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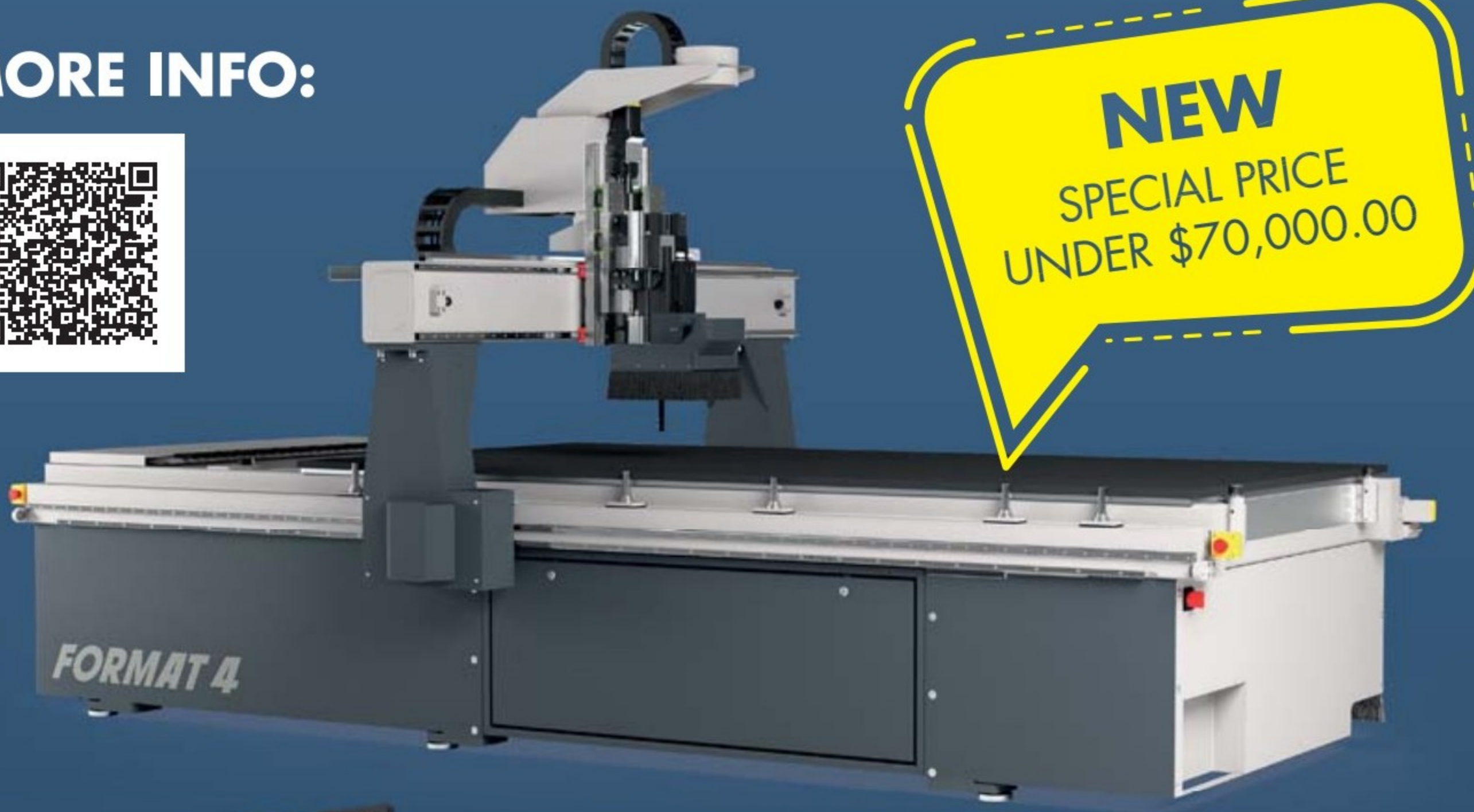
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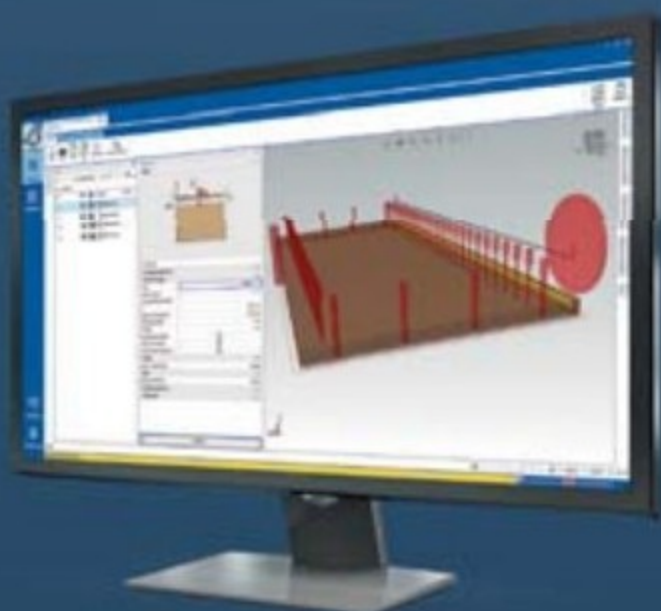
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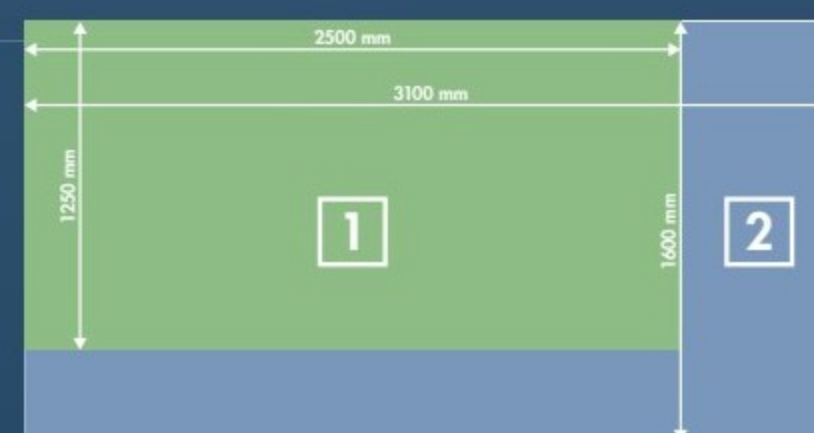
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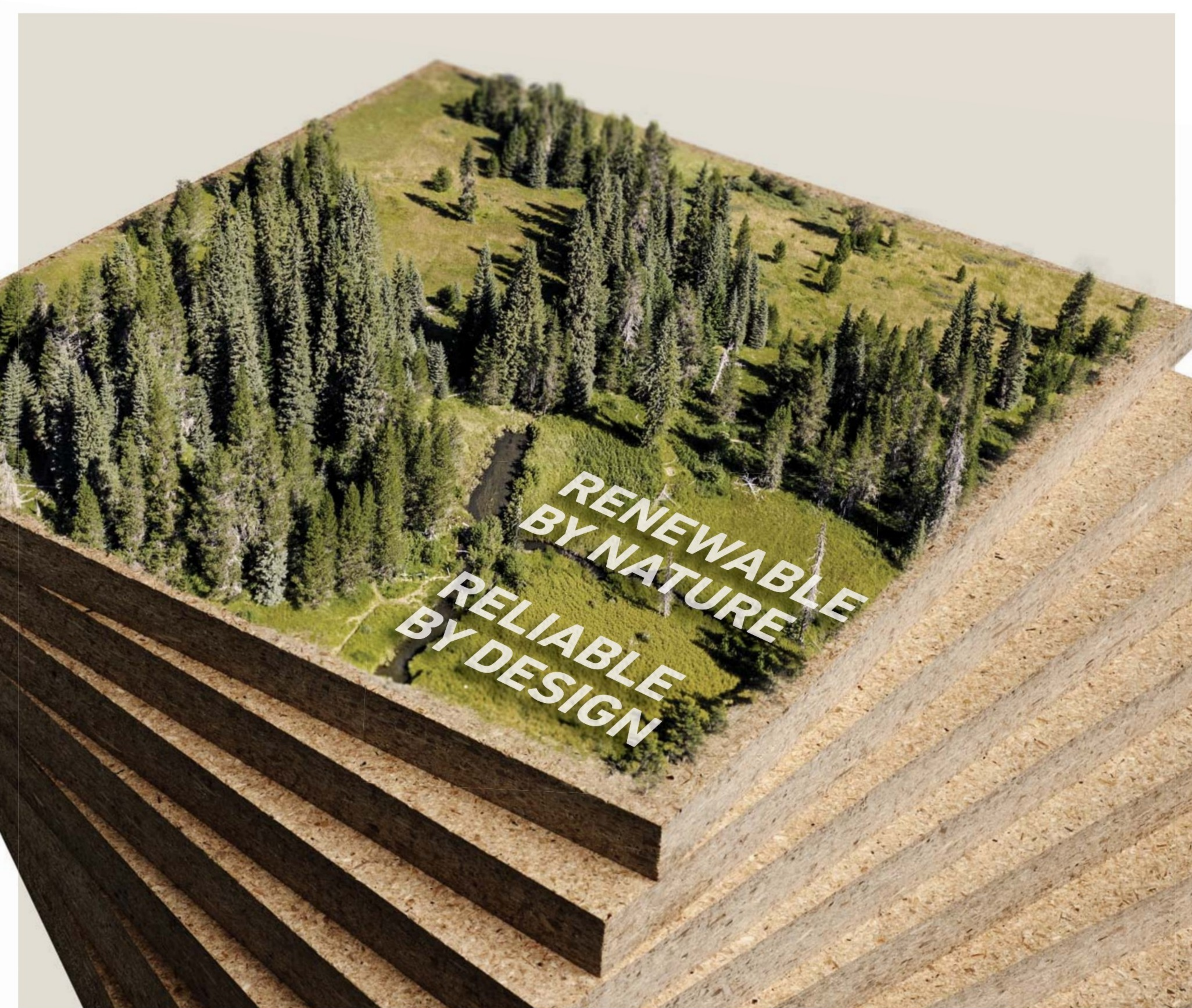


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Jennifer Hicks (top, cover)

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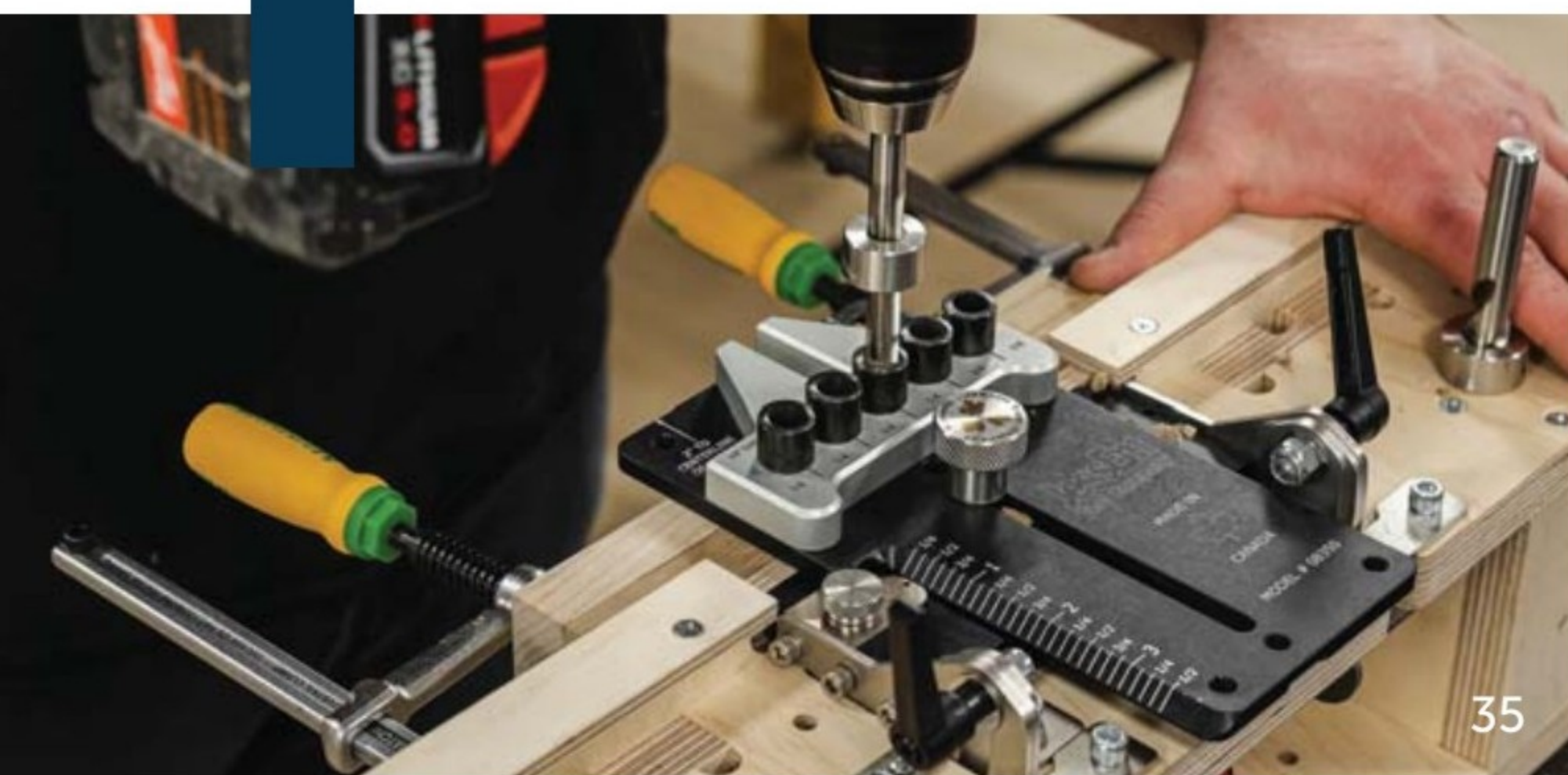
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Over the Workbench

