raw lay-ups, it's a good idea to use an adhesive recommended by the veneer manufacturer for specific backers. Some professionals steer clear of contact adhesives in favor of glues that aren't so hard and brittle after curing, but this can be a good solution on small panels. And buying in pre-glued edge banding can save a lot of time. Matching species, even unusual ones, is relatively easy. For example, **CabinetParts.com** (cabinetparts.com) lists about 100 species, including hard-to-find cuts such as quartersawn walnut and rift sawn white oak.

Among the machines available for commercial veneering are cross clippers, fanners (they prevent veneer strips from sticking together after the glue is applied), gluers, specialty saws, guillotines, and splicers. Vacuum clamps are the industry standard for shaped parts, and pressure clamps are often preferred for flat sheets. Small shops may use a vacuum clamp for both. A vacuum bag conforms to the shape of the strongest





or most resistant shape, which is the substrate, and forces the more flexible veneer to bond evenly.

Felder Group USA (felder-group.com) recently introduced the new MVP 31.14 flex, which is a membrane vacuum press for shape gluing. It has a small footprint and can handle large and tall workpieces. It has stopped grooves in the table that guarantee uniform pressure, and this machine works fast because it has a powerful 40 or 48 m³/h (60Hz) vacuum pump.

For shops that are veneering more than occasionally, **Evans Midwest** (evansmidwest.com) offers machines for panel lamination, feeding, cleaning, gluing, stacking, and roller pressing. The company's glue spreaders, laminate racks, layup tables, and roller presses can be customized.

Larger shops building larger parts such as veneered passage doors or wall panels might look to continuous cycle presses such as the Sergiani Las from **SCM Group** (scmgroup.com).

Small shops that need to attach real veneer to the edges of panels often use a household iron and a tape with hot melt adhesive. A step up is a small edge bander, such as the EP-C or EPC-3 from **Adwood** (adwood.com), both of which can handle curves.

Looking forward, the way we think about natural veneer is being challenged by technological advances. For example, **REHAU's** Rauvisio Ingrain (rehau.com) is a wood fiber laminate that is made with cellulose fibers from wood pulp. It's etched for a natural feel, and costs about one-third the price of pre-finished veneer. And **Lenderink** (lenderink.com) has launched a new product, Expandable Film Adhesive, that's a heat-activated foam core composite. It fills a mold cavity to form parts of any shape, without the need for time-consuming machining processes or costly press equipment, so a shop can make veneered and shaped panels that are both lightweight and strong. **W**



The new open-ended G0404 benchtop oscillating drum sander from Grizzly Industrial can eliminate a lot of disc and belt sanding.



The new 6301 from Oliver Machinery is a benchtop 6" x 48" edge sander with an adjustable contour sanding table.

Evolve or sink

New technologies to help woodshops stay competitive in today's fast-paced market

By John English

As with sharks, businesses need to keep moving forward or they'll sink to the bottom. For woodshops, that normally begins by upgrading machines, tools and workflow to improve both the quantity and the quality of work.

The following is a round-up of some of the newer technologies that may help a shop owner stay current, and competitive.

CNC ROUTING

Automation isn't really an option anymore. With a tight labor market and the need for speed, it's the only way forward.

Shops looking for their first CNC might consider the Centaurus Series from **Limtech Industries** (limtechindustries.com), which has many of the design and operating features found on the company's larger machines, but with linear tool-changing instead of onboard carousel tool changers. Centaurus is designed for nested manufacturing and it has

an inline 32mm line-boring system in the X and Y axes.

Shops that own an **Anderson America** (andersonamerica.com) CNC can instantly upgrade with the company's new QR Code Support System for customer service. A woodworker with a technical issue can point a phone at one of the QR keys and gain instant access to comprehensive guides and video tutorials.

Laguna Tools (lagunatools.com) has added its new KX24, a desktop router with several notable features including a 15" touchscreen, an 'ultra-quiet' spindle, and a 24" x 48" work-zone..

A new generation of the LC Series of CNC from **Techno CNC Systems** (technocnc.com) features a new ball screw technology. Available in three sizes (4 x 4, 4x8 and 5x10) with a 12" gantry clearance, this machine comes standard with a 12-hp automatic tool changer, eight-position tool rack, and pneumatically operated vacuum hood. There's also a four-zone vacuum T-slot table and a handheld controller.



