

# eCabinet Systems

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M E M B E R M A G A Z I N E

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

## NEW...

- SOFTWARE VERSION
- MEMBER MAGAZINE
- CNC FEATURES

### DOVETAIL DRAWERS

Big News in Version 5

### MDF DOORS

Now in eCabinet Systems

VERSION 5 CD  
INSIDE THIS MAGAZINE!

## MEET KERRY FULLINGTON

The  
eCabinet  
Systems  
Master







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Ken Susnjara

## eCabinet Systems

Vol. 1 Number 1. July, 2006

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# NEW

## *The theme of this issue of the Member Magazine is NEW!*

To begin, this magazine is NEW. Version 5, which came to you with this magazine is also NEW. There are a lot of NEW features in Version 5, but is NEW always better?

Not always, but usually. Making things better is the reason to come out with things that are new. When you see the word “NEW” in an advertisement it is implied that whatever they are advertising is also better. We are trying to make the eCabinet Systems program better so pretty much, on an ongoing basis, you will be subject to things that are new.

There is a downside to new. The old and comfortable may change. New means you have to learn things that are...well new. “New” normally makes things better but you don’t get this better without some effort. “New” is not free.

The magazine you are looking at right now is new. We plan to publish quarterly for now. Later, who knows? We could go bi-monthly or even monthly if the program gets strong enough. For now, it’s quarterly.

Version 5 is new and brings new features that could change the industry’s view of “nested based”. From the beginning, “nested based” meant designing jobs with fancy software and cutting nested cabinet boxes on a CNC router. Version 5 adds dovetail drawer boxes and MDF doors to the nest.

Sure, these things could have been designed and nested in the past but it was difficult so nobody really did it. Now it’s easy. It comes from the same software that makes the cabinets.

Whether you realize it or not, eCabinet Systems is working in an area that is new. Technology aimed at custom manufacturing is a new, emerging technology and we are pushing the envelope. This isn’t very apparent because this new technology uses old tools. Software, networks the Internet and CNC routers have been around awhile. I saw a TV commercial the other day for some type of phone based information system. One of the older guys in the commercial commented “If I want that information I get it the old fashioned way, I look it up on the Internet”. These things are not new. The way they are used today, however, is very new. The emerging technology and techniques are understood by few. Most, in fact, don’t even realize that there is a revolution going on because the tools of this revolution have been around for awhile.

As with anything new, there is much to learn and that is one purpose for this magazine. We hope to help eCabinet Systems Members by exposing them to emerging technology. We encourage Members to show others what they are doing, how they are doing it and how it’s benefiting them. We will encourage vendors to tell us about their new products. We will try to find and show techniques that will make everyone more productive.

Perhaps in this modern day we should do this on the web. It would certainly be cheaper but, studies have shown that only about ten percent of our Members visit our web site regularly and we need to communicate with all Members. If you won’t come to the mountain, I guess we’ll bring the mountain to you.

Just like the software, this magazine will probably evolve and change as needs and the industry change. Hopefully we will be able to keep bringing you things that are new and interesting. In business, especially a business changing as fast as ours, new is good. In fact, it is not only good but perhaps essential. ■

# DOVETAIL DRAWERS

## *A Great Addition*

**V**ersion 5 introduces drawer boxes including a novel dovetail that can be nested and machined on a CNC router.

Almost since the beginning Members have been clamoring for drawer boxes they can build. Finally with Version 5, they are here.

A Drawer Box Designer is used to design and save them. It looks familiar. In fact it is a skinny version of the Cabinet/Assembly Editor made just for drawer boxes with its own slimmed down version of Construction Settings. Drawer boxes work like doors. You configure and save a design and then when you need them you grab the file you saved.

There's three different ways to use the designs. The Door/Drawer Editor has been expanded to include an area where you specify a drawer box to go with a drawer front, and finally a check box to tell the system if you want a drawer box or not.

There is also a new Drawer Box Editor that installs drawer boxes in an opening without drawer fronts. This area works pretty much the way drawer fronts do but it only installs drawer boxes. You can even inset the front of the drawer boxes and install doors in front of them.

In both cases, using the Door/Drawer Editor or the new Drawer Box Editor, the drawer boxes automatically resize as the cabinet size changes.