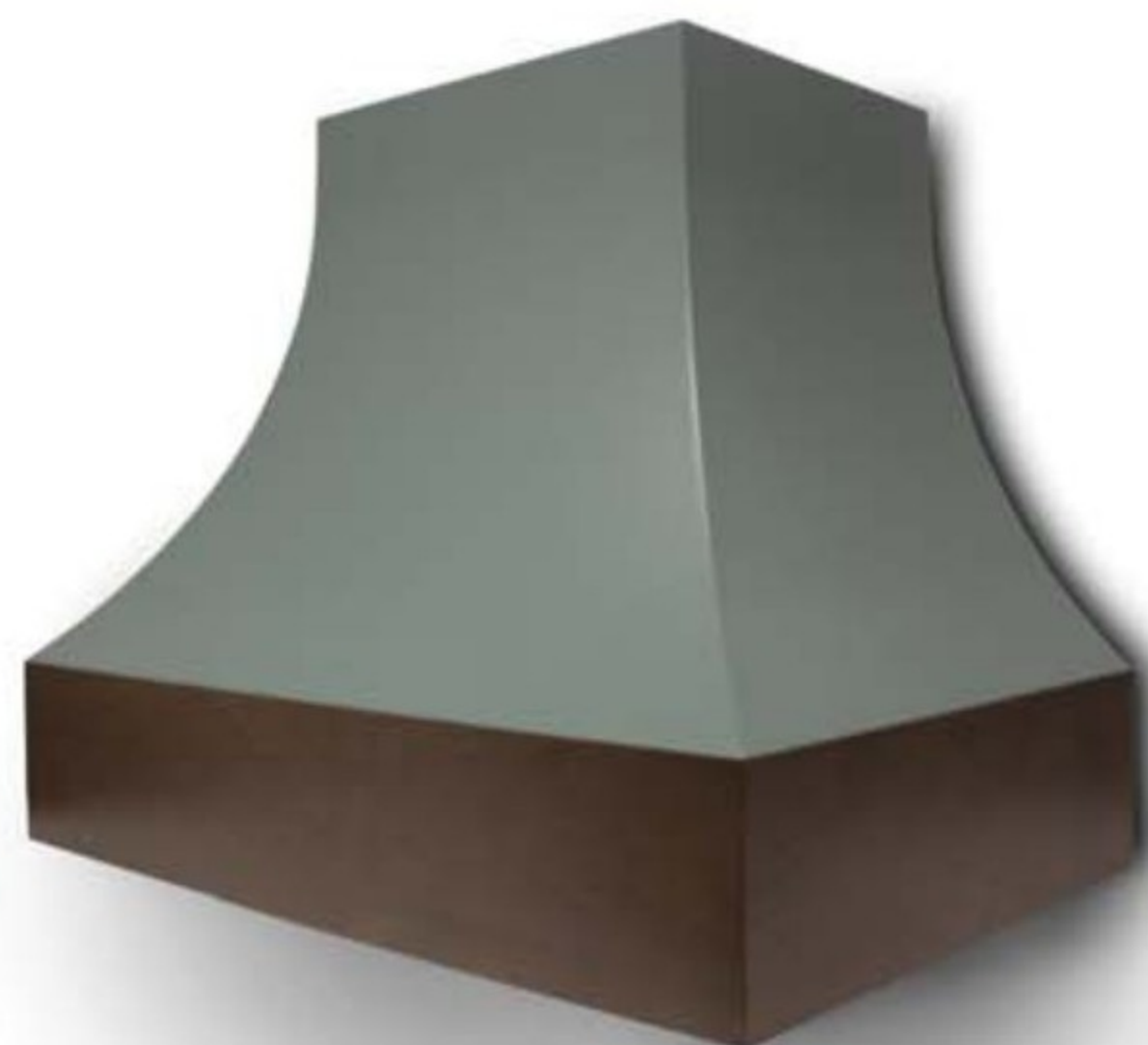
Talkin' shop with former editor A.J. Hamler

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Gilchrist assumes dual executive role on WCA Board

By Tod Riggio

Kent Gilchrist, long-time Secretary of the Woodwork Career Alliance of North America (WCA) Board of Directors, has taken on the additional role of Chairman. Gilchrist was elected Chairman during the WCA Board's recent meeting. In addition, the board elected John Leininger to serve a three-year term on the board of directors.

Gilchrist, President of Fremont Interiors, has served on the WCA Board since 2010. His was President of the Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) in 2015 and has held various leadership positions within AWI's Board and Education Committee.

Gilchrist has also been Technical Chair of the annual SkillsUSA National Cabinetmaking Competition since 2000 and served on the Skill-USA Indiana Board of Directors.

Gilchrist succeeds Brian Bond, who joined the WCA Board in 2009. Bond recently retired from his position as Professor of Sustainable Biomaterials at Virginia Tech.

"On behalf of the WCA, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to Brian Bond for his 16 years of dedicated service including most recently as Chairman," said Scott Nelson, WCA President. "Brian has been an instrumental part of our growth since the early days, and his expertise has been invaluable to our mission. While we will miss his leadership, we are fortunate to have Kent stepping into this role. Kent's long history with the WCA and his experience with the AWI and SkillsUSA make him an able successor who is well-prepared to help lead us forward."

Leininger, president of Leininger Cabinet & Woodworking, has been involved with the AWI since 1982.

The **Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers** (AWFS) announced the launch of GlassWind America, a trade show for the glass, window, facade and container glass industries, that will debut alongside the AWFS Fair, July 13-15, 2027, in Las Vegas.

GlassWind America 2027 will bring together manufacturers, technology suppliers, processors, architects, fabricators and other industry professionals focused on business development and North American market expansion.

The B2B event will showcase the supply chain across flat glass, container glass, windows, doors, facades, and related sectors. The show aims to strengthen business connections between North America, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East while providing access to regional buyers, distributors, manufacturers, and developers.

"GlassWind America represents an exciting expansion for the AWFS Fair and a strategic opportunity to bring together industries that are becoming increasingly interconnected through technology, manufacturing, materials and design," said Bob Brown, AWFS president and executive vice president of Royal Plywood Co. "By creating a dedicated international platform focused on the glass and facade industries, we are opening new doors for collaboration, innovation and business growth throughout North America." **W**

EDITOR TOD RIGGIO
ART DIRECTOR CHRIS CIRILLI
STAFF WRITER JENNIFER HICKS
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
 RALPH BAGNALL, JOHN ENGLISH, A.J. HAMLER,
 DIANE SHATTUCK, AND YOAV SAMUEL LIBERMAN

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PUBLISHER
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 203-952-6790; rory@woodshopnews.com

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HEADQUARTERS:

Active Interest Media 2143 Grand Ave. Des Moines, IA 50312
 Editorial E-mail: editorial@woodshopnews.com
 Advertising E-mail: sales@woodshopnews.com
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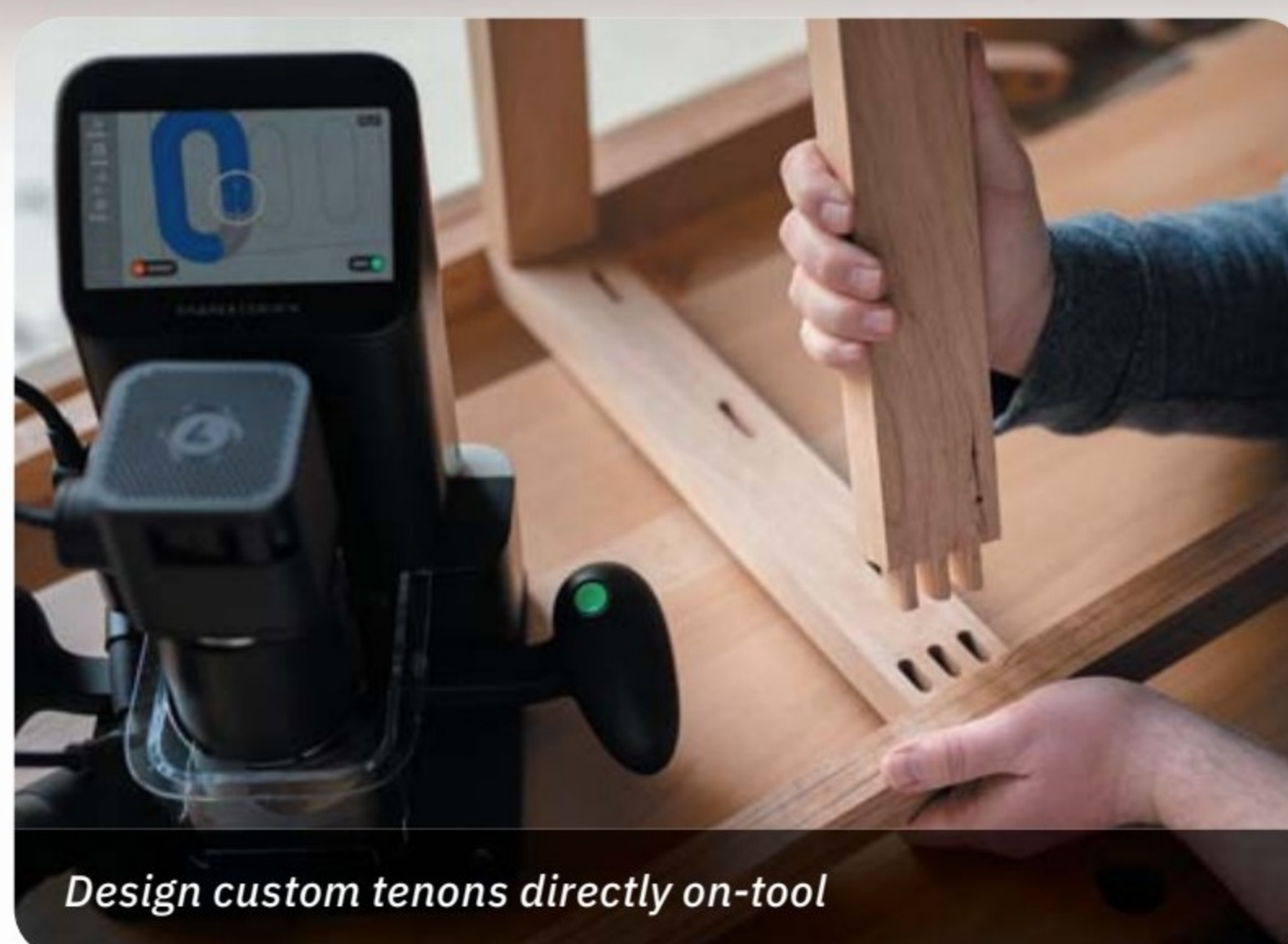
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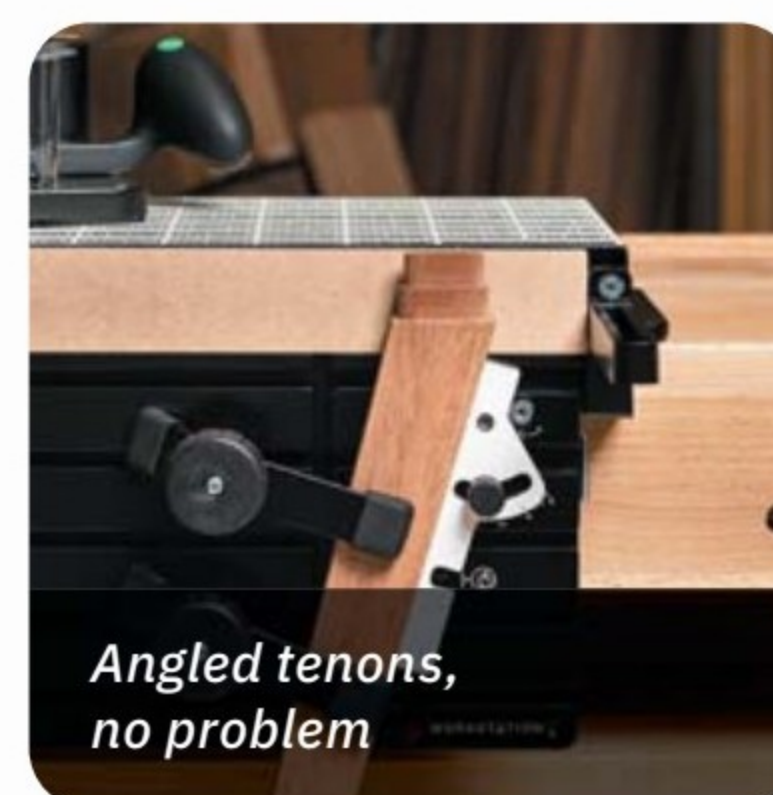
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SBWI approved for national apprenticeship program

By Jennifer Hicks

The Sam Beauford Woodworking Institute (SBWI) in Adrian, Michigan, has been approved as a related technical instruction provider for The Campaign for Historic Trades nationally recognized Registered Apprenticeship Program. This designation opens a new avenue for aspiring journeymen and preservation trades professionals across the country to earn necessary apprenticeship credits while developing valuable hands-on skills.

In partnership with The Campaign for Historic Trades, eligible SBWI courses will now meet classroom instruction requirements for the Preservation Carpenters, Historic Window Technicians, Deconstruction Technicians, Traditional Roofing Technicians, and Traditional Masons.

"Our continuing education program and exciting new trade school programs provide students with access to exceptional instructors, hands-on training, and meaningful skill development in a short-course format," says SBWI President Luke Barnett.

"Becoming an approved Registered Apprenticeship training provider allows students to apply that learning toward professional advancement while making high-quality



ity woodworking and historic trades education more accessible to people at every stage of their careers."

Registered Apprenticeship Programs, which blend paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction, are overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor and state workforce agencies, including the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

"Registered Apprenticeship programs create meaningful opportunities for people to build careers through hands-on learning and real-world experience," stated Susan Corbin, director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

"Partnerships like this help expand access to high-quality professional trades opportunities for Michigan residents while also attracting students from across the country to communities like Adrian, where nationally recognized training is paired with the innovation, grit and character that make Michigan the best place to learn and work."

SBWI is a nonprofit school offering immersive, hands-on education in woodworking, furniture design, wood sculpture, and timber framing, catering to both beginners and aspiring professionals.

The Campaign for Historic Trades is a national nonprofit organization committed to expanding career pathways in the preservation trades through Registered Apprenticeship programs, workforce development, and industry partnerships.

Learn more at sbwi.edu. **W**

IWF announces 2026 Challengers Award finalists

By Jennifer Hicks

From a field of 84 entries submitted by 65 exhibiting companies at IWF 2026, 20 finalists have been selected for the trade show's Challengers Awards. These finalists will perform live demonstrations for a judges' review on August 25. Seven winners will be announced at 11 a.m. on August 26 at the Level 2, Building B overlook, near the Challengers Award Gallery.