The INVIS connector from Lamello is one of many ways to upgrade joinery speed and simplicity for RTA casework.

EDGE BANDERS

Among a family of new banders from **Felder Group USA** (felder-group.com) is the compact G383, which has chain conveyors, a 7" touchscreen, and a pre-milling unit. It handles banding from 0.4 to 5 mm thick, and panels up to 50mm (about 2") thick. The G383 can be configured with features including a Teflon-coated interchangeable glue pot, and spraying units for cleaning and release agents. It also comes with a corner-rounding unit and spaces for up to three additional finishing units.

SNX Technologies (snxtechnologies.com) says that its new nVision C1.5 is its most budget-friendly machine yet. This is a contour banding machine that's designed for open-ended and tight inside radii parts. Equipped with a new controller, the machine is capable of edge banding and trimming an inside radius as small as 7/16". It has 20,000 rpm ER20 collet-type spindles top and bottom, and an articulating vacuum support arm. The C1.5 can band and trim open-ended parts up to 8 feet in length and can apply edge banding from 0.5mm to 3mm thick. Additionally, it can handle parts up to 60mm high and uses standard EVA hotmelt glue.

HANDLING AND FINISHING

From moving parts around the shop to raising materials for infeed or clamping them securely on a worktop, **Martin Woodworking Machinery** (martin-usa.com) offers a family of vacuum and lift carts from Barth that can organize and speed up the production process in any workshop. One of the most interesting is the VakuuCar+, a manual workstation that is well worth a look for shops thinking about workbench solutions.

Upgrading to a **Guffey** system can help eliminate bottlenecks at the finishing booth. The company (guffeysystems.com) makes the PivotPoint and PivotLine. The PivotPoint lets doors be rotated to spray, and is designed for small batches or small booths. The PivotLine takes that concept to another level. Rather than just holding a door or drawer in one place and feeding the operator via mobile racks, it automates the whole journey. Parts are delivered on mobile racks, suspended from rails to slide into and through the spray booth, and then moved out after coating, again without anyone touching any surfaces.

Saw Trax Mfg. (sawtrax.com) sees safety as an area where woodshops can upgrade, and the company makes a lineup of products that serve that concept. Its catalog includes vertical panel saws that let a woodworker stand



The entry-level industrial series from Limtech, the Centaurus, is designed for nesting and has a linear tool changer.

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With 'smart technology' throughout, Harvey Woodworking calls the new Alpha A-15 the world's first intelligent band saw.



Among the safety-minded upgrades from Saw Trax are the Varsity Series portable panel saw and the Scoop Dolly cart.



The Squeeze Tight from ProEdge Technology.

upright; ergonomic dollies for moving materials and finished goods around the shop and jobsite; and 'reach' tools that help keep feet on the floor and shoulders out of harm's way.

JOINERY AND PROFILING

The new Rebel Pocket-Hole Joiner from **Kreg Tool** (kregtool.com) is powered by a brushless 20-volt Ionic Drive motor and is designed for portable use. There's no need to pack a drill or clamps, and it sets up tool-free.

Upgrading joinery methods can be a real timesaver and one of the newer options here is the INVIS connector from **Lamello** (csaw.com). This invisible, reversible system saves time and effort by allowing a shop to join parts with a completely hidden fastener that can be unscrewed as needed, so it's ideal for RTA, flat-packed casework. The INVIS magnetic actuator (the plastic box) is simple to use. Just chuck it in a drill, place it on the workpiece parallel to the connector, and pull the drill trigger to tighten. A rotating magnetic field drives the joint together, and a tapping sound indicates that it's snug. To detach, simply reverse.