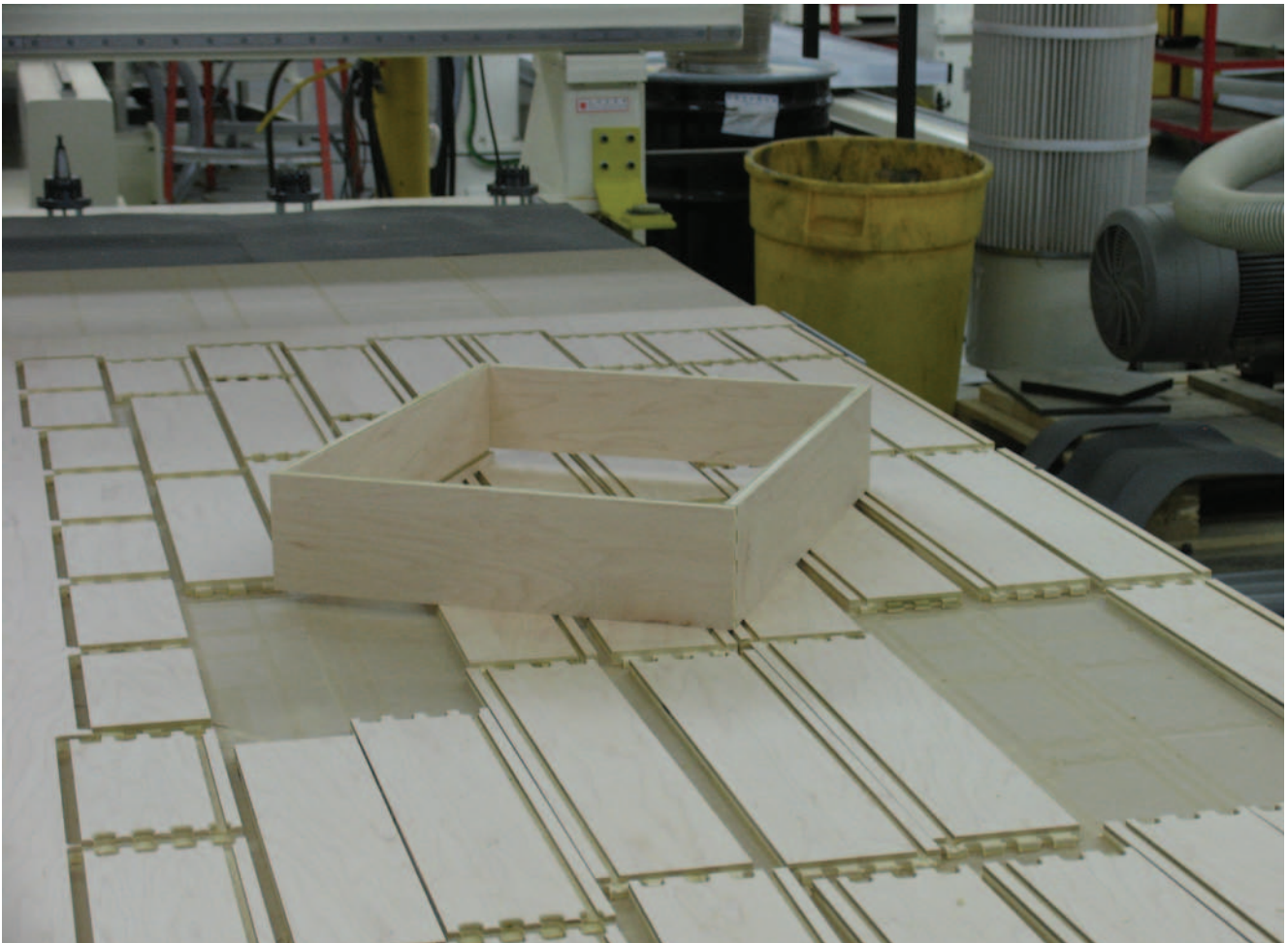
There is one other way to use drawer boxes and that is to add them as a Display Item. In this case you will specify the file and size you want when you load it. Much like a mini-cabinet, you can then highlight and change the size of the drawer front. It does not however, automatically change with the size of any other item in the workspace.