The finalists are listed below in alphabetical order and include entry name/booth number(s):

Bacci America Inc. | ICON | B7373

Con-Vey | Con-Vey's patent-pending Edge-Damming System for Plywood Panel Repair Lines | B8320

Edge Automation Inc. | Edge Automation CabSort Vault A10741

Felder Group USA | creator 1250 | B5000 & B5010

Felder Group USA | F1000 performance | B5000 & B5010

Italiana Ferramenta S.r.l. | Symetra | C1758

Kouros Tools | Sand-R-Light PRO | A10129

Kouros Tools | Euro-Line | A10129

Kundig USA Inc. | KÜNDIG Regent | A10102

Mereen-Johnson LLC | Robotic Dovetail System - RDT1020 | B5511 & A9728

Northtech Machine | iGlueSRCD | B7335 & A9930

OmniRobotic Inc. | PSA-80 Pro robotic sander | A10309

Pillar Machine / Larick Machinery | OTF (On-The-Fly) Bore and Dowel | B7729

Sano Handtrucks LLC | The SANO LiftKa | A9941

SCM North America | Accord 500 Edge | B6953, B6973, B7153, B7173 & A9614

Stiles Machinery | Venjakob Ven Air Vortex | A9840, B4835 & B4853

Stiles Machinery | ORRA Velocity Sorting Solution | A9840, B4835 & B4853

Vancouver Automation | PSP | A9923

Weinig USA | Weinig Scan Rip 310 | A9914, B5735 & B6035

Weinig USA | Holz-Her Glu Jet Redesign | A9914, B5735 & B6035 **W**

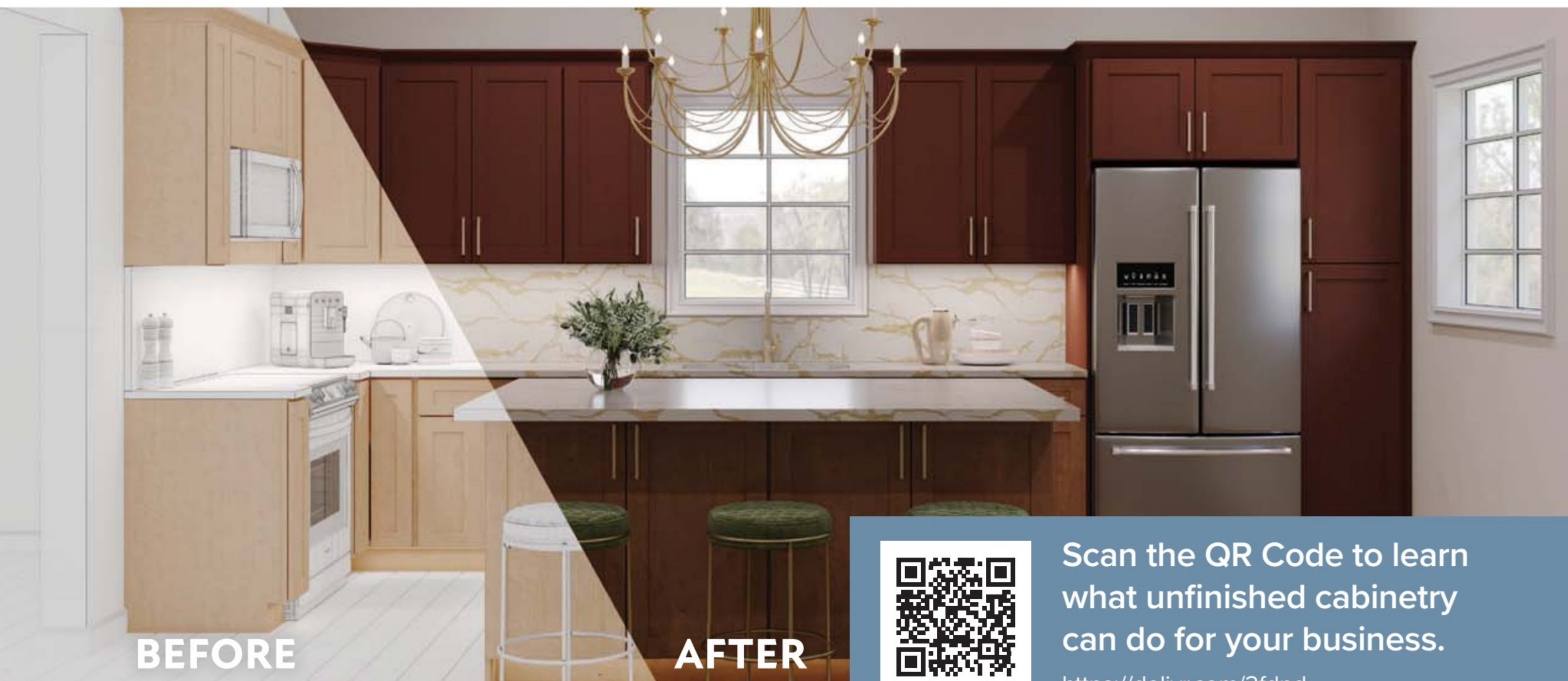


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AWI's Education Foundation awards \$80,000 in scholarships

By Jennifer Hicks

The Education Foundation of the Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWIEF) recently awarded \$80,000 in scholarships to students enrolled in academic programs aimed at preparing them for careers in the architectural woodwork industry. These scholarships were awarded to students from 12 different schools.

"As part of a record-setting year, the AWIEF Board of Trustees awarded \$80,000 in scholarships to 24 recipients, with an average award of \$3,300 ranging to a top award of \$5,000," Doug Hague, CEO of the AWI, said in a statement.

"All completed applications found merit and favor with the AWIEF Board of Trustees that awarded the scholarships. Recipients included seven freshmen in secondary schools and 17 from post-secondary schools. Five females were among the scholarship recipients."

The usual \$50,000 from the Randy Estabrook Scholar-



ship Fund was augmented with additional funds from 2025, bringing the total scholarship amount to \$55,600. In 2025, AWI member donations amounted to \$109,500, supporting the endowment focused on scholarships and grants central to the AWIEF mission. Thanks to record-setting donations in 2025, an additional \$24,400 was contributed by donors.

Scholarship funds can cover expenses incurred for the 2026 academic year or be allocated toward future costs for the 2027 school year.

Since its inception in 2008, AWIEF has distributed over \$481,800 in scholarships, contributing to a skilled workforce within the architectural woodwork industry.

The application window for AWIEF scholarships for the 2027 academic year opens on November 1 and closes on January 31, 2027.

Learn more at awinet.org. **W**

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WOODSHOPNEWS

CMA picks scholarship winner

By Jennifer Hicks

The Cabinet Makers Association has selected Tyler Campau of Decoda High School in southeast Michigan as the recipient of its 2026 Scholarship Program. The CMA launched the scholarship initiative two years ago to support and encourage the next generation of woodworking professionals.

Campau, nominated by Amy Jones of Bakes & Kropp Fine Cabinetry in Mount Clemens, Mich., received \$1,000 to further his endeavors in woodworking, cabinetry or related trades.

According to the CMA, he has demonstrated an exceptional passion for woodworking, combining traditional craftsmanship with modern engineering and manufacturing technologies.

"Tyler represents exactly the kind of talent and work ethic our industry needs. His combination of craftsmanship, engineering knowledge, professionalism, and passion for learning, demonstrates a bright future woodworking and millwork manufacturing," Amanda Conger, executive director of the CMA, said in a statement.

Campau started woodworking in seventh grade and developed skills by making advanced furniture and cabinetry projects with guidance from his teachers as well as his father, a woodworking and millworker instructor at his high school.



He later discovered the connection between engineering and cabinet-making through CNC software and digital manufacturing and is currently interning at Division 6 Millwork where he works alongside the company's engi-

neering team using AutoDesk Inventor and SolidWorks on active client projects.

"Every day at work I treat it as an opportunity to understand the business as well as construction methods to make the products we are known for. I take pride in all my work as an intern and recognize how lucky I am to have this opportunity," says Campau.

The CMA Scholarship Fund is made possible through contributions from member companies, industry partners, and individual donations.

Learn more at cabinetmakers.org. **W**

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Woodworkers searching for superior waterborne coatings will discover that Sayerlack has designed a line of products that fit their business needs in a world where environmentally friendly products are preferred. The simple and easy-to-use waterborne coatings line offers high-per-

formance formulation without formaldehyde-based resins. Its next-generation performance delivers excellent clarity and non-yellowing properties, along with fast cure and easy sanding characteristics.

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A stroll down the cedar aisle

By Jennifer Hicks

Cedars are among the most versatile wood species available to woodworkers, offering a blend of workability, durability, and affordability.

Popular varieties include Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Northern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*), and Alaska yellow cedar (*Cupressus nootkatensis*), along with several other species.

Cedars are highly valued for their natural resistance to rot and insects, alongside their generally accessible price point.

"With the cedars, the biggest thing is they're a softer, easier-to-work-with species, usually not as expensive, that holds up and weathers well," says Luke Zale of Rare Woods USA in Mexico, Maine who carries six cedar varieties.

"For general use, the aromatic and western red cedar are the two big ones. The eastern white cedar is pretty much taken up by the shingle shake industry, so I don't even try to carry it."

Western red cedar is considered the industry standard for outdoor garden beds, small furniture projects, and other



Japanese cedar

applications where moisture and insect resistance are crucial. Aromatic cedar is primarily used for interior projects like blanket chests and closet linings, while Alaska yellow cedar is favored by a specialized customer base.

"The Alaska cedar is a good one. People love that species," says Zale. "It has a light-yellow tone, it's very clear, and available in decent sizes. It's big in the instrument world."

Zale's collection also includes Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*), Himalayan (*Cedrus deodara*), and Spanish cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), each catering to niche applications.

"Japanese cedar is an up-and-coming species for us," says Zale. "It's kind of in-between eastern white cedar and western red cedar, so it has not-as-good rot resistance and pest resistance, but it's fairly clear."

Himalayan cedar is noted for being strong and durable but is typically only available in narrow widths. Spanish cedar remains a popular choice for cigar humidors due to its dimensional stability and mild aroma, according to Zale. **W**

Courtesy of Rare Woods USA



Alaskan cedar

AUGUST 2026

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ISFD PICKS JUDGING PANEL FOR 30TH PINNACLE AWARDS

The International Society of Furniture Designers (ISFD) has announced the judges for the 30th annual Pinnacle Awards, open to furniture and textile designers, manufacturers, designer-makers, and students who have created home furnishings, décor, or textile products introduced for retail sale within the past year.

The deadline to enter is July 31, 2026. Submission details can be found at the 2026 Pinnacle Awards.

"Each year, designers continue to raise the bar with entries that are visually compelling, innovative, and highly functional," said David Blair, executive director of ISFD. "Selecting the finalists and winners is never easy, and we are grateful to this exceptional panel of judges for sharing their time and expertise to help recognize the best new work in home furnishings and textile design."

This year's judges are:

- Drew Alden, Director of Furniture, Currey & Company
- Kurt Berlin, Vice President of Mass Merchandising, Martin Furniture
- Larry Boyd, President and Partner, THS Creative
- Samantha Cury, Owner and Principal Interior Designer, Cury Design Studio
- Jessica Duce, Co-founder, Vacation Rental Designers and Vacation Rental Design Summit
- Rachel Fasciani, Editor-in-Chief, Design News Now
- Violette Forman, General Manager, Havertys Furniture
- Cat French, Principal Designer and Owner, Cat French Design
- Richard Frinier, Principal, Partner, Creative Director, Richard Frinier Design Studio
- Corey Harris, President, Global Home USA
- Steve Hodges, President, Steve Hodges Associates
- Nick Johnson, Director, Sustainable Supply Chains, Sustainable Forestry Initiative
- Alison Littman, Product Development, Sourcing, Merchandising, Alison Littman
- Hanna Manes, Co-Executive Director, Cohab Space (501(c)(3))
- Michael Manes, Co-Executive Director, Cohab Space (501(c)(3))
- Jaye Anna Mize, Vice President, Advisory + Partnerships, Future Snoops
- Susan Pilato, CEO, Mantra Furniture
- Kim Grimsley Richy, President, Kim Grimsley Designs
- Rico Ruffino, Assistant Professor of the Practice of Industrial and Product Design, NC State
- David Santiago, Owner, Casa Santi Interior Design
- Giuli Schacht, Founder, Go Natural
- Max Shangle, ISFD, Retired
- Denise Smith, Owner, CEO, and Principal Designer, The Home Studio Collective
- Missy Walters, Founder, Principal Interior Designer, Studio M Architectural Interiors
- Mary Paul Yates, Principal, Yates Design

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Design details vary widely in today's modern wood shop. From veneer inlays to epoxy, fiberglass, and even intricate CNC carvings, newer applications have changed how we use sandpaper.

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- Check out our interactive catalogs on our website, as well as reference materials that can help you understand the various abrasives and their applications.



Call today to speak with one of our technical advisors for details on which sandpaper is best for your application. – Nick, Technical Advisor



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Felder presents the creator 1250

By Jennifer Hicks

Felder Group has introduced the Format4 creator 1250, a compact CNC machining center and the newest addition to the company's Format4 line of woodworking machinery. Designed for space-conscious shops, the machine comes standard with four-sided processing and offers an optional dowel aggregate in the X-axis.

"The creator 1250 is a full-blown CNC machining center. It's the big brother of the creator 950, and the 950 was the start of bringing all the boring, doweling and machining into one machine for Felder," says Rod Purdun, product manager.

"What's nice about this is you have a couple different options with the machine — to feed a part in and have it come back toward you, or to feed a part through and have it go out the other side," Purdun says. "So if you want to be more of a production line, assembly operation, you can send it out to conveyors."

The creator 1250 features the company's F4Integrate control system with integrated 3D visualization for both



batch production and one-off projects.

Equipped with a main spindle rated up to 12 kW, drill heads and an automatic tool changer, the machine accommodates workpieces up to 6 meters long, 1,250 mm wide and 80 mm thick. Horizontal material transport supports precise machining while promoting ergonomic handling.

The machine includes an extended X-axis travel of 3,600 mm, compared with the standard 1,470 mm, to reduce changeover times when processing medium- and long-length components. A clamping system with two independently servo-driven clamps enables uninterrupted workpiece movement throughout machining, except at the clamping points.

Learn more at felder-group.com. **W**

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WOODSHOPNEWS

Kreg adds a cordless loose tenon joiner

By Jennifer Hicks

Kreg has introduced the Edge Ionic Drive Loose Tenon Joiner, a cordless tool that machines precise mortises in seconds. Compatible with the Kreg 20-volt Blue Ion battery system, the tool arrives in stores next month with pre-orders available now.

The company developed the tool to make loose tenon joinery — a method of joining wood pieces using floating wooden splines — more accessible to woodworkers, according to Jerry Rosenberger, Kreg's director of product management.

"There's been a competitor on the market, the Festool Domino, that's been out there more than 10 years, and it's a great solution," Rosenberger said. "A lot of woodworkers want it, it's just really not obtainable for the average woodworker at the price point. We're not here to dethrone Festool. We're trying to make those solutions more approachable."

The Edge features a brushless motor and an oscillating high-speed carbide cutter. Built-in chip relief slots help clear debris and reduce buildup, allowing operation without dedicated dust extraction during shorter work sessions.

"The Domino requires a dust extractor. Dust extractors



alone are \$700 to \$900," Rosenberger said. "Ours doesn't need a dust extractor — that's one of the key differentiators. You can hook a dust extractor to it, but we know our customers aren't going to do that."

The tool matches the Festool Domino's performance in tenon placement, size and perpendicularity while adding features for Kreg's customer base, according to Rosenberger.

Standard features include an auto-centering narrow stock guide, configurable edge stops for mortise alignment, one-touch mortise width adjustment, and a micro-adjustable fence for non-standard material thicknesses. The tool handles material from 7/16" to 2 3/8" thick, with manual mode for thicker stock.

The machine accepts existing metric loose tenons from multiple suppliers, though the tool uses imperial dimensions for U.S. material thicknesses.

The Edge will be available at select retailers in mid-September. Pricing starts at \$449.99 for the bare tool package. A kit, with a 4.0Ah battery and charger, will sell for \$499.99.

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

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ShopBot introduces Carolina Series

By Jennifer Hicks

ShopBot Tools has unveiled the Carolina Series, a new line of CNC router machines tailored for custom wood-working shops. The ShopBot Carolina and ShopBot Carolina ATC are full-size machines that bring industrial-scale machining capabilities to small shops and home studios. According to the company, the new platform was largely developed in response to customer feedback.