Wouldn't it be nice to be able to make all the parts for a raised panel door on a single machine, without changing cutters? That's exactly what the new CS-55PAAU from **Lobo Castaly** does (lobomachine.com). It's an automated raised panel door shaper, with a 6" tall stackable spindle that has enough power to cut an arch or oval without having to precut the part to rough size. Table movements

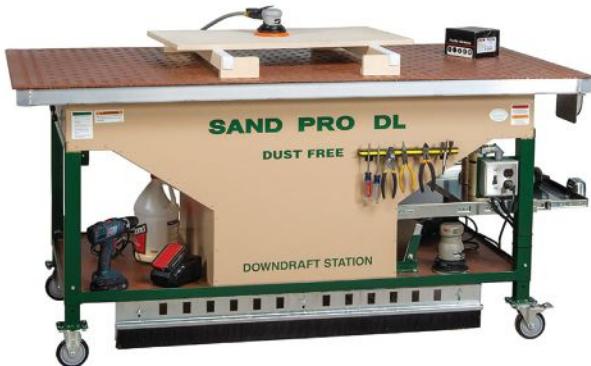
are hydraulically powered left and right, and movements in and out are pneumatic. Heavy-duty air pistons hold work tightly during the cutting process.

Shops building dovetail drawers in-house may wish to visit **Macoser** (macoser.com) and have a look at more than a dozen Omc brand Italian engineered dovetailing machines.

Attaching face frames to boxes has always been tricky and time-consuming. The **Blind Stapler** (blindstapler.com) is a pneumatic staple gun that does this job without pocket screws, nails, or putty. It will never leave a mark, so cabinets can be pre-finished before assembly. The patented design lines up the frame and then allows a narrow staple to be shot in diagonally from the back with no visible marks that require filling and sanding.

Woodshops using a lot of trim or linear moldings might wish to consider upgrading to an in-house molder. **Williams & Hussey** (williamsnhussey.com) has been building those since 1954. Machines are available in either single or 3-phase power, with a variable speed rate up to 19 fpm. And woodworkers who already own a W&H molder can visit the Upgrades page on the website to add variable feed control, improve dust collection, increased cutting precision, or ways to modernize an older machine.

For smaller shops looking at harvesting their own lumber, **Wood-Mizer** (woodmizer.com) has introduced the LX30 Portable Sawmill. It handles logs up to 22" in diameter, with a maximum cut width of 21-1/2" and a 7-1/2"



Sandman Products makes sanding tables and booths that capture fine wood dust at its source.



Laguna's new KX24 desktop CNC.



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depth of cut. It has a 9-1/2-hp engine and uses 1/8" thin-kerf sawmill blades.

DUST CONTROL AND SANDING

One of the most profound upgrades for any woodshop is more efficient dust collection, and to that end **Cantek** (cantekamerica.com) has introduced a new 10-hp machine called the CBS10. This is a cyclone collector with a HEPA filter, a remote control, and a quick release for removing the coarse dust bin. The HEPA filter also has a quick release system to remove and dispose of fine dust particles.

Sanding the faces of edge-glued panels can be upgraded with the new G0404 from **Grizzly Industrial** (grizzly.com). This 11" benchtop oscillating drum sander oscillates 29 times a minute from side-to-side, which minimizes sandpaper clogging and heat buildup. One can turn off the oscillation for figured woods or unique projects. The machine has a 1-hp motor, a 5" diameter hook-and-loop sanding drum, and a variable speed conveyor belt.

Oliver Machinery (olivermachinery.net) has introduced a new 6" x 48" benchtop edge sander, the 6301, that offers big machine features for smaller shops and budgets. The main table is 17.3" x 10", and the machine runs on standard household current.

The new DEROS RS 600X from **Mirka** (mirka.com) is a 750-watt portable disc sander with a low noise level, adjustable speed from 700 to 2500 rpm, and optional slow-start.

It's lightweight at less than 4 lbs. and has a low 4.5" profile. There's an app that monitors vibration, and available accessories include pad savers and a shroud that directs dust.

Machine Tool Camp (machinetoolcamp.com) makes a cabinet door robotic sander that includes fully automated loading and unloading, a Door Sense program that recognizes and measures raised panel, arched, Shaker, MDF and other door types, and automatically changes the sanding media. Cutting, trimming and assembling units are also available.