For those with traditional equipment, drawer boxes can be made with butt joints or full dados. They can also be made with blind dados, but the best is



a new CNC dovetail that can be machined in the nest.

To be honest we didn't invent this joint. It has been around but it has always been difficult to program so it wasn't used much. What we did is integrate the joint into eCabinet Systems software so programming is automatic. CNC dovetail joints are now practical. In fact, they're easy.



*Dovetail drawer boxes designed in Version 5 can be nested and machined using a Thermwood CNC router and special CNC dovetail tools*

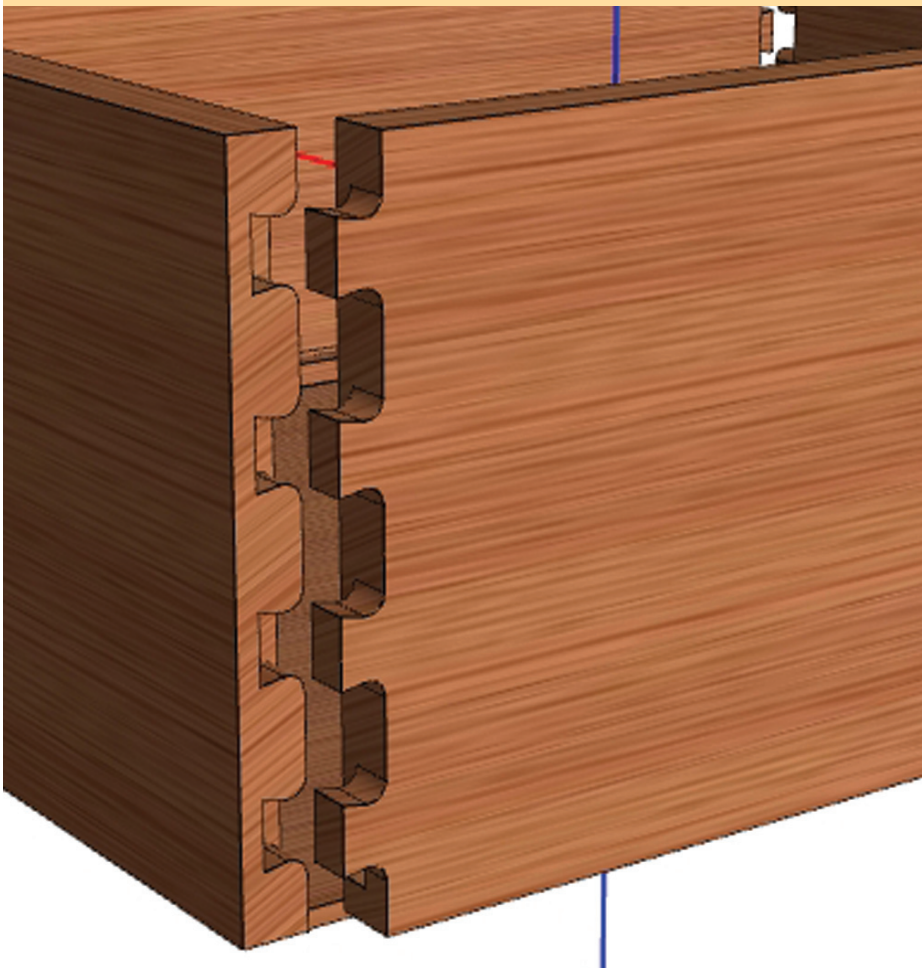
The joint does require a specially matched dovetail tool set which is available through the program. Other than that it nests like all the other parts and if you make dovetail drawer fronts and other parts from the same material it nests them together.

Some folks like to have their box sides made from board stock, and this too is possible, but you have to trick the system. The software creates

drawer boxes using sheet stock. Only sheet stock. But, there is no reason you can't create a sheet stock material that is actually board stock. For example, if you have a 1/2 inch by 8 inch board, 8 foot long create a sheet material called 1/2 board and make it 1/2 inch thick and 8" x 96" in size. It will work. The system will nest the drawer sides on it and the CNC will machine the sides from it. Depending on how flat the material is, you may need to make special provisions for hold down (double sided carpet tape anyone?).