"We have always had a unique and direct relationship with our customers. Our team visits shops, understands workflows, and listens carefully to wish lists. With the launch of the ShopBot Carolina Series, we are answering those requests directly, with reliability and efficiency at a price point that respects our customers' investment," says Jeanne Taylor, CEO of ShopBot Tools.

The Carolina Series succeeds the ShopBot Standard line, which introduced smaller shops to CNC technology. This new platform features enhancements in speed, spindle options, and overall machine components.

The ShopBot Carolina comes with spindle options



ranging from 1 to 5 horsepower, including a 1-hp 110-volt configuration compatible with standard household power. It offers cutting speeds of up to 480 inches per minute and rapid speeds of 720 inches per minute. Built on the company's PRS5 modular table design, the machine is available in 4'x4', 4'x8', and 5'x8' configurations, with 8" of Z-axis travel.

The ShopBot Carolina ATC enhances the platform by introducing automatic tool changing to the full-size CNC market while maintaining compatibility with standard household power. Available in 1-hp (110-volt) and 3-hp (220-volt) configurations, the Carolina ATC features a seven-position tool bar, expandable on larger table models. The system uses ISO20 tool holders and ER20 collets in various sizes, accommodating tooling with shanks up to a half inch. Automatic bit changes enable uninterrupted production of

complex, multi-step projects, including 3D textures, lettering, and intricate carvings, eliminating the need for manual tool changes and re-zeroing.

The standard Carolina model starts at \$19,813 for a 4'x4' machine equipped with a 1-hp spindle. The Carolina ATC starts at \$26,850 for a 4'x4' model with a 1-hp spindle.

Learn more at shopbottools.com. **W**

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WOODSHOPNEWS



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PDS HIRES NEW MANAGER OF PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCIALIZATION

Precision Drive Systems (PDS), a global provider of precision electro-mechanical motor spindles, engineering support, and spindle repair services, has hired Jeff Buchko as manager of product development and commercialization.

Buchko brings experience as a product manager, salesperson and multi-patent holder. His expertise includes product lifecycle management, manufacturing, research and development, customer needs assessment, dealer development and regulatory compliance.

"From concept through design, testing, production, pricing, marketing, sales and customer support, he will help fuel PDS' product success and future trajectory," said Robert Turk, president of Precision Drive Systems.

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ShopSabre targets small shops with industrial-grade IS Series

By Jennifer Hicks

ShopSabre offers its Industrial Series (IS) routers for small to medium-sized woodworking shops seeking to streamline workflows, reduce outsourcing and improve operational efficiency. The company says the machines combine industrial performance for high-production environments

with flexibility for custom projects and short runs.

"The IS Series is really meant to be a machine that can be extremely versatile, while still giving you the ability to maintain that production format," says Brandon Bombardo, director of sales and marketing for ShopSabre.



The IS 408.

"You can really push these machines. We've got shops that run these seven days a week, with some running two, three shifts a day. They were built to be able to withstand that demand, but while still giving the end-user the ability to remain versatile with different projects, whether it be cabinetry, furniture, signs or other products."

The IS includes three models: the IS 408 with a 4'x10' table, the IS 510 with a 4'x10' table, and the IS 612 with a 6'x12' table. Standard features include 12 inches of Z-axis clearance, with an optional automatic tool changer available.

"The optional auto tool changer, called the FAV3, houses three tools on the gantry and expands tool change capability to 15 positions. For shops needing more tool capacity or working with various materials, it allows storing more preprogrammed tools on the machine, saving time when switching between materials or projects," Bombardo says.

Each machine features a one-piece welded steel frame and steel tube gantry. The machines use finite element analysis engineering, aerospace milling and laser calibration, according to the company. AC digital servo motors with matching amplifiers and glass encoder technology are standard.

The ShopSabre IS Series starts at \$42,995.

Learn more at shopsabre.com. **W**

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The RMC 50 from Robotics Solutions.

Woodworking's next chapter

With CNC machines now commonplace, workshops prepare for the next wave of automation with advanced robotics and AI integration

By Ralph Bagnall

Many woodworkers remember when computer numerical control machines belonged only to large firms. Today, they're everywhere. But this transition took decades.

Woodworkers tend to be traditional and don't always adopt new technology rapidly, partly due to cost. The first CNC I programmed around 1997 was bought used for \$180,000. Now machines with similar capabilities cost one-third of that price new. Edge banders and molders are programmed and run by computers. This technology has made job changes faster and easier while reducing the number of machines and the need for highly skilled operators to set up equipment between jobs.

The next revolution in woodworking will likely involve robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) or both. Like many new

technologies, both are becoming more affordable as they grow more capable and user-friendly. Forward-thinking companies are already experimenting with these technologies, and suppliers are developing solutions.

BACK SAVERS

Cabinet shops work with sheet goods, requiring workers to lift and move heavy, unwieldy objects throughout their shifts. This leads to fatigue, potential injuries and workers' compensation claims. For decades, manual vacuum lift systems have helped prevent injuries when handling plywood and MDF sheets. Automating these manual lifters is a logical next step.

7Robotics (7robotics.com) manufactures lifting and moving robots — not humanoid machines, but large

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The PSA-80 Pro automated sander from Omnirobotics.

these machines particularly valuable for tasks that don't require experience, freeing skilled employees for higher-value work.

Sanding is another tedious task that **Omnirobotic** (omnirobotic.com) addresses with its PSA-80 Pro automated sander. The company says the machine can sand more than 500 doors per shift without requiring programming for every size, shape and type.

arms that can move, reach, rotate and grasp. These arms operate on six axes, enabling a wide range of motion. Like human arms using tools, robotic arms can be fitted with various implements.

For sheet handling, the arm can be equipped with vacuum pods to lift sheets from a stack and place them on a CNC bed. If parts need machining on both sides, the robot can lift panels, set them on stands, pick them up from below and return them to the CNC. Both pick-and-place and flipping operations can be automated within CNC cycles to minimize production delays.

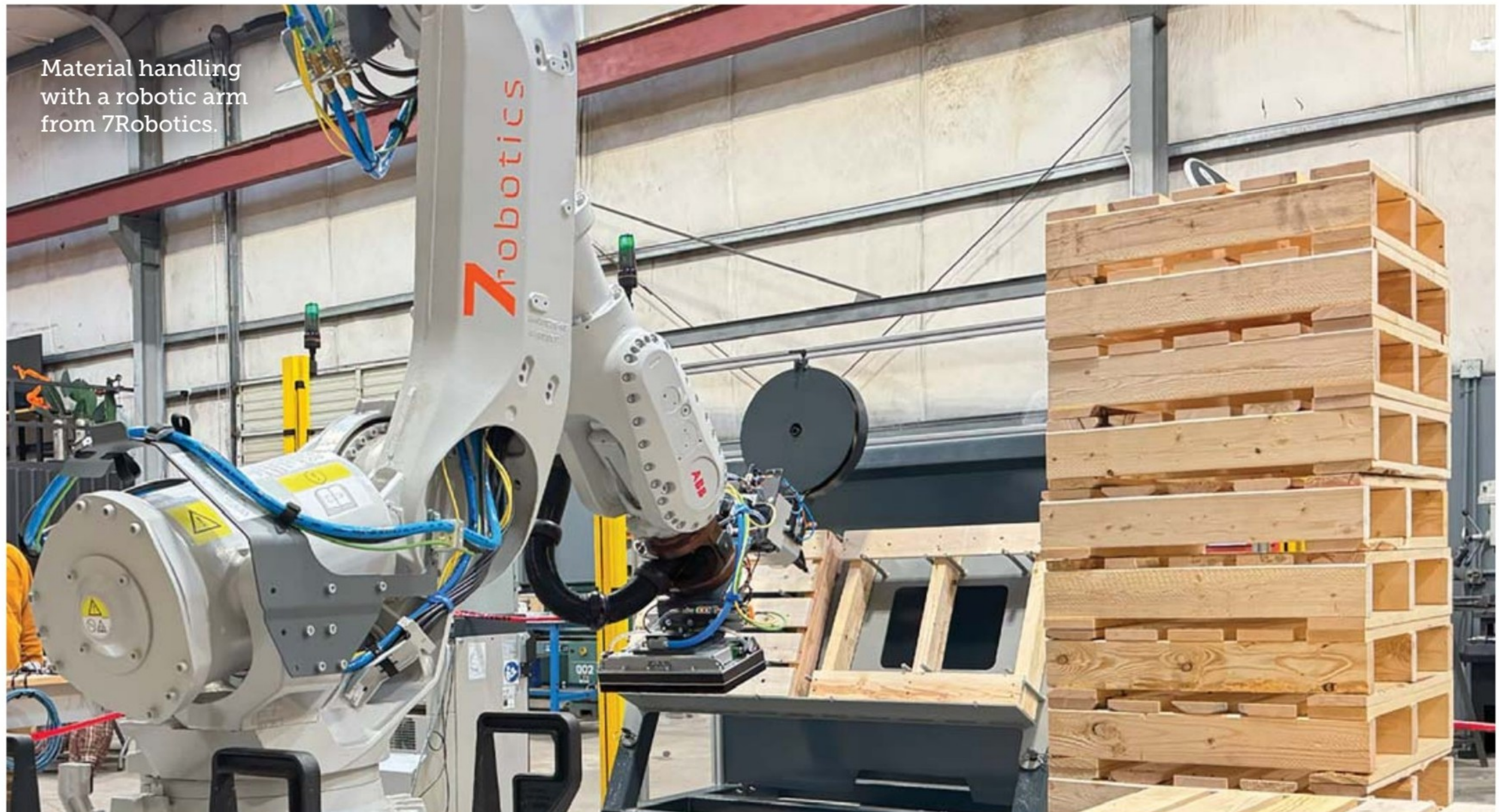
According to 7Robotics, its basic arm can be configured to place parts in fixtures and nail them together to make pallets, or to drill pilot holes and screw parts together. The attachments can be swapped and the robot moved between workstations as needed. This ability to perform repetitive movements continuously without errors makes

Using 3D vision technology instead of complex software, the PSA-80 Pro operates with one button — operators load mixed batches on the table, select the finish, and AI manages the sanding control.

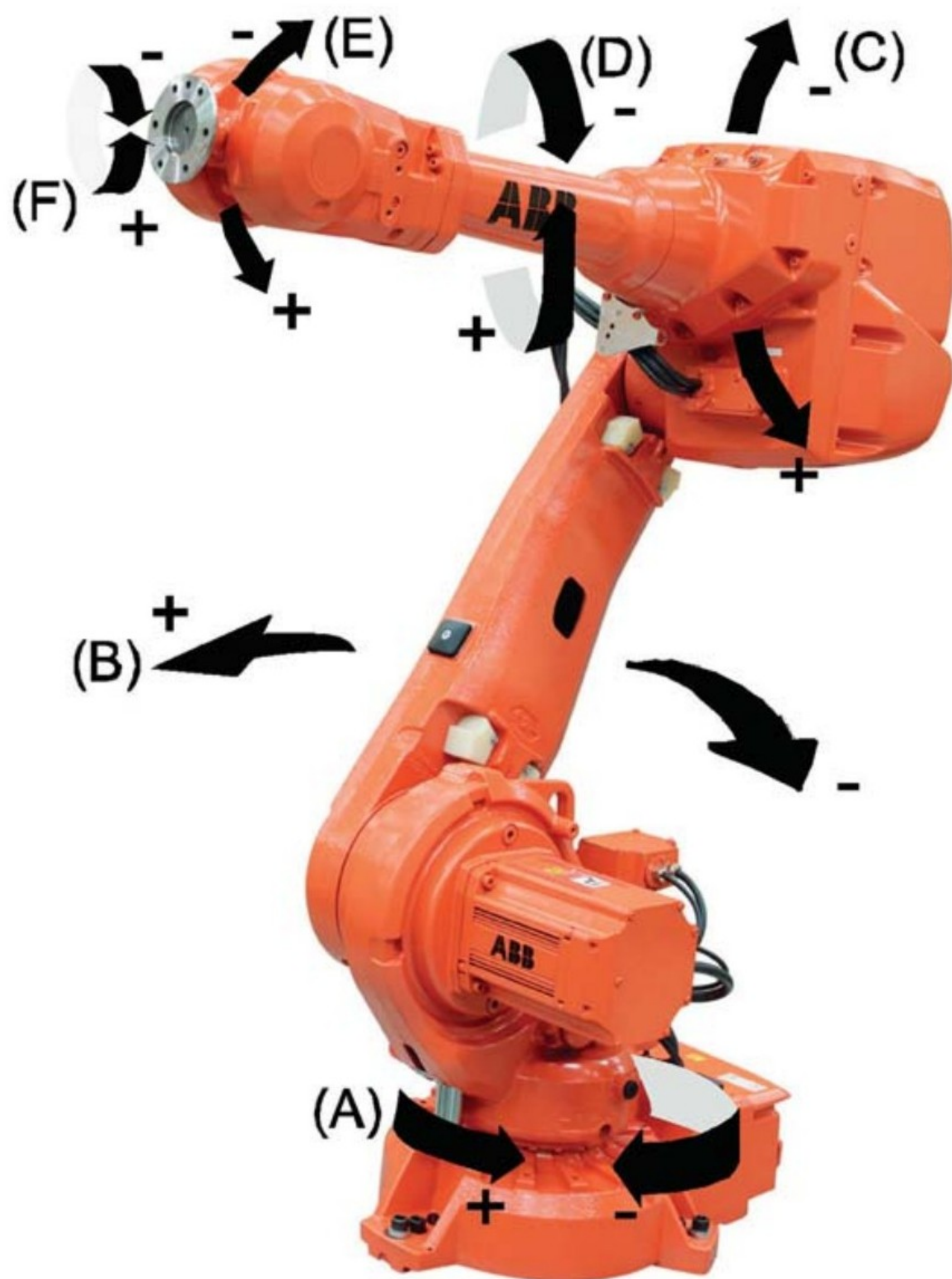
The PSA-80 features a robotic arm with a sanding head positioned between two tables, allowing pendular cycles with the robot sanding on one side while the other is unloaded and reloaded. The laser-guided sanding head maintains 0.1mm accuracy to remove tool marks and the robotic arm can run for about 48,000 hours between maintenance cycles, according to the company.

TOOL ATTACHMENTS

The robotic revolution in woodworking currently centers on standard robotic arm designs, with differentiation coming from the tools attached. **Robotic Solutions** (roboticsolutionsinc.com) attaches a CNC spindle to create a system



Material handling with a robotic arm from 7Robotics.



This image illustrates the six degrees of freedom (6-DOF) for an industrial robot: base rotation (A), forward and backward lower arm movement (B), raising and lowering the upper arm (C), wrist roll (D), wrist bend (E), and wrist turn (F).

similar to a five-axis CNC but with more flexibility. The company offers three models: the RMC 10, 50 and 120.

The RMC 10 shapes and carves lightweight materials like foam, ice, clay and soft wood. It can work parts measuring 4 feet by 4 feet and includes a live rotary table. The 14,000 RPM spindle has a five-tool garage to maximize flexibility and minimize down time. Its electrical requirements are simple, and the company provides step-by-step operating instructions.