Sanding out router and knife chatter marks on trim or molding can be time-consuming, so the **Chatterinator** (profilesander.com) was designed by Colorado woodworker Bill Grom to solve that. It's a patented profile sander that can be located at the outfeed side of a molder. Its sandpaper drum removes chatter on parts being fed by a powered conveyor. The drum has sandpaper flaps/fingers in various sizes that can reach hollows in a molding profile.

Gibbs Group North America (gibbsgroupna.com) has introduced a robust Cup Brush Sander that has a delicate touch. Replacement brushes and abrasive are low-cost, and the machine has a touchscreen controller. There's an automatic cleaning function that leaves parts dust-free and ready for finishing, and differently sized machines to fit any size shop.

Catching fine wood dust at its source is more efficient and safer than letting it become airborne, and **Sandman**



Maksiwa's new sliding panel saw features a CNC-controlled rip fence, 10-hp motor and touchscreen controls.



SawStop's Revolution Miter Gauge offers precision and accuracy with the turn of a dial.



Wood-Mizer's new LX30 portable sawmill.



The nVision C1.5 contour edge bander from SNX Technologies.

Products (sandmanproducts.com) makes both down-draft sanding tables and dedicated sanding booths that do just that. Among them is the Sand Pro SBP108 portable sanding booth that has side panels that are hinged and fold in when not in use. The company's eight Sand Pro tables range from 60" x 33" to a full 96" x 48" and the most popular model, the DL7236, doubles as a workbench.

CLAMPING

The Squeeze Tight is an automatic hydraulic clamping station from **Pro Edge Technology** (proedgetechnology.com) that squares up and clamps casework. A woodworker simply places the glued-up cabinet on the conveyor and the machine does the rest. There's no programming, constant machine tending, or manual adjustments.

In addition to pocket hole, line boring and sanding machines, Michigan-based **Ritter Machinery** (rittermachinery.com) also makes face frame and door clamping tables that sit at an angle, so gravity helps when inserting parts. Cylinders on beams hold the parts for flush and tight joints on pocket-screwed face frames. And Ritter's door clamping tables have adjustable pneumatic clamps, squaring bars, heavy-duty steel frames, perforated steel tables, and built-in dust collection. They can also be upgraded with extra clamp cylinders, manifold assemblies, and foot treadle assemblies.

TrackTubes (tracktubes.com) are an aluminum extrusion with a T-slot in each face, and woodworkers use them for miter saw and drill press fences. The manufacturer introduces the VacuDog, an aluminum plug that locks into a 20mm bench dog hole. When connected to a small vacuum pump, it becomes a clamp.

CUTTING

The basic technology of band saws hasn't advanced much in decades, but **Harvey Industries** (harveywoodworking.com) says it has changed that by launching the 3-hp Alpha A-15, which the company calls "the world's first intelligent bandsaw." The 15" saw features sensors to monitor blade tension, drift, speed, and table angle.

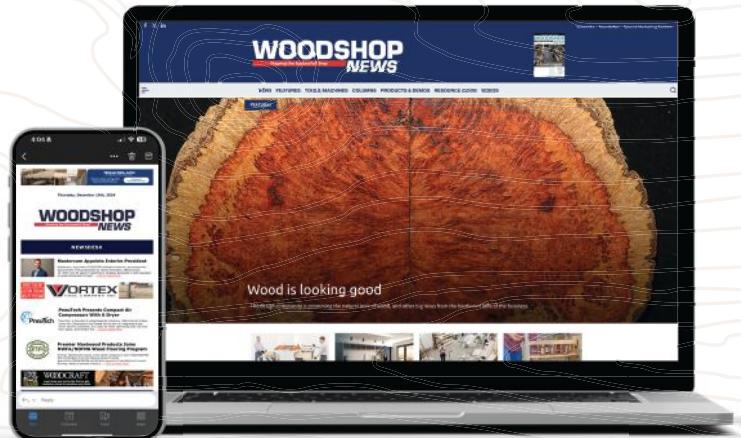
Adding an upcut saw can be a big timesaver for shops that require multiple parts in solid wood. The RazorOptimal