Everyone needs drawer boxes, and don't forget you can buy some really nice drawer boxes through the program. After Version 5, if you have access to a Thermwood CNC router you can also make some really great dovetail drawers yourself. Now it's quick and easy. ■

*eCabinet Systems Version 5 includes the ability to custom design dovetail drawer boxes*







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# Meet Kerry Fullington

## *The guru face to face*

**A**nyone that visits the eCabinet Systems Member forum, or any other cabinet or cabinet design forum has come across Kerry Fullington and his amazing eCabinet Systems designs. Kerry is the acknowledged master of the eCabinet Systems software, sharing remarkable designs and layouts and freely helping others solve their problems with innovative approaches.



*Kerry at work in his office*

He is clearly the most respected voice of the eCabinet Systems program, but who is he?

No one had really seen Kerry. Even the folks at Thermwood had never met him face to face. He doesn't go to trade shows and doesn't travel much so we decided it was time to finally meet. We invited Kerry to take a special trip to visit Thermwood and meet the Thermwood and eCabinet Systems people.





*Kerry's shop – where eCabinet Systems designs become real*

Kerry is from Dalhart, Texas, a small town in the panhandle about 90 miles from Amarillo. Until the late 90s, Kerry was building and remodeling homes in and around Dalhart. Then, as Kerry explains, “housing starts went to zero”. He wanted to stay in the shop and in woodworking so decided to focus on cabinets and custom built in furniture. He also bought his first computer (for accounting). This was 2001.

That's right, the master of our software has only been working with computers a few years. He taught himself and in his typical understated words, “It was difficult”.

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At this same time he also decided he needed design software to support his new cabinet business. He went to the market leader who promptly quoted him \$18,000 but said he didn't really need all those features. He however, though he did need all those features but \$18,000 just wasn't in the cards. Then he saw an ad for eCabinet Systems. It was free so he signed up.



*Kerry's work goes beyond simple cabinets as seen by this impressive ceiling*

This was before Version 1 came out so he had to wait awhile but he finally got it and thought it was great. It probably helped that he had no experience with other software so he didn't know what to expect.

"I felt that if I was going to depend on this software I needed to understand every aspect and every detail about its operation". So he dug in with the same determination he had used to learn the computer and learned how to use this new tool, work around problems and sometimes "fool the system" to get it to do what he wanted. And, to the benefit of everyone else in the program, he shared the things he was learning and freely helped others.

Through each new version and each new release he mastered it and then shared his new knowledge.

So we looked forward to the visit and a chance to finally meet.



# Kicked up Nested Based...

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DOVETAIL DRAWERS... MDF DOORS... AND MORE

With Thermwood and eCabinet Systems, nested based means more than cabinet boxes.

eCabinet Systems, Version 5 software also means nested drawer boxes, with a choice of joints including dovetail. These are machined right along with cabinet boxes... same system.

It means nested MDF doors. Not just run-of-the-mill MDF doors, but also quality modeled doors that look just like five piece doors. Design them in the software, send them to the machine and cut them...same system.

It means carvings on doors and cabinets. An entire library to exploit. Applied carvings.. inset carvings. Resize them as you want right in the software. Customize your design, send it to the machine and carve it...same system.

It means furniture designed by leading professional furniture designers. Customize it in the software, output it to the machine and make it...same system.

It means cutting custom profiles without custom tools. Design profiles in the software, send them to the machine and model them with standard modeling tools...same system.

Why settle for just boxes when you can have it all with Thermwood.

P.S. Start today, eCabinet Systems software is free to cabinetmakers. Check it out on our web site [www.eCabinetSystems.com](http://www.eCabinetSystems.com).

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*A hickory kitchen that many of us first saw as an eCabinet Systems design on the forum*



*Kerry Fullington (right) and Ken Susnjara examine a dovetail drawer*





*Kerry (right) with Thermwood's President, David Hildenbrand*

Kerry's personality is very much like the personality you see on the web. He is friendly and easy, fun to talk to and very enthusiastic about the program and the future. During his short visit, he met all the folks he corresponds with on the web and got a chance to get a pre-release look at Version 5. He also witnessed the first ever full nested sheet of dovetail drawers being cut.