The RMC 50 and 120 extend reach to 8' x 98" and 8' x 122", respectively. The 50 uses an ISO 30 toolholder (a standardized spindle mounting system), while the RMC 120 uses an HSK 63 toolholder (a high-speed, high-precision mounting system). Both models can be mounted on precision tracks for larger parts or pendular operations. Combined with material handling robots, these machines can handle post-and-beam components and laminated beams for large building projects.

AI adoption in woodworking lags behind robotics, though basic forms have existed for years. Optical defect detection systems for cutting and sorting hardwoods have been used in glue-up operations for decades.

Cognex (cognex.com) combines AI technology with visual defect identification in panel mill operations, and its 3D vision system can identify and measure tongue-and-groove boards on conveyors. **James L. Taylor** (jamestaylor.com) offers the Cameron Automation Optimax, a flow-through, automated color-matching system. The AI in these systems enables computers to sort natural wood parts by color for panels with more



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natural gradients, allowing experienced workers to focus on higher-value tasks.

AI is also appearing in design software, helping creators and drafters improve designs and construction techniques. Artificial intelligence will undoubtedly become more prevalent over time. While AI can be a valuable tool, like any tool, it needs to be respected and used appropriately.

AI isn't truly intelligent — it primarily coordinates existing knowledge to solve problems. Many early adopters have discovered hidden costs and problems. If AI replaces entry-level positions in woodshops, who will gain the experience needed for skilled work as current employees retire? Most woodworkers started by cutting, sanding and sweeping floors. They helped out, observed processes and learned the trade from the inside. This tradition becomes difficult to maintain if AI is overused. Silicon Valley reportedly faces a shortage of qualified coders, as AI has taken over basic work that once served as entry-level training.

This isn't an argument against learning about or using AI in your shop. Rather, it's a reminder to consider not only how AI can help, but also what it might eliminate if implemented without careful thought. **W**



Don't miss that 'one thing'

Why great craftsmanship isn't enough, and how truly listening to your customers makes all the difference

By Weston Peters

When customers spend thousands on custom kitchens, they remember what matters most — and it's not always what builders expect.

A local custom shop recently built a beautiful kitchen with expert craftsmanship and flawless installation. Yet the customer was disappointed. She had wanted a slide-out step installed in the toe kick but was talked out of it. "I really wanted it," she said. When everything was done, her



main takeaway was that she didn't feel heard.

That sentiment hit closer to home recently. After installing a new kitchen, we discovered the customer expected rollout drawers behind the pantry cabinet doors, not the shelves we installed. "That was one of the main things we wanted," they told us. "Our old house had it, and why would we go

back to something less functional?" We had missed what mattered most. We installed rollout drawers immediately.

These experiences underscore a critical business truth: Listening to customers requires more than just hearing their words. Research shows we retain only 25 to 50 percent of what we hear eight hours after a conversation, according to Harvard Business Review. For custom builders and designers, poor listening can mean costly mistakes and unhappy clients.

THE THREE E'S OF LISTENING

Effective listening means identifying three key elements: essentials, emotions and expectations.

Listen for essentials by actively engaging customers. Ask directly: "What is most important to you? What is absolutely essential?" Look for what they're saying — and what they're not saying.

Listen for emotions. When customers get excited about features they've had before, like pullout drawers, that passion signals importance. Negative reactions may indicate need for clarification. For instance, customers with bad experiences with cheap lazy Susans often have strong feelings about corner cabinet solutions. Use their emotion level to guide whether to show high-quality units or propose alternatives.

Listen for expectations by getting curious about project goals. Ask open-

"If you make listening and observation your occupation, you will gain much more than you can by talk."

— Lord Robert Baden-Powell

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ended questions: "What does success look like for this project?" or "What do you want to feel when you walk into your kitchen?" Note phrases like "what I really want is" or "I've always wished I had." These reveal priorities.

Remember that customers don't always articulate their true needs. As Theodore Levitt observed, "People don't want to buy a quarter-inch drill. They want a quarter-inch hole." When customers say they want a new kitchen, they may really want a space for family gatherings or a show-piece for entertaining.

THE 'ONE THING' METHOD

To simplify this process, we developed five steps:

Ask: "What is the one thing you don't want to lose?" This could be a function, storage solution, design element or

"We have two ears and one mouth,
so we should listen more than we say."

— Zeno of Citium in 300 BC

workflow pattern.

Clarify: Make statements like "Tell me more about that" or ask "Why does that matter to you?"

Repeat: Echo their priority back with phrases like "So what I'm hearing is..." This confirms understanding.

Document: Record their "one thing" on drawings, proposals and notes. Memory isn't reliable enough.

Protect: Make this priority non-negotiable throughout design, budgeting and installation. Communicate it clearly to installation crews.

We use a kitchen planning guide that customers receive before design meetings to facilitate productive discussions.

Good listening takes practice, but the payoff is clear: customers who feel heard become customers who feel satisfied, even when unexpected challenges arise.

PITFALLS TO AVOID

While the "one thing" method helps builders focus on customer priorities, three common mistakes can derail the process.

Playing hero instead of guide: Business author Donald Miller argues in "Building a StoryBrand" that companies succeed when they position customers as heroes and

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themselves as guides. "We will be recognized as a trusted resource to help them overcome their challenges," he writes.

This principle matters in practice. Builders must provide expert guidance and point out potential design challenges while remembering that customers make final decisions. When customers seem indifferent to important details, explain why these elements matter rather than skipping over them. Even when you disagree with their choices, remember: They're paying the bill.

Speaking in code: Industry jargon creates barriers between builders and customers. Terms like "full overlay," "partial overlay" and "inset doors" mean nothing to most homeowners. This knowledge gap — what experts call the "curse of knowledge" — breeds confusion and distrust.

Combat this by preparing simple explanations and visual

aids. Photos showing design differences work better than technical descriptions. Physical samples allow customers to see and touch options. When technical terms are necessary, define them immediately.

Creating stiff, transactional meetings: Nobody wants to sit through tedious planning sessions. Make design meetings productive yet welcoming. Simple hospitality — offering coffee and snacks — helps customers relax and engage. Shop tours after meetings let customers see craftsmanship firsthand, building trust through transparency.

But avoid overwhelming clients with too many options or technical details. As Miller notes: "If you confuse, you lose."

The bottom line: Customers want quality work from trustworthy professionals who understand their needs. Most builders can deliver on craftsmanship and reliability. Listening well completes the package. It shows respect, prevents expensive mistakes and transforms satisfied customers into enthusiastic referrers.

When builders truly hear what matters most to their customers — whether it's a slide-out step or rollout drawers — they deliver not just beautiful kitchens but lasting satisfaction. **W**

Weston Peters is the second-generation steward of Peters Cabinetry, a custom cabinet shop in Ohio specializing in premium residential projects. He is particularly interested in improving shop systems, integrating technology like CNC machining, and developing skilled craftsmen in the trade.

Courtesy of Peters Cabinetry



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Tracey and Jim Cover.



STAYING SMALL, THINKING BIG

Colorado Cabinet Makers thrive on personal touch and client relationships

By Jennifer Hicks

Based in Loveland, Colorado, Colorado Cabinet Makers is a custom cabinetry shop serving residential clients. Founded in 2014 by husband-and-wife team Jim and Tracey Cover, the company has stayed about the same size to remain connected to clients and daily operations.

"We're a small to medium-sized shop with 15 total people in the company, but we try to run it like a small shop where we have a personal relationship with each client and design their product with them, in front of them on the computer, if need be," says Jim Cover, who has owned four woodworking businesses.

"It's definitely more fun this way. If you get too many people, you lose the personal touch. And with 10-11 people in the shop, I can still meet with all the clients and get to know the projects and not just be trying to shuffle paper and do all the busy work."

Jim serves as president and Tracey as vice president of the company, which focuses on craftsmanship and client relationships.

STARTING FRESH

Jim started his first shop in 1984 in Bozeman, Montana, after leaving Montana State University's mechanical engineering program to pursue woodworking full time.

"I realized I didn't want to be an engineer and quit

school to be a woodworker and started a furniture shop," he says.

Over the years, he owned four different shops, one in Montana and three in Colorado. As those businesses expanded, he sold several of them before launching Colorado Cabinet Makers with Tracey in 2017. Tracey, who also attended Montana State University, has a legal background and moved to Colorado in 2000. Their paths eventually crossed, leading both to a personal and professional partnership.

"One of the thoughts, after having shops with 60, 70 people, was that I wasn't having fun. The fun factor was gone," Jim says. "Furniture was a thing in the '80s and '90s. I was a furniture shop, but by 2000, the furniture industry had gone overseas, and I decided to make furniture for the kitchen instead. Since 2003, it's mainly been residential kitchens and other casework for homes."

Today, the company operates from an 11,000-square-foot facility. It began in a smaller building with three to four employees before growing to 15 staff members, including 10 production employees, three handling engineering, sales and design, and the two owners.

"One of the challenges is to not get bigger, because I didn't want to have another 30 to 40-person shop. I wanted to try to keep it manageable where Tracey and I could



Production manager Chris Cmiel works on the structure of a circular book nook, shown on the previous page.

meet with clients and enjoy the process," Jim says. "Beyond that, you get into more management, more expenses, you're wearing lots of hats and there's no fun factor. We're in our 60s now and you have to retire at some point."

THE PROCESS

Most projects come from the company's network of contractors and designers. Colorado Cabinet Makers completes 60 to 70 projects annually, with about half being new construction and half remodels. The company primarily serves residential clients, with only one or two commercial projects per year.

The company's reach extends throughout Colorado's mountain communities, including Edwards, Vail, Breckenridge and Beaver Creek. In areas such as Loveland and Denver, the company works with a select group of builders.

"We mostly serve central Colorado, with about 50 percent around the Front Range and the balance up in the Vail Valley and Summit County," Jim says. "We're doing most of our work in Vail, just because of the relationships we've built up. Our contractors and designers are up there. Also, the affluent customers are up there. Even when the economy dips, the people that live in the resort areas and have second homes up there are still remodeling and building."

"The Greater Denver area is an untapped market. There are millions of people. We're a small shop, so there's plenty of work out there if you're good at what you do and do what you say you're going to do. There's a lot of competi-

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Clients with mountain homes often prefer accentuating rich wood tones over painted styles.

tion in central Colorado. Within 20 minutes of us, there's probably 10 to 11 shops bigger than us."

AN ATTRACTIVE SHOWROOM

The Covers purchased their current facility in 2022, a 40-year-old building about eight blocks from where the company began.

"We were outgrowing the last building, but also, having done this for a long time, owning the property is a huge advantage," Jim says. "As you get a little older and you

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actually want to build equity. If you're just renting all the time, you're just throwing money away, so being able to purchase was a big deal."

The facility features a showroom. As a custom shop, every product is unique, and the displays serve as inspiration for clients.

"Not all of our clients get to visit the showroom. Some of our work is a couple of hours away and pretty remote, so about 50 percent of our clients come here, and we sit down and do the designs, and people tour the shop," Jim says. "Most customers, when they see the shop and that Colorado boys and girls are making their product, they're sold."

About half of the projects are driven by architects, design-

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This vanity captures a client's preference for a warm and cozy vibe throughout the home.

ers or other influencers working with clients. Direct homeowner projects typically come through word of mouth.

"We've been in the Colorado area for a long time, and my phone tends to just ring a lot. So word of mouth is our biggest advocate," Jim says.

Serving clients from across the country, many with second homes in Colorado, the company sees diverse styles.

"If they're from the East Coast, they'll bring their desires for that style. We do a lot of flat panel, white oak, walnut. We still do a lot of paint — probably 30 to 40 percent of our jobs are painted some color," Jim says.

While many homeowners arrive with inspiration boards and online references, the company focuses on translating those ideas into functional spaces.

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The Covers say clients appreciate Colorado craftsmanship.

HOLDING STEADY

Business is up 15 percent compared to last year, continuing annual growth of 10 to 15 percent since the company's founding, according to the Covers.

The owners say they're proud of their employee retention, experiencing little turnover during the past decade.

"We'd like to see a little bit of growth next year, get our people more skilled so they can make more money in the shop, and continue to offer more benefits to them," Jim says.

After more than four decades in the industry, Cover says one lesson stands above the rest: enjoy the work.

"You can get hung up on the money and the profit margins, but at the end of the day, I want to be a good cabinetmaker, try to enjoy the process, try to see the customer as a friend and someone I want to make happy."

Learn more at coloradocabinetmakers.com. **W**

Higher-end drill doweling jigs, like this JessEm model, offer a range of adjustments for hole spacing, angle and indexing on board edges or faces.



Hidden connectors

Achieving strength and elegance with discreet joinery options

By A.J. Hamler

Whatever you make, especially for paying customers, you want to showcase the beauty of the wood and your craftsmanship — not the hardware holding it together. But which hidden fasteners are the best for clean lines, uninterrupted surfaces, and professional-looking joinery? Your choice dramatically affects strength, appearance, cost, and speed/ease of assembly.

First, it's important to make a distinction between hidden and invisible. There are lots of places on furniture and cabinetry that aren't seen in daily use, like the undersides or backs of components. Usually, that's perfectly acceptable and considered hidden.

For example, you could edge-join boards for a panel with pocket screws, and orient that side to the back. But for shelves, vertical cabinet sides, door panels and the like, the concept of hidden gets kicked up a notch — you

simply don't want those showing, so internal fastening such as dowels or tenons is called for.

Hidden fasteners typically fall into distinct categories. The most common are systems and hardware that allow furniture to be assembled and disassembled. Others, used with adhesives, create permanent structural joints. Certain fasteners accommodate wood movement in tabletops. Finally, reliable pocket-hole joinery prioritizes both speed and simplicity.

The ideal choice is a juggling act of the project's structural requirements, budget, appearance goals, and potential disassembly needs.

SET 'EM UP, KNOCK 'EM DOWN

Knock-down hardware is the foundation of modern flat-pack and modular furniture, allowing efficient shipping and



Handheld dowelers function like biscuit joiners to drill a pair of holes simultaneously into stock edges. Like this Grizzly and Triton doweler, they incorporate a built-in fence and a plunging motor.

assembly while maintaining respectable structural integrity. Their greatest advantage is the ability to repeatedly disassemble and reassemble components without damage.

Cam-locks/pins: Cam-locks are pretty much the industry standard for flat-pack ready-to-assemble furniture, consisting of a threaded steel pin installed in one panel and a circular locking cam installed in the opposing panel. Insert the pin, rotate the cam, it grabs the pin and pulls the two pieces tightly together. Unscrew the cam and it releases.

Cam-locks are simple, inexpensive and ubiquitous in RTA utility furniture: bookshelves, desks, entertainment centers, cabinet carcasses, etc. They enable fast assembly, are removable and reusable, and can be taken apart as needed.

However, cam-locks aren't as strong as traditional wood joinery and remain visible from certain angles unless placed on hidden sides or covered with plastic caps that make them less obvious. Precise drilling is essential; a drill press is your friend here.

Titus and Häfele Rafx connectors: Still using the cam-lock idea, Titus and Rafx connectors offer an improvement for commercial-grade modular joinery using cleaner, stronger knock-down fasteners. These systems use a housing pressed flush into a face-bored hole, using an internal tightener that locks onto a stud inside the joint.