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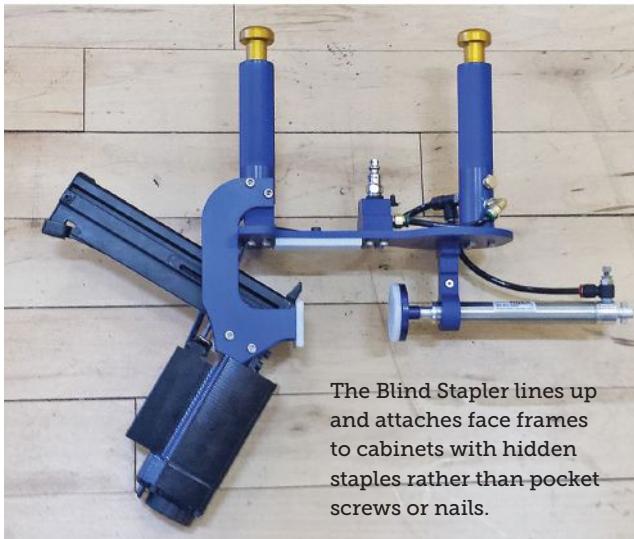
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The Blind Stapler lines up and attaches face frames to cabinets with hidden staples rather than pocket screws or nails.

from **RazorGage** (razorgage.com) is a programmable optimizing saw system that combines an automatic saw measuring system with a Cyclone 600 upcut saw. It has automated crayon-defecting technology where the system scans material for defects such as splits, knots and other wood defects.

A vertical panel saw adds three important upgrades to a woodshop. It saves floor space, simplifies material handling for large sheet goods, and augments the safety of employees. **Safety Speed Mfg.** (safetyspeed.com) makes about a dozen models to suit just about any shop's physical size and product output. These machines save backs from injury, eliminate table saw kickback, reduce the operator's chances of contacting the blade, and make both rip and cross cuts. Some smaller models are portable for jobsite use, and others can be ordered with SawGear or TigerStop systems. The top-of-the-line automated unit, the SpeedWorx, provides X, Y, Z, and C axis cuts.

SawGear (tigerstop.com) is a simple and intuitive automated stop that easily attaches to an existing miter saw, drill, or punch. It eliminates tape measures and manual fences, and increases accuracy. TigerStop is a stop and position-

CNC manufacturer Machine Tool Camp also makes a line of robots for sanding, trimming and parts assembly.



ing system for a wide variety of machines and it can push, pull and position material up to 180 lbs. It turns an existing manual machine into a fully automatic, lean manufacturing asset, and can be upgraded to optimize boards for defects.

Maksiwa (maksiwa.com) makes a full line of traditional woodworking machines, including a sliding panel saw that can be a significant upgrade from a standard table saw. The BMD.3200.IR has a 10-hp motor, advanced CNC-controlled rip fence, a scoring blade, an industrial grade frame, an intuitive touchscreen interface, and a built-in dust collection system.

Rockler (rockler.com) has added the Wixey heavy-duty rip fence and rail upgrade for table saws (item 76178). It has a 72" long heavy-duty aluminum rail with an analog scale that measures 36" right and 12" left of the blade. The steel fence glides on rollers and has two aluminum faces with T-slots for attaching feather-boards and other accessories.

Last year, **SawStop** (sawstop.com) introduced its Revolution Miter Gauge, where setting angles is quick and easy using the intuitive geared dial system. It has increments of 1, 1/2, 1/4, or 1/10 degrees with a positive 'click' in each notch.



The LC Series from Techno CNC Systems.



Dust collection upgrade options include machines such as the new CBS10 cyclone with a HEPA filter from Cantek.

Or a woodworker can bypass the gear system for free turning.

Sometimes the required workshop upgrade isn't the machine or its accessories, but simply the blade. **Total Saw Solutions** (totalsawsolutions.com) makes and sharpens circular saw blades but also specializes in ultra-thin blades. At approximately 1/16" thick, the Micro-Kerf was designed for tasks such as glue-line ripping and cross-cutting applications on miter saws.

SOFTWARE AND POWER TOOLS

Smart machines, performance apps and other digital advances can be huge upgrades in the workshop. Many of these are brand-specific, such as the App Suite from **Weinig** (weinig.com) which is available for Android, iOS and as a web application. It lets a shop monitor and manage machines in real time. Weinig also offers Control Suite as a single-operator solution for controlling production lines.