Kerry has agreed to become a contributing editor to this magazine and will share his knowledge and insight each issue in an area we will call "Kerry's Corner". ■



*Kerry and the crew from Thermwood with the first ever Version 5 nest of dovetail drawer boxes*



# VERSION 5, the best yet!

*Version 5 is out...finally. The CD for Version 5 is included with this magazine package so be sure to find and install it.*

“

**You guys and gals did it again at eCabinets - So nice”, “Drawer editor is very cool!””, “I’ve been playing with the Inset Carving thing. Very Cool!**

”

**T**hese are just some of the comments by Beta Test Members who have actually used Version 5, and now you have it.

It was a huge technical challenge and has a LOT OF NEW FEATURES.

The software team focused on fundamental features that Members have been requesting and they really hit a home run.

The first big item is “configuration management”. That’s a fancy name for being able to keep modifications made in the Part Editor when the cabinet



size changes. Although this sounds easy, it isn't.

When you cut a shape in a part, and then change the size of the part, there are a lot of different ways the shape can react. It can change position proportionally with the part. It can stay a fixed distance from one edge, or the other edge. It can stay in the center.

For this to work, the system needs to know what you want the shape to do and that takes rather sophisticated configuration management software, but it's here. It is part of Version 5 and as complex as it sounds, it's actually fairly easy to use.

Another big item in Version 5 is drawer boxes. You can now design them, install them and they resize with the cabinet. You get a Cut List and can nest the drawer parts in the software. You can also nest and cut them on a Thermwood CNC router. The really great thing is you can nest and then cut dovetail joints. You can even display the dovetail joint in the software, a nice touch.

Imagine designing your cabinets today and having them delivered, ready to assemble tomorrow!



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## Custom CNC Machining

NorthWoods Manufacturing is a full service CNC shop, offering custom machining and edge banding. Allow us to show you how to turn your design into machined parts ready for assembly.

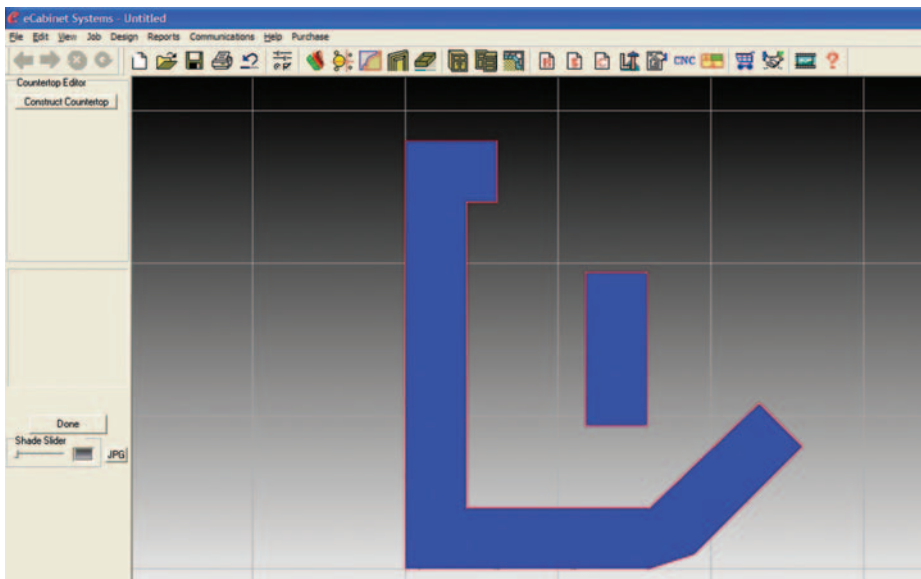


We did a lot of work to refine a dovetail joint that can be machined from a nest on a CNC router and now it's here. Check out the pictures.

MDF doors. You can design them, display them, nest them and machine them on the router but, as has become tradition with eCabinet Systems, it goes beyond basic MDF doors.

Yes you can develop traditional MDF doors using an interface similar to the one that defines Thermwood doors. These designs use a profile router bit to cut the center groove.

You can also model an asymmetric groove into the door. So what exactly does that mean?