Both systems provide tight seams. They're especially favored for commercial cabinetry, office furniture, and

premium shelving.

Consider them for their flush-fitting professional look and greater strength. The downside is the need for extremely accurate machining. Many shops rely on CNC routers or specialized drilling jigs to achieve the required precision. They're also not as widely available as regular cam-locks.

Lamello Invis MX2: Often considered a benchmark among hidden knock-down fastening systems. Embedded inside a joint, mini screw connectors are completely concealed inside and tighten/loosen from the outside of the joint with a drill-mounted magnetic actuator. The Invis system provides high holding strength and absolute invisibility, while maintaining reversibility.

INTERNAL STRUCTURAL JOINERY

While knock-down systems prioritize flexibility, traditional (and, sometimes, very modern) internal joinery focuses on strength. These methods rely on glue and large bonding surfaces to create durable, permanent connections inside the wood itself.

Dowels: Why have wooden dowels been a reliable go-to for centuries? For a low cost (just pennies per dowel), they create a strong glued mechanical bond between workpieces, combining simplicity and strength.

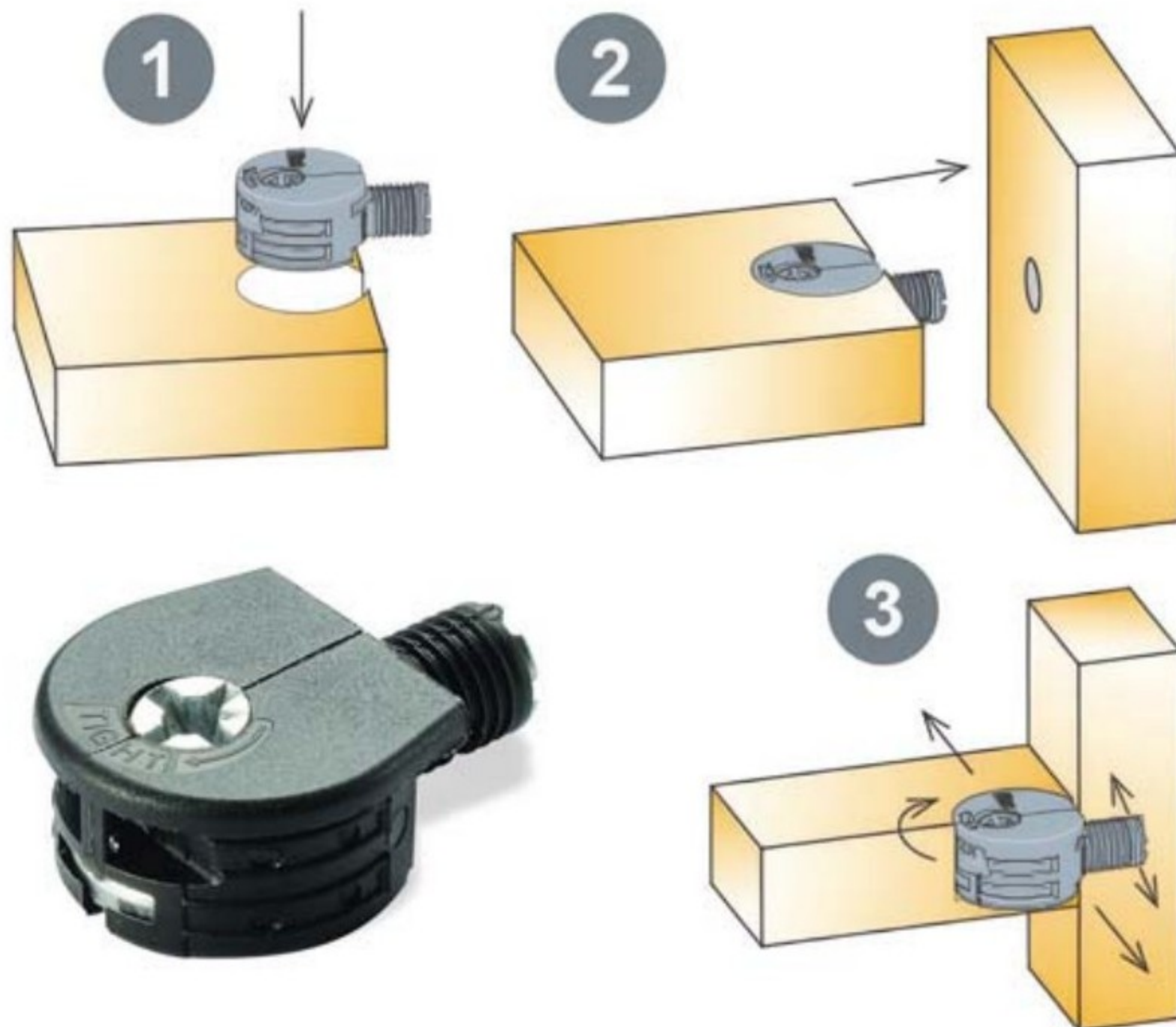
Doweling jigs are a must when using handheld drills, but CNC routers and specialized stationary doweling machines are available for high-production shops, as well as handheld dowelers that drill paired holes simultaneously into stock edges.



With key Festool patents to its Domino joiner expiring, other manufacturers are entering the arena. One of the first is the Kreg Edge, a 20-volt cordless version using loose tenons nearly identical to Festool's Dominos.



Basic cam-locks are among the most common hidden fasteners, and a staple of the flat-pack furniture industry.



This Titus QuickLoc cam connector uses an integrated housing and dowel. Turning the cam mechanism expands the connecting post inside the mating hole.

Dowels are particularly useful in chair construction, face frames, and panel glue-ups for good reason: perfect alignment and substantial shear strength. The challenge is precision. Even a slight drilling error creates mismatched holes that won't mate properly.

Biscuits: These cookie-like wafers of compressed beech, or a similar species, are glued into crescent-shaped slots cut by a biscuit joiner. The glue's water content causes the biscuits to swell, locking them into place.

Although biscuits do add some structural reinforcement, accurate alignment is their primary purpose. This makes them well-suited for tabletop glue-ups, cabinet assembly, and picture frames when a flush surface is more important than maximum strength. And, unlike dowels, biscuit joints



The Invis Mx2 from Lamello is entirely internal. It uses a drill-mounted rotating magnetic actuator to turn the fastener inside the joint.

can be "adjusted" while the glue is still fresh, so cutting biscuit slots is more forgiving than drilling for dowels.

There are also options for no-glue plastic and metal biscuits. To use them, biscuit slots are cut as for wooden ones, typically with a #20 slot, but instead of a single biscuit these come in matched pairs with one going on each side.

Although most of these use a hooking method of snapping tightly together, which is intended to be permanent, adjustable knock-down versions are available. These, like the Lamello Clamex P-14 and Knapp FIYU Connector, typically use a tiny access hole for a hex wrench to engage and disengage the connection.

Biscuit joinery makes for fast installation and helps alignment, but don't count on them for strength or heavy loads. For that, tenons are much better suited.

LOOSE TENONS

Mortise-and-tenon is among the oldest and strongest hidden joinery methods, but time-consuming. Loose (or floating) tenons are faster, sacrifice none of the traditional tenon strength, but still take time. About 20 years ago Festool introduced the Domino joiner to address this, effectively bridging the gap between traditional mortise-and-tenon joinery and modern production efficiency.

Mechanically a biscuit joiner/router hybrid, it uses an



Hidden fastening options sometimes combine attributes of dowels, cam locks and biscuits. The FastenLink system (top) cuts keyhole slots that secure to pins, while OVVO milling connectors (bottom) uses connectors set into twin holes and slots.



oscillating bit to quickly make precision-cut mortises that accept loose tenons (Dominos) for exceptionally strong glue joints. The high-strength, twist-resistant Domino joints are especially useful for bed frames, dining tables, and entry doors. The machines, though expensive (about \$1,350 and \$1,850 for their two models), are a production shop favorite.

No surprise, then, that with key Festool patents expiring, new versions are starting to appear. Kreg has introduced the Edge, a 20-volt cordless tool that uses the same size 5mm, 6mm, 8mm and 10mm cutters as the Domino.

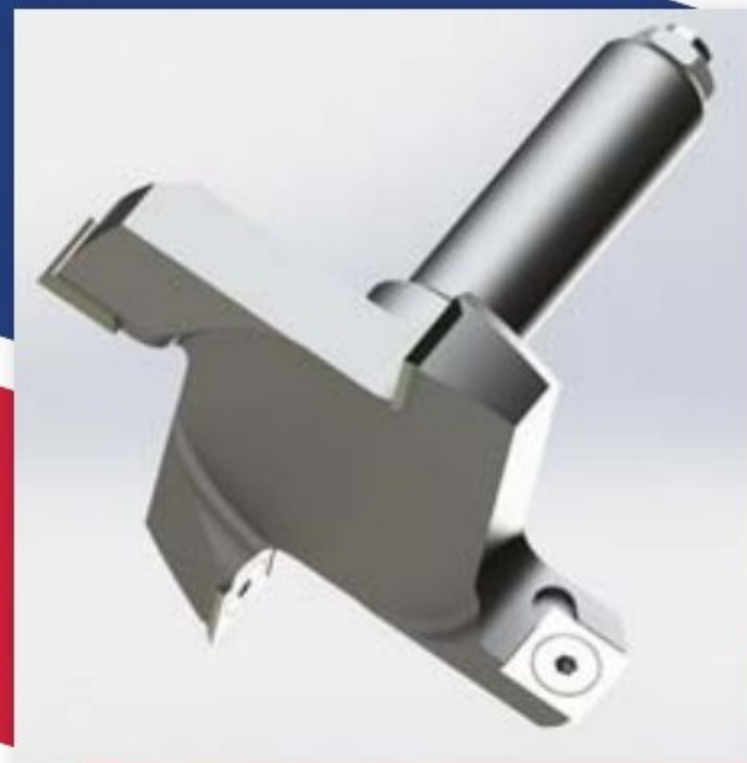
FASTENERS FOR WOOD MOVEMENT

Unlike plywood, MDF, and other engineered materials, seasonal humidity changes cause significant expansion and contraction in solid wood. Fasteners that literally lock a tabletop to its base can cause splitting, warping or, at



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Basic doweling jigs, like this pocket-sized Rockler example, drills a pair of perfect 90-degree dowel holes in seconds.

worst, joint failure.

There are specialized tabletop fasteners that secure tabletops but still allow for seasonal movement.

Z-Clips are simple metal fasteners shaped like, well, the letter Z. Slid into grooves cut along the inside top edge of a table apron, while the other end screws into the underside of the tabletop to securely pull the top tightly in place.

Their design allows the tabletop to shift naturally while remaining securely attached to the base.

Because they're effective and easy to install, Z-clips have become a standard solution for solid wood tables — or anything with a rigidly attached panel — where seasonal movement is a concern. The only real downside is that they require apron grooves or slots. (To which your biscuit joiner shouts, "Hey, I can do that!")

Figure-8 fasteners: Achieving the same goal as Z-clips, figure-8 fasteners use a different approach. One side sets into a shallow dado atop the apron; the other attaches to the underside of the tabletop. The two attachment points allow slight pivoting to counter seasonal wood movement.

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As an alternative to wood, plastic and metal biscuits feature gripping ridges or hooks that snap together for a tight, glue-free joint.

Since they don't require slots or a continuous groove, they're handy for desks, side tables, benches and smaller furniture. Installation requires careful recessing into the apron, however, so everything sits flush.

PANEL MOUNTING

Fastmount Systems use interlocking clips that snap together and separate repeatedly without damaging the surrounding material. They're useful in architectural woodworking, removable wall panels, and custom cabinetry where solid-looking concealed access is required.

These methods are completely concealed, and durable enough to withstand repeated remove/reattach cycles. Layout accuracy is critical, however, as even slight misalignment can prevent clips from engaging properly.

The **FastCap BeauClip** system is a secure and reusable way to prevent panels from slipping and falling. Applications include marine and RV interiors, architectural woodwork, applied wall panels, and seat cushions.

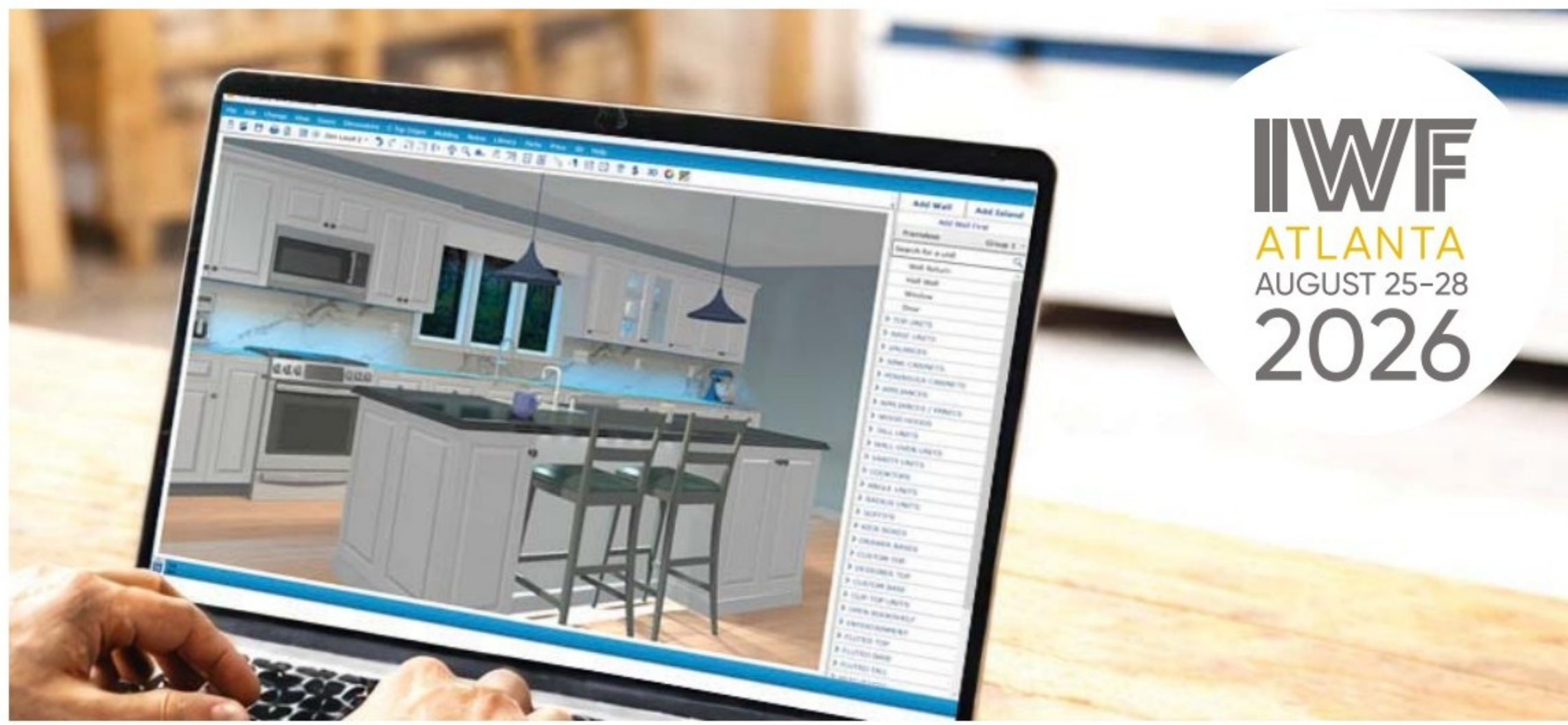
The **Button-fix** system features plastic "buttons" attached to the background structure, while the mating "fixes" are attached to the removable panel.