A handheld router can be immediately improved with the addition of the **Micro Fence** (microfence.com). This system turns a hand-held router into a precision milling machine for straight, circular and elliptical applications, and it can



The Wixey fence from Rockler, with its digital readout, can be a serious upgrade for older table saws that lack accuracy.

be fitted to more than sixty models of routers, compact routers, laminate trimmers, and high-speed rotary tools.

No matter what machine or tool one thinks about, **MasterGage Tools** (mastergage.com) has probably found a way to enhance its precision and accuracy. The company slogan is 'Master Your Machines', and relying on their expertise in alignment, measurement and calibration for woodworking machines can be a great start to upgrading any workshop.

When a woodshop owner is thinking about improving the production line, that process can be easier when using a single supplier. **SCM Group NA** (scmgroup.com) builds more than 17,000 machines each year in its three Italian factories, bringing the best of European engineering to the woodshops of North America (and the rest of the planet, too). The catalog includes CNC routers, full CNC machining centers, edge banders, panel saws, bore and dowel machines, wide belt sanders and more.

Whether it's moving up to CNC, automating processes, or perhaps adding an aftermarket improvement for accuracy, any of the innovations mentioned here can help a workshop upgrade. **W**



Florida CraftArt hosts “Against the Grain”

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An exhibition at Florida CraftArt in St. Petersburg challenged traditional perceptions of woodworking this fall. “Against the Grain,” which ran from Sept. 13 through Oct. 25, brought together contemporary wood artists to present both functional and sculptural pieces that blur the line between craft and fine art.

Curator Kurt Raschke, a Tampa-based furniture maker and artist, conceived the exhibition as a provocation. “Against the Grain is meant to change what we think of when we hear the term ‘woodworking,’ to encourage our minds to stray from the typical connotations of basic furniture and craft show fare, like cutting boards and simple bowls,” Raschke explained in his curatorial statement. “How does woodworking surpass craft to become art?”

This exhibition features artists who have left the confines of typical woodworking. It includes furniture makers stepping away from traditional building techniques and styles to turn the craft on its head and other artists creating items using the medium of wood. The featured pieces demonstrate that the studio craft movement remains very much alive today.

Raschke holds a BFA in three-dimensional art from Georgia State University and completed a furniture-making intensive program at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in Maine. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Florida School of Woodwork in Tampa.

Participating artists included Eric Blackmore of Edgewood, Fla.; Critz Campbell, of West Point, Miss.; Tim Carter of Ormond Beach, Fla.; D. Nina Cruz of Stewartsville, N.J.;

Raul Darriba of Tampa; Peter Dayton of St. Petersburg; Gary Greer of Safety Harbor, Fla.; Weston Hall and Dana C. Tupa of Dover, Tenn.; Jason Haskell of Portland, Maine; Mike Ingold of Lutz, Fla.; Thomas Kamila of Ashburnham, Mass.; Simon Levy of Ashland City, Tenn.; Stephan Michelotto-Blouin of Nashville; Milton Mizell of Miami Shores, Fla.; John Morgan, of Tampa; Chris Morrey of Norman, Okla.; Kelly Parker of Kansas City; Seth Peter of Minneapolis; Erika Scheer of Waupun, Wis.; Kate Swann of Tampa; Larry Weiner of St. Petersburg, Fla.; Mauro Wieser of Orlando, and Kimberly Winkle of Cookeville, Tenn.

Learn more at floridacraftart.org.

CELEBRATING NORTHWEST ARKANSAS TRADITIONS

Historic Cane Hill, a museum and historical site in Cane Hill, Ark., recently hosted an exhibition of furniture crafted by Northwest Arkansas makers in the 19th century.

“Treasured Chests: 19th Century Furniture by Northwest Arkansas Craftsmen” celebrated the area’s rich furniture-making traditions with more than 25 pieces from Cane Hill and the surrounding area.

“The early settlers of the rugged Ozark Mountains faced the challenge to forge the necessary trappings of life from the resources at hand. Their success relied on a creative spirit, ingenuity, and artisan skills, resulting in furniture that was often well-designed and aesthetically pleasing,” according to the museum.