## *Countertops are now easy in Version 5*

If you look at a real five piece door you will see that the raise shape on the center panel and the bead around the inside edge are not the same shape and the corners are squared off.

Traditionally MDF doors are machined from above using profiled router bits and normally the profile on both sides of the groove in the center of the door are the same.

Some people try to better simulate a five piece door by using two tools, a bead tool for the outside of the groove and a tapered raise tool to simulate the center raised panel. It sort of works, but, to keep the raise tool from machining away the bead, there needs to be a rather wide flat area at the



bottom of the groove to move the raise tool away from the bead. It looks OK except that five piece doors aren't made that way. Normally there is a rather narrow flat between where the raise ends and the frame bead begins, so the fake MDF approach doesn't look quite right.

Our new MDF door system allows an asymmetrical tool. This is a tool with a different shape on one side than the other. In the case of our MDF doors, this tool has a bead shape on one side and the raise shape on the other side. You can't spin this tool, it just doesn't work. The tool needs to move along the part without spinning sort of removing material like magic. This is easy in software but how do we actually machine it?

With our asymmetric tool we create a profile between the raise and the bead that is exactly like a five piece door. Then, instead of trying to machine it with traditional router bits, which won't work, we model it using a small diameter ball nose and flat bottom bit.

The modeling takes about 6-10 minutes per door but the final result is quite nice. So whether you are displaying MDF doors you buy, making your own traditional MDF doors or modeling MDF doors that look just like five piece doors, MDF doors are quite a nice addition to Version 5. Also, working with Valspar we have developed antique painted finishes that look really great on MDF doors creating a new category, high-end MDF cabinets.

Countertops are finally here. This previously difficult, involved task is now easy with a new countertop editor.

It's a new area in the software, but defining countertops, even complex tops with waterfall edges is quick and easy. It is also quite flexible. There are few, if any countertop configurations that can't be duplicated. You can still use Display Cubes, but this is a LOT easier.



## CARVINGS IN THE KITCHEN.

These hand-carved pieces add flavor to any kitchen. Corbels and onlays are highly detailed and they come in a variety of sizes. Mouldings may be easily cut to fit.

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DXF input is another big feature. You can now import geometry or even parts in the DXF file format. These files can be used in the Profile Manager to make profile tools or can be used in the Part Editor.

The DXF file is actually imported into the *Contour* area of the Part Editor



*Even experienced woodworkers can't believe Version 5 MDF doors are really MDF*

*Inset carvings can be scaled and cut into cabinet parts – both in the software and for real using rented CNC programs*

where it can be used like any other contour shape. We have added one additional feature that should prove really useful. You know how in Version 4, if you have a closed contour, you can cut it through a part but if you want the contour shape to be the part, you need to create shapes around the outside to cut it out. No more.

Now, if you have a closed contour, you can still cut it from a part but you can also specify that everything not inside the closed contour be cut away. The contour shape becomes the part!

This should be a great help to anyone that uses the Part Editor and even



more help to Members who are comfortable with other CAD systems that output DXF.

But DXF isn't the only file format you can import in Version 5. x\_t files are Parasolid files that are used extensively in eCabinet Systems except, until now you could not bring x\_t files into the software. The reason is that we use additional data fields in our files for things such as material and textures that are not part of standard Parasolid files. Version 5 has a new interface that allows you to import these files from other systems. If any information is missing, it asks you to select or define that information during the import process.

A lot of really nice three-dimensional CAD systems output x\_t files and now these can be brought directly into eCabinet Systems.

While we are talking about three-dimensional files, you can now resize these parts at will. All your display objects can be made larger or smaller. This was actually done for carvings but as a result it works for all other HSF files as well.

## The Adventures of Hardware Man & Whisper-Ride

**Panel 1:** A man and a woman are in a store. The man says, "I'm so excited!" and the woman replies, "Me, too!" They are looking at a TV cabinet. A sign in the background says "PLASMAS & LCD" and "SALE".

**Panel 2:** The man is looking at a TV cabinet. He says, "NOW what?" and the woman replies, "Yeah... Where do we put this thing?!" A dog is barking "WAHI!"