Pocket-hole joinery creates strong mechanical joints with a specialized jig and stepped drill bit. Once angled holes are drilled into one board, inserted screws firmly pull mating parts together.

This method is particularly common in face frames, workshop furniture, and production-oriented woodwork-



'Reversible' biscuits like these Lamello and Knapp offerings, install into traditional biscuit slots, but have an internal locking function. A tiny hole for a hex wrench is all that's needed to open and close the fasteners.



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Fastmount's low-profile clips use mating plastic components to allow panels, padding, wall sections and more to be easily attached and removed with a simple snap-to-fit method.

ing where speed matters. Unlike glued joinery, pocket holes provide an immediate grip without waiting for anything to dry. Add a bit of glue, though, and you've got yourself some bullet-proof, clamp-free joints.

Pocket-holes promise the trifecta of being beginner-friendly with extremely fast assembly, with no clamp time required if using glue. The primary drawback is visibility. Unless plugged with matching wood inserts or incorporated into the design of the piece, the angled holes remain visible wherever you put them, so the best spots are on the back or underside of the workpiece. They might be a bit less elegant than traditional joinery, but when the goal is production speed and you're putting more attention into the visible portions, I won't tell anyone if you won't.

WHICH METHOD WORKS BEST?

What's your top priority: absolute invisibility, structural strength, or easy installation? Matching the fas-



These BeauClip fasteners from FastCap use a convex ball and concave socket means of locking. The hold up to 15 lbs. each.

tener to the project dictates everything.

If your need is straightforward, repeatable assembly and disassembly, knock-down hardware such as cam-locks and their close cousins offer the most flexibility.

For permanent structural joinery with high strength, dowels, Domino-type loose tenons, and other glued joinery provide superior long-term performance.

To handle seasonal movement in tabletops and other solid wood panels, consider movement-friendly hardware like Z-clips and figure-8 fasteners to avoid splitting or other damage.

And for fast, budget-friendly fastening, pocket screws are still among the most practical options around. **W**

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A kitchen rendering produced with Cabinet Pro.

Seeing is believing

Design software bridges gap between vision and reality

By Ralph Bagnall

Years ago, the design process for a kitchen, doctor's office or retail space was completely separated from the presentation process that convinced clients to approve projects. Designs appeared on blueprints that few clients could interpret, requiring artists to create presentation drawings. While these renderings could be artistic, they were expensive, time consuming, and limited to a fixed number of perspectives.

Modern design software has bridged this divide. Three-dimensional models created digitally can be translated instantly into photorealistic images to share with clients, then quickly output as prints to guide manufacturing and installation teams.

Many software systems now incorporate these features. **Cabinet Pro** (cabinetpro.com) offers several versions developed specifically for custom cabinet shops. The software delivers fast and accurate cut lists and bidding reports for estimating projects and creates basic 3D or photorealistic renderings to help sell jobs to clients. Once approved, Cabinet Pro can output panel optimization, nesting, labels, and direct CNC code for building the job.

Cabinet Pro offers both Cabinet Pro and Door Pro software packages, each available with or without CNC pro-

gramming capability. Several add-on modules customize the software's capabilities. Cabinet Pro systems can be purchased outright or rented monthly. These options allow shops of all sizes to choose the version that fits their needs and budget, knowing that additional options can be added as they grow.

Mozaik (mozaiksoftware.com) takes a similar approach with three basic software levels available through monthly subscription. Mozaik Manufacturing provides tools to design and detail jobs, from custom cabinetry to casework. Users can generate shop drawings, 3D designs, assembly sheets, cutlists, pricing estimates, labels and other manufacturing data. The 3D designs can be captured from any angle and update automatically with design changes. These images can be used in a viewer during the design phase before being rendered for client presentations.

Mozaik CNC adds machine-ready G-code, along with true-shape nesting, CNC MDF doors, CNC dovetail drawers and more. It includes stock post processors for over 175 CNC machine brands. Extra seats can be purchased for both Mozaik levels, but as companies grow, Mozaik Enterprise allows for multiple users along with administrative controls and a job dashboard for better collaboration.



Sketchlist assembly of a table trestle beside a photo of the actual parts.

This modular software design is becoming more common because it offers shops of all sizes just the features they need, helping control costs. The **Cabinet Vision** line from Hexagon exemplifies how customizable these systems can be.

Cabinet Vision comprises 14 modules, from Core Cabinets and Core Closets providing initial design functions to Cabinet Vision X Rendering for sharing designs through 3D photorealistic renderings.

The library includes modules for creating countertops using the same assembly interface as cabinets, an optimizer for

4- and 5-axis programming. Cabinet Vision and Alphacam can be purchased as a complete system or selected for specific capabilities. Together they demonstrate how software can be customized for production and sales needs.

This market encompasses alternative options for specific users. **SketchList 3D** (sketchlist.com) is a true 3D modeling software that outputs cut lists for individual board layouts and sheet goods cutting diagrams. Users can create complete designs and get 3D renderings for customer presentations. SketchList simplifies designing single built-ins or

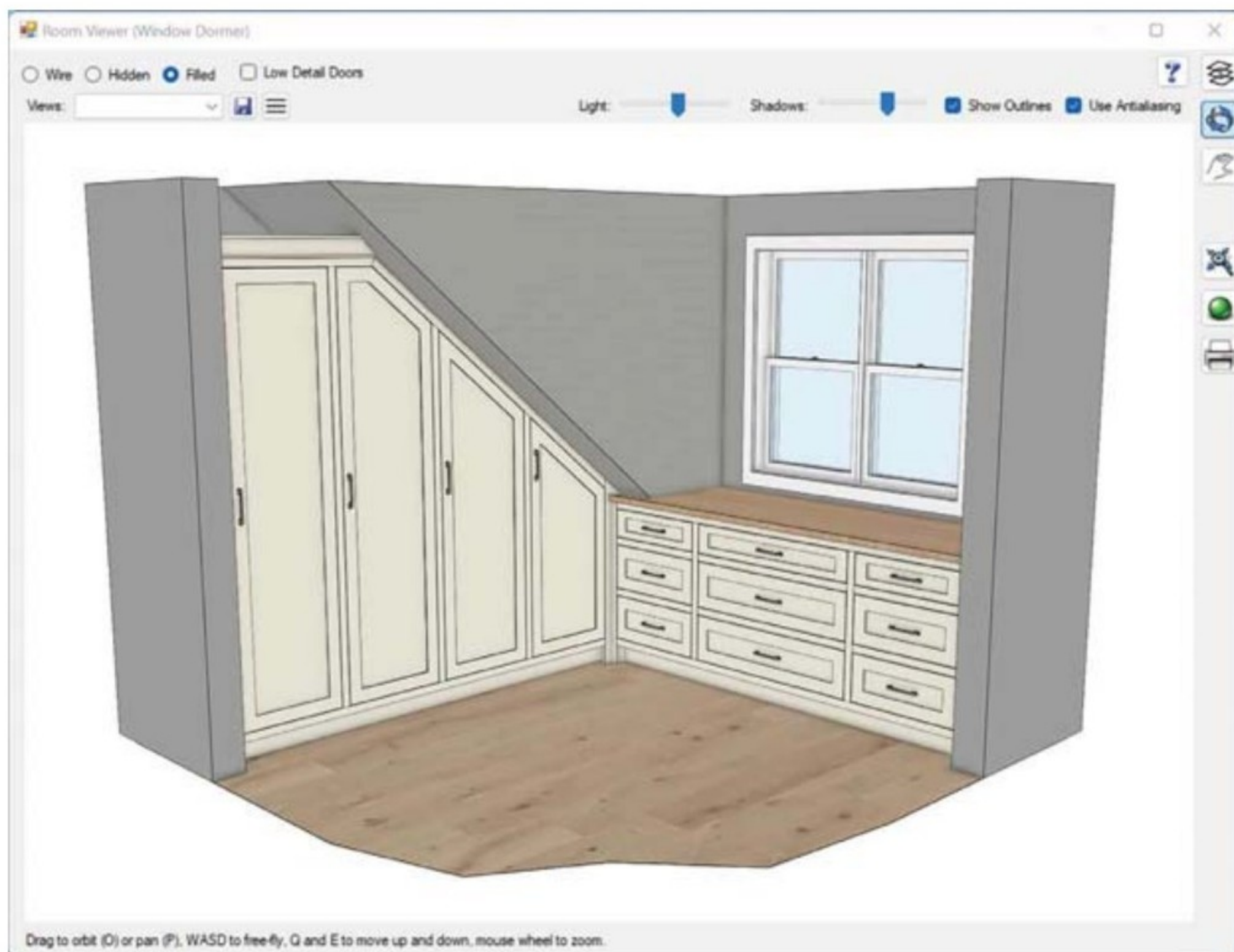
minimizing sheet goods waste, customer management for tracking jobs and revisions, general G-code output for various machines, and bidding modules for calculating client proposals.

Hexagon also owns Alphacam, CAD/CAM software composed of several customizable modules. Alphacam and Cabinet Vision work together seamlessly, with Cabinet Vision outputting Alphacam files natively. Alphacam modules enable everything from basic 2D sheet goods cutting to 3D model milling and

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A room view from Mozaik software.

entire kitchens and floor plans. Its Cabinet Wizard allows inputting features and outputs cabinet designs, parts lists, cut sheets and renderings. Individual pieces can then be placed within floor plans. SketchList doesn't output G-code directly but provides .dxf files for CAM software import.

What sets SketchList apart is its design method. Most

CAD systems draw shapes in two dimensions then extrude them into 3D parts. In SketchList, parts are created as wood blanks first by entering dimensions and grain direction. These virtual boards are then cut to shape in the software using the same steps as in a real woodshop. This makes it easier for woodworkers to design and assemble parts digitally. The software steps mirror shop processes, making it more intuitive to learn and use, according to users.

KCD Software (kcdsoftware.com) is a specialized, parametric design-to-manufacturing software built specifically for custom cabinetmakers, closet builders, and designers. It bridges the gap between creating detailed room visualizations for clients and generating precise engineering instructions for the workshop floor.

In Touchscreen mode, it optimizes workflow for tablets and laptops, allowing a cabinetmaker to design, price and clearly show elevations, floor plans, and material options to customers anytime, anywhere.

CabBuilder Pro from **CabBuilder** (cabbuildersoftware.com) features a real-time 3D design rendering window, giving you instant visual feedback as you edit your project.

Many will know **SketchUp**, which has existed for decades. It began as one of the first free 3D modeling programs and has evolved into a powerful tool with both free DIY and paid

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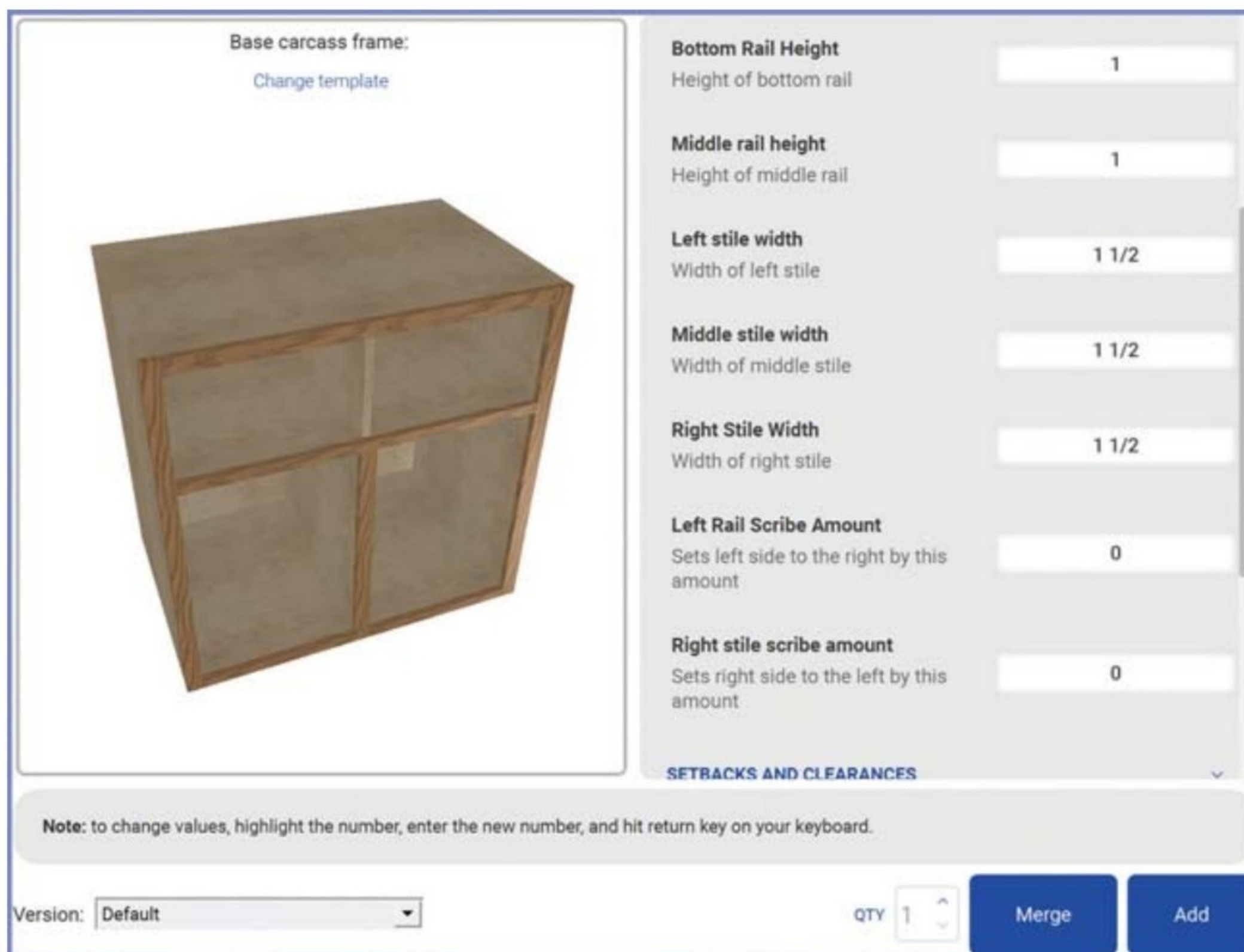
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A base carcass template in the SketchList program.

professional versions. SketchUp from Trimble (sketchup.trimble.com) offers desktop, iPad and web applications.