Learn more at historiccanehillar.com. **W**

By Jennifer Hicks

Organizations sponsoring meetings, classes or shows of interest to professional or hobbyist woodworkers are invited to submit items to 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 at least 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.

— Compiled by Jennifer Hicks

ARIZONA

April 29 - May 1 — Wood Industry Conference hosted by the Wood Industry Association. Connect with woodworking machinery importers, manufacturers, distributors and suppliers, attend keynotes with business solutions and strategies, and more. Location: Fairmont Scottsdale Princess. woodindustry.org

CALIFORNIA

Monthly — San Fernando Valley Woodworkers meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Balboa Sports Center in Encino. sfvw.org

Monthly — Society of Wood Manufacturing, a chapter of AWFS consisting of educators, manufacturers, hardware and industrial suppliers, and machinery dealers, meets during the second week of each month. For location and dates, visit awfs.org.

Monthly — San Joaquin Fine Woodworkers Association meetings are open to all experience levels at members' shops. For locations and dates, visit sjfwa.com.

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.

Monthly — Woodcrafters Club of Tampa meets every third Thursday evening at 3809 W. Broad St. in Tampa. tampa-woodcrafters.org

Feb. 17-19, 2026 — Design & Construction Week. An industry event, co-hosted by the Kitchen & Bath Industry

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MINNESOTA

Monthly — The Minnesota Woodworkers Guild meets on the second Tuesday of each month at various locations. mnwwg.org

Monthly — The Minnesota Woodturners Association meets on the first Saturday of each month (except July) in Plymouth. They also offer a wide range of classes for beginners and advanced turners. mnwoodturners.com

MISSOURI

April 28 – May 2 — Stairbuilders and Manufacturers Association' annual conference, featuring seminars, networking opportunities and more. Location: Marriot Country Club Plaza in Kansas City. stairways.org

NEW JERSEY

Monthly — The North Jersey Woodworkers Association meets the third Monday of every month. njwoodworkers.org

Monthly — The Professional Woodworkers Guild of Upper New Jersey meets the third Wednesday of every month. njwoodguild.com

NEW YORK

Monthly — The Woodworkers of Central New York holds

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meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Belgium Cold Springs Fire Department in Baldwinsville. woodcny.org

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

Monthly — The Long Island Woodworkers meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Frank Brush Barn of the Smithtown Historical Society in Smithtown. liwoodworkers.org

NORTH CAROLINA

Monthly — Triangle Woodworkers Association meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Klingspor's Woodworking Shop. Location: MacGregor Village in Cary. trianglewoodworkers.com

Monthly — Charlotte Woodworkers Association meets the third Tuesday of each month, except December, at 6:15 p.m. Location: 8801 Park Road in Charlotte. charlottewoodworkers.org

Feb. 20-22, 2026 — 39th National Arts & Crafts Conference and Shows featuring exhibitions, demonstrations, networking opportunities, and more. Location: Grove Park Inn in Asheville. arts-craftsconference.com

OHIO

Ongoing — Cincinnati Woodworking Club meets the second Saturday in the months of Jan., March, May, Sept. and Nov. from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the E.B. Mueller in Reading. cincinnatiwoodworkingclub.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Monthly — Lehigh Valley Woodworkers Guild meets at 6:30 p.m. every third Tuesday of the month at the Woodcraft in Allentown. Various craftspeople provide presentations on their woodworking techniques. lwwg.com

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 wood-turning groups. Learn more at sdwoodworker.org.

VIRGINIA

Jan. 22-25 — The 28th annual Working Wood in the 18th Century, themed "United We Sit: Exploring Early American Chairs". It will feature guest speakers, tradespeople, curators, and more. Location: Colonial Williamsburg. colonialwilliamsburg.org **W**

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JON CERIO HONORED BY HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

Jon Cerio, ACE Academy Instructor at Gov. John R. Rogers High School in Puyallup, Wash., was honored with the 2025 Harbor Freight Tools for Schools (HFTS) Prize for Teaching Excellence.