**Panel 3:** Hardware Man, a superhero in a blue suit, is flying through the air. He says, "I got here as fast as I could!" and "OH, Hardware Man! Thank you!!!"

**Panel 4:** Hardware Man is holding a TV lift. He says, "I'd like you to meet Whisper-Ride. This little guy mounts easily inside a cabinet concealing your TV. Then with the push of a button, your TV raises out of the cabinet like magic." The woman replies, "Oh, Hardware Man! You're the GREATEST!"

**Panel 5:** Hardware Man is installing the TV lift. He says, "Whisper-Ride is so EASY to install..." and "...and SO QUIET!"

**Panel 6:** The man and woman are sitting on a couch in a living room. The man says, "Thank you, Hardware Man. Thank you, Whisper-Ride." The woman replies, "Thank you, Hardware Man. Thank you, Whisper-Ride." A dog is barking "WAHI!"

**Panel 7:** Hardware Man is sitting on the couch. He says, "Don't leave your TV out in the COLD! Conceal it inside a fine entertainment cabinet with Whisper-Ride from Wood Technology, Inc."

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As we indicated, carving files can now be resized in the software, but there is another really great carving feature in Version 5. Inset carvings, that is carvings that is actually cut into a part rather than applied to the outside, are now really easy to apply to a cabinet part. A new application interface makes it easy to resize and then cut carvings into almost any cabinet part. As design becomes a bigger part of cabinets, these features will take on new importance. Remember, you can also rent the CNC programs to actually cut them. A few carving designs have been included with the software and a lot more are available for free download from our web site.

For you frameless enthusiasts, edge banding is here. You can add edge banding to cabinet parts, have it display properly and have the parts resize for the edge banding automatically. It even keeps track of the amount of edge banding you need.

Folks have been asking for this for a long time and Version 5 has a really capable and flexible interface that should handle virtually any requirement.

Version 5 also supports a new program called Design Sharing. In this program, power users of the software can create libraries of cabinet and furniture designs and sell them to other users. The file structure needed to track and control this is part of Version 5. We talk about this program in more detail in another article in this magazine.

So Version 5 is here and includes more really new features than any new version since the beginning. Members now have more power, more capability and more flexibility with which to be more competitive. Time to start working on Version 6. ■



## **Don't Forget to Register For CNC Router Discounts**

**I**f you buy through eCabinet Systems, as every good Member should, don't forget that you can earn a discount on a Thermwood CNC router system with those purchases, but you must register.

Register on the eCabinet Systems web site. There is no cost or other obligation. Once you register, Thermwood keeps track of your purchases and places 5% of all qualified purchases (pretty much everything but machines) in an account for you. Each purchase stays in the account for five years if you don't use it.

This is a unique program because there is no limit! The more you buy, the more you save. In fact, if you buy enough, the CNC router could be free! You would need to buy about \$2 million in five years if you want a free machine, not out of the question for a lot of shops, especially since the program includes doors and drawer boxes, some of the more expensive items. If you want a machine right now and can commit to buying a certain level, give us a call and we can work something out.

If you buy through the program it makes sense to register, even if you have no immediate plans to buy a CNC router. If your plans change to include one in the future, your account will be there waiting. ■

## **Got a Quadro Graphics Card ? We have a new driver that makes it fast...REALLY FAST!**

**O**ur software folks were playing around with the video driver software for the Quadro series graphics cards and came up with a modified video driver that speeds up eCabinet Systems, especially for really complex images. How much does it speed things up? A LOT!

Each computer seems to be a little different but speeds four to SIX TIMES FASTER have been seen on test systems. This makes a huge difference when working with complex scenes or carved furniture. It makes ordinary computers seem almost like engineering workstations.

We have made this driver available for download on our web site along with instructions. If you have a Quadra FX series graphics system, you should give this a try. If it doesn't work for you it is pretty easy to switch back to your old driver. ■

# Custom Furniture - Here... Now

**T**he Thermwood Furniture Network is off and running. The first pieces have been posted and some Members have actually built and finished them. We have heard stories of the sales prices and if they are right, this furniture could return profits of 50% or more!

The first pieces offered through the program were some intricately carved tables by Arno Schadt. Thermwood held a furniture training class in December to teach several shops techniques that make building this type of furniture easier. They then went back, built and sold some pieces.