Like all the software systems in this article, SketchUp creates custom designs and outputs information through cut lists and 2D prints, as well as data for estimates and

CNC machining. It offers rendering capabilities for photorealistic images and virtual walkthroughs of 3D spaces. The platform incorporates thousands of user-generated models of appliances, vehicles, buildings and cabinets to populate designs. This SketchUp Warehouse saves time when adding artwork, plants and other details to designed spaces — similar to adding plastic cars and people to an architectural model.

SketchUp offers multiple options. Go works on iPads and the web, Pro has three levels for different shop needs, and Enterprise can be customized for larger organizations.

Software constantly evolves as computer systems become more capable. Outputting drawings, renderings, cut lists, G-codes, estimates, and other job requirements from a single plan saves time, effort and money. Modular packages address the old complaint of buying unnecessary software features, which benefits smaller and niche woodworking shops.

Today's software market offers options for virtually every shop size and need. The days of creating blueprints in design offices and commissioning artistic renderings from outside artists have ended. Even small companies can present accurate plans and estimates to customers with professional renderings. **W**

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JEFFREY ALEXANDER

by Hardware Resources has introduced the Ogden collection, a line of cabinet and furniture hardware that combines round details with square bases. The collection targets transitional and traditional design markets. The Ogden collection includes one round knob, six pull lengths and two appliance handle options, available in five finishes. Each piece is individually wrapped with attachment hardware included. Learn more at hardwareresources.com/decorative-hardware.



POWERMATIC

presents its new 15" (15BHH) and 20" (209BHH) helical cutterhead planers. They feature cast iron tables, digital readouts, an upgraded caster locking and braking system, dual lifting handles, and 4" bi-directional dust ports. The 15" and 20" models are priced at \$4,399 and \$6,299, respectively. Learn more at powermatic.com.



GRIZZLY INDUSTRIAL

has introduced the Bear Trap Undermount Dust Collector, offering three-way mounting flexibility, a compact footprint, and 5-micron dual filtration. Other features include a 4" inlet, 1-hp motor, and remote control. The Bear Trap sells for \$505. Learn more at grizzly.com.

POWERMATIC

has introduced a new 14" x 20" variable speed woodworking lathe, model 2014B, featuring a 1-hp variable-frequency drive motor with three-phase output. The lathe offers variable speeds from 15 to 3,600 RPM, a 14-inch swing and 20 inches between centers. It sells for \$2,849. Learn more at powermatic.com.

**WOODPECKERS**

has debuted its new Router Sled 4896 for flattening live-edge slabs, epoxy tables, and projects that are too big for the shop's planer. The engineered, adjustable-height sled makes it easy to accommodate a variety of stock thicknesses, according to the company. The Router Sled 4896 sells for \$569. Learn more at www.woodpeck.com.

Philly's Moderne Museum features chairs by Garry Knox Bennett

By Jennifer Hicks

The **Moderne Museum in Philadelphia** is currently hosting "Garry Knox Bennett: Chairs," a selection of eight hand-crafted chairs by the late furniture maker and American studio craft designer, Garry Knox Bennett (1934-2022).



Chairs from the Garry Knox Bennett exhibit at the Modern Museum.

Six of the eight chairs are part of Knox Bennett's "GR Series," which humorously riffs on the iconic Z Chair design by Dutch furniture designer and architect Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964).

Knox Bennett wasn't an early fan of Rietveld's work, but he came around, according to an excerpt from the exhibition's catalog, "Garry Knox Bennett: Call Me Chairmaker":

"I've always looked at [Rietveld's 1934 Zig-Zag Chair] as kind of a joke. I thought, 'What a dumb chair this is!' And when I made the first, the ladder-back chair, which started out as kind of tongue-in-cheek, I sat in it, and it was a surprisingly comfortable little chair! I mean it works really well. You can get your feet behind it when you tuck your feet under yourself; there's no stretcher that gets in the way. It's a good height: 18 inches, pretty standard. And it's got some spring to it; it's got a little limber to it.

"So, then I have to admit, I actually fell in love with the model. From then on, I was fairly serious. Obviously, I'm using puns in a lot of the titles (and) a lot of the visuals, but I got pretty serious about it. It's such a simple form that it allows itself a lot of manipulation."

The exhibition opened on May 1 is scheduled to run through Aug. 29. Learn more at modernegallery.com.

TRUMAN LOWE RETROSPECTIVE

The National Museum of the American Indian, part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., is currently hosting "Water's Edge: The Art of Truman Lowe."



"Mimi" by Truman Lowe.

The exhibition, which opened on Nov. 25, 2025, and will run through January 2027, is the first major retrospective of the acclaimed Native American Hoocak (Ho-Chunk) artist Truman Lowe (1944-2019).

The exhibition encompasses Lowe's sculptures and significant works from

public and private collections, including 28 pieces from the National Museum of the American Indian. Featuring nearly 50 of his sculptures, drawings, and paintings, it surveys his career and the key themes he explored in his work. His sculptures, made from willow branches, feathers, and other natural materials, evoke the waterways of the Wisconsin woodlands where he was raised and the canoes used to traverse them. His work also considers human relationships to place and memory.



Lowe's "Ottawa".

"Truman Lowe's art reflects on the waters and woodlands of his home, as well as family and cultural traditions, memory, and knowledge," Rebecca Head Trautmann, exhibition curator, said in a statement. "We are excited to share his work and his story with our visitors."

The exhibition is organized around four intersecting themes: Moving Water, The Land Holds Memory, Woodland Structures, and Memory and Shared Knowledge.

As an artist, museum curator, university educator and mentor, Lowe influenced generations of emerging artists, scholars and curators in the fields of American and Native North American art. An internationally exhibited artist, Lowe also taught sculpture for 35 years at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and was the founding curator of contemporary art at the National Museum of the American Indian.

Learn more at americanindian.si.edu. **W**

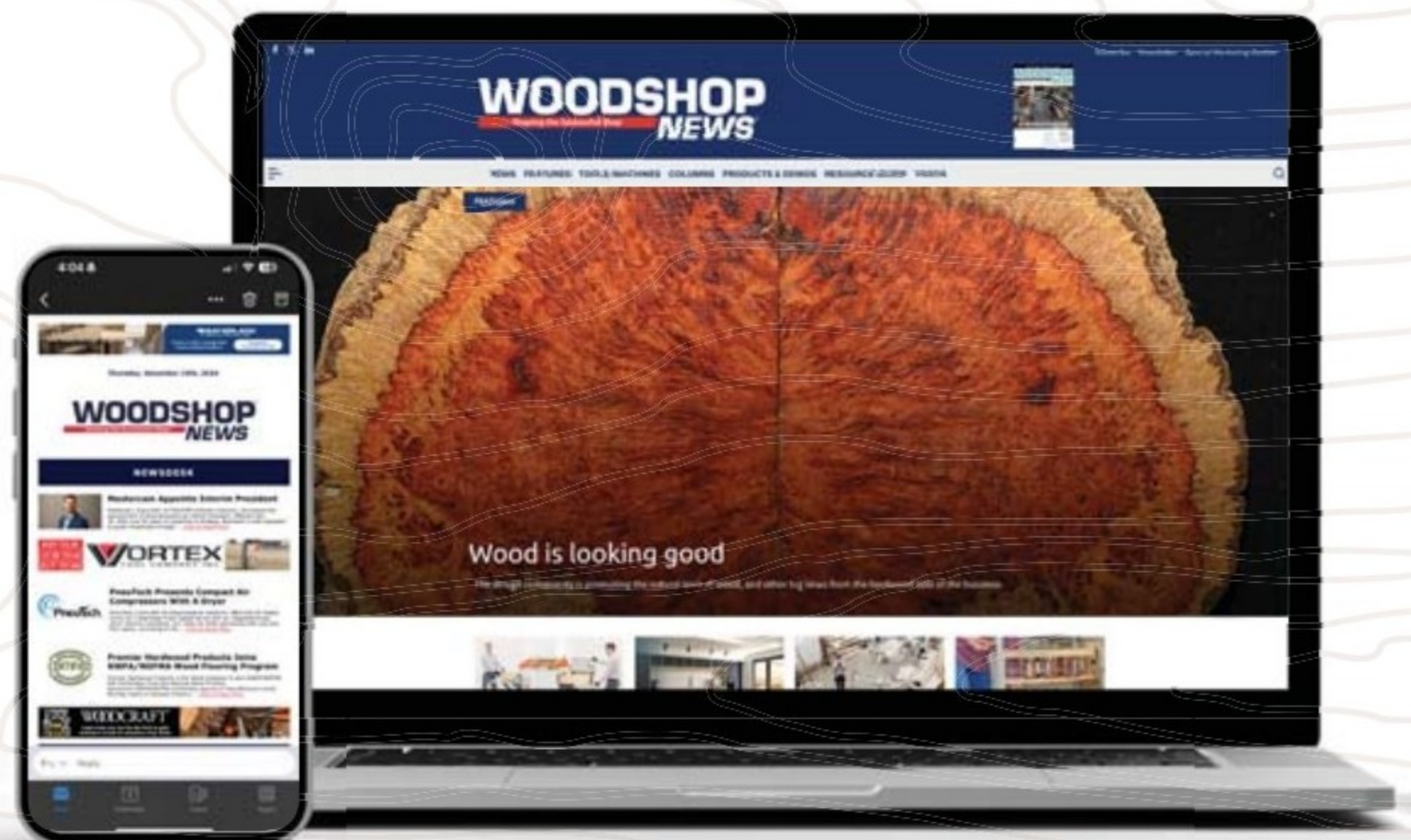
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Organizations sponsoring meetings, classes or shows of interest to professional or hobbyist woodworkers are invited to submit items to editorial@woodshopnews.com.

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

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.

Nov. 15-17 — STAFDA's 50th annual convention and trade show for members to convene with manufacturers and distributors in the industry and take part in educational programs and seminars. Location: Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim. stafda.org

FLORIDA

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

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

Oct 7-8 — Wood Products Manufacturers Association's 96th annual meeting with an agenda of presentations, networking opportunities and local plant tours. Location: Hilton Lake Buena Vista in Orlando. wpma.org

Oct 21-23 — Architectural Woodwork Institute's annual convention featuring a lineup of expert speakers and networking opportunities. Location: Hyatt Coconut Point Resort in Bonita Springs. awinet.org

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IOWA

Oct. 9-10 — Woodworking in America, hosted by Woodsmith, Popular Woodworking and Fine Woodworking magazines, offering workshops, demonstrations and camaraderie for woodworkers of all skill levels. Location: 4-H Exhibits Building, Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. woodworkinginamerica.com

MAINE

Ongoing — The Center for Furniture Craftsmanship offers year-round classes in woodworking to the highest degree of craftsmanship. One- and two-week workshops from June through October; 12-week Furniture Intensives; a nine-month Comprehensive; eight-week Turning Intensives, and Fellowships. woodschoo.org

MARYLAND

Monthly — The Howard County Woodworkers Guild meets the first Saturdays of the month at the Bain Senior Center at 5470 Ruth Keeton Way in Columbia from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Contact: Manny Flecker at aaron0641@hotmail.com.

MASSACHUSETTS

Oct. 9-11 — Paradise City Arts Festival at the Three County

Fairgrounds in Northampton. paradisecityarts.com

Nov. 20-22 — Paradise City Arts Festival at the Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough. paradisecityarts.com

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

Oct. 16-17 — Minnesota Woodworkers Expo, presented by the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild. Location: Minnesota State Fairgrounds in St. Paul. mnwwg.org

NEW JERSEY

Monthly — The North Jersey Woodworkers Association meets the third Monday of every month. njwawoodworkers.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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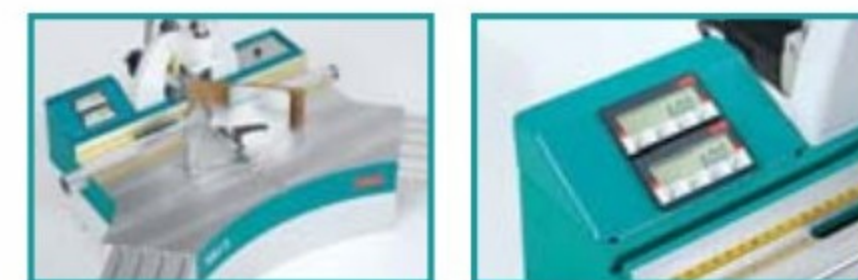
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meetings on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Belgium Cold Springs Fire Department in Baldwinsville. woodcny.org

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

Oct. 17-21 — Fall High Point Market. Home furnishings trade show attracting over 70,000 industry professionals across 11.5 million sq. ft. of showroom space. Open exclusively to trade professionals. Location: High Point. highpointmarket.org

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

Sept. 16-18 — National Hardwood Lumber Association's annual Convention and Exhibit Showcase. North America's largest hardwood industry gathering, the event draws sawmill owners, wood product manufacturers, and industrial craftspeople from across the country. Location: Hilton Cleveland Downtown. nhla.com

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. lvwwg.com

RHODE ISLAND

Nov. 7-8 — 31st annual Fine Furnishings Show, offering handcrafted furniture, accessories, home decor and fine art, as well as student work from students in the furniture making program at North Bennet Street School. Location: WaterFire Arts Center in Providence. finefurnishingsshows.com **W**



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Woodworking for wellness

When Jamie Harpser founded Plane Wellness in 2023, he likely didn't anticipate the rapid growth it would experience. Today, he and the board of directors are focused on expanding the nonprofit into a comprehensive woodworking retreat.



Students at on-site classes.

Based near Kittanning, Pennsylvania, Plane Wellness offers woodworking education and community support through online and satellite programming. These services are provided at no cost to adults facing mental health challenges, physical disabilities, PTSD, and other life struggles, referred to as mission students.

"The plan is to build a woodworking retreat where students can stay on-site in mini cabins, woodworking by day, enjoying campfires at night, and sharing meals together. We also aim to build a museum and event center. When the workshop isn't in use for courses, we want it to serve as a makerspace," explains Harpser.

Harpser's journey began in the mental health field in 2014, and in 2018, he discovered woodworking while crafting a table. The positive impact on his mental health inspired him to merge woodworking with mental wellness.

"I was working with teens who had attempted or were threatening suicide, helping them stabilize before returning to the community," he says. "Woodworking became my safe space and a break from that. I'm also diagnosed with ADHD, so it really taught me patience, how to slow



down and calm down, and nothing needs to be rushed because you can't rush woodworking.

"Hobbies can significantly improve mental wellness and have even saved lives. Many veteran students have shared how woodworking saved their lives, stating they wouldn't know where they'd be without it."

Courses encompass a wide range of topics and techniques, from dove-

tail joinery to creating CAD drawings. Plane Wellness hosts over 100 classes a year, either online or at maker-spaces nationwide.

The retreat project requires approximately \$2 million to \$2.5 million in funding. Harpser acknowledges the ambitious goal but believes it's attainable.

"After securing a piece of land, it's a five-to-nine-year building plan. We'll start with the shop hosting courses, then add cabins, an event center, and continue until everything is established," he explains, mentioning the ideal location would be a short drive from Pittsburgh's airport.

"In my opinion it's fully obtainable and it's going to happen."

Learn more at planewellness.org. **W**

—Jennifer Hicks

60 Grit

Rough humor by Steve Spiro



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