Cerio, a long-time EDUCATION member and accredited skill evaluator of the Woodwork Career Alliance of North America (WCA), was among 25 high school skilled trades educators to be recognized in Harbor Freight Tools for Schools' annual awards program. As a result, the RHS Trades program earned a \$35,000 prize and an additional \$15,000 went to Cerio.

Cerio is the third instructor from a WCA EDUCATION school to win the prestigious award in the past four years, joining Staci

Sievert of Seymour High School, Seymour, Wisconsin, and John Stearns of Amity High School, Amity, Oregon, who won the award in 2021 and 2024 respectively.

"We are thrilled to see Jon Cerio honored by Harbor Freight Tools for Schools. Jon is an outstanding example of how WCA-accredited instructors are using our standards to connect high-school students with real-world industry needs and career pathways," said Scott Nelson, president of the WCA. "To have three WCA EDUCATION members win this prestigious prize in four years validates the importance of teaching verifiable, industry-recognized skills in the classroom."

CMA ANNOUNCES 2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Cabinet Makers Association (CMA) kicked off its 2025 National Convention in Grand Rapids, Mich., by announcing the winners of its 15th annual Wood Diamonds Award contest.

The top Best Of, Best Overall award went to Gillpatrick Woodworks of Overland Park, Kan., for a residential kitchen in the Frameless Over \$50,000 category.

"Built from blueprint-matched rift-sawn white oak, the

design features modern clean lines, maximized storage, and a streamlined aesthetic," the CMA said in a statement. "Highlights include slab doors for subtle texture, a fluted radiused corner cabinet that doubles as a functional element, brass accents with fluted crown moldings, and a custom radiused island that anchors the space as a sculptural centerpiece."

For the full list of winners, visit cabinetmakers.org/2025-winners.

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Felder Group USA.....	www.feldergroupusa.com	9	SNX Technologies	www.snxtechnologies.com	50
Grex Power Tool	www.grexusa.com	23	Techno CNC Systems, LLC.....	www.technocnc.com	27
Grizzly Industrial, Inc	www.grizzly.com	28-29	Vexor Custom Woodworking Tools.....	www.vexorcwt.com	19
Guffey Systems	www.guffeysystems.com	1	Vista Finishing	www.vistafinishing.com	21
Hoffmann Machine Company	www.hoffmann-usa.com	51			

A build-off for a cause

Rubio Monocoat and Festool partnered for a second charitable build-off event. In October, the companies sponsored the Tampa Build-Off 2025 at the Florida School of Woodwork. Two teams of skilled craftspeople joined forces to create handcrafted furniture pieces to be raffled off in support of aspiring woodworkers. The event raised \$6,750, the highest event total to date.

"We brought two teams of woodworkers from across the country and ended up having nine different woodworkers. We did a longer event this year, two-and-a-half days instead of one-and-a-half days, and the goal with that was to build two really nice pieces of furniture that would essentially encourage more people to purchase raffle tickets," says Natalie Dove, Rubio Monocoat's content marketer.

"We ran a raffle through the Florida School of Woodwork, which has a nonprofit called the Friends of the Florida School of Woodwork. The nonprofit helps fund scholarships for those interested in learning the woodworking craft, so all funds went to their scholarship fund."

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WOODSHOPNEWS



Team 1 and its bar-themed console.



Team 1 constructed a bar-themed console made from walnut named the Heritage Console. The piece features ample storage, a wine glass rack, a drawer, and a rattan door. Team members included Keith Johnson, Ronnie Fulton, Nolan Thompson, and Michael Hale.

Team 2 created a wall-hung whiskey cabinet, called Oak & Ember, showcasing an elegant starburst door design, interior brass



Team 2 and its wall-hung whiskey cabinet.



railing, and precise joinery throughout. Team members included Alex Dolese, Bud Farmer, Chris Huguet, Justin Ascherman, and Cameron Fulton.

Dove adds that a raffle was held in place of an auction this year to allow more people to participate. Tickets for the raffle items were \$10 each. In addition to the two pieces of furniture, two prize

packages were offered in the raffle as well, including a Forstner drill bit set from Festool and a furniture finishing package from Rubio Monocoat. **W**

—Jennifer Hicks

60 Grit

Rough humor by Steve Spiro



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