*eCabinet Systems Members attend the first Furniture Network training class*

Arno received the first ever designer commission check. He couldn't exactly retire on it but all aspects of the program are now rolling.

A bedroom suite and china cabinet by Elwood Lilly has also been added to the program and several entertainment credenzas by Steve Hodges are also being added to the collection. ■

*This beautiful carved table was machined, assembled and finished by eCabinet Systems Member Garrin Stricklen from Furniture Network files*





*Master carver Arno Schadt receives the first designer commission check*



*This beautiful china cabinet designed by Elwood Lilly is ready for download from our web site – [www.eCabinetSystems.com](http://www.eCabinetSystems.com) and click on Thermwood Furniture Network.*

# Not the Same Old Furniture

**F**urniture has been made pretty much the same way for hundreds of years. Sure, today we use electric motors instead of water wheels in the 1800s or foot power in the 1500s but furniture today is pretty much the same as furniture yesterday...but that may be changing and this profound change may need some explanation.



*Several carvings and moldings are combined in this top skirt*



Let's look at a traditional furniture design such as Italian, French or English. The piece is typically made of moldings and pilasters and carvings. Fancier designs have more moldings, pilasters and carvings than simpler designs but they all have moldings, pilasters and carvings. The skill in furniture making is designing all these pieces so they all fit together and then actually assembling them. This took a lot of time in the past and takes a lot of time today. We can make the parts faster and more accurately today but it still takes time and real human effort to put them all together and make them fit and we are not much faster today then we were five hundred years ago.

Perhaps this is why so many furniture companies have moved their production to China because if you are going to use a lot of labor to build furniture, it is better if that labor is real cheap, or so they believe.



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In the face of centuries of stable tradition, we are trying to change the fundamental formula with the furniture being offered in the Thermwood Furniture Network. We are trying to substitute modern technology for traditional methods and if it works, it has the potential to revolutionize how traditional furniture is made.

In this case we want the furniture to look like it did 100 or 500 years ago. We want traditional design elements' we just don't want to spend so much time building it. Believe it or not, the answer is really simple.

Instead of making a lot of parts that fit together to get the overall appearance, we make one part that looks like a lot of parts put together. Now we only have one part to fit instead of a bunch of parts. It's easier and much, much faster.

*This potentially difficult joint is easy the way we do it*



Now the only problem is how do we make this one really complex part? In today's world of CNC and computer programs this really isn't that difficult and once we have the part, the entire competitive formula changes. No longer is cheap labor that important.

This is the basic approach we are using to bring designer furniture to eCabinet Systems Members in a program we call the "Thermwood Furniture Network" and it is working just great.

For example, on the Italian Renaissance Entertainment Credenza, the original traditional design required 84 individual parts. The Thermwood design, which has exactly the same appearance has 54 parts (a 36% reduction). The actual labor savings is probably even greater since assembly labor increases rapidly as part count increases.

As an added benefit, the final product is probably higher quality since it has fewer joints that can fail, separate or shrink.

Carrying this thought forward, we have tried to simplify joinery using this same idea. A good example of this is a curved molding used on the Manchester suite. The original part joined a curved molding with a straight molding at an odd angle. The joinery and coping to make these fit are very difficult to fabricate. In the final design, this complex joint is carved into the curved molding, ending in a simple butt joint where it meets the straight molding. A "piece of cake" joint. This kind of thinking is going into every piece and it makes building complex looking furniture easy, really easy.

So furniture you find in the Thermwood Furniture Network is not exactly what it seems. It offers impressive traditional designs which when fully assembled look pretty intimidating. Because of this simple modern approach however, any cabinetmaker can handle it, quickly and easily. ■



# IWF '06

## Come and see us

*Stop by and see us at  
Atlanta – we plan a  
really action-packed  
display*

**T**he bi-annual IWF show is still the grand-daddy of US woodworking shows and the eCabinet Systems and Thermwood folks will be there demonstrating a lot of what we talk about here. We are in hall C at booth 8826.

eCabinet Systems and Version 5 are the main focus of our display. We will have three CNC routers demonstrating various aspects of the program as well as two software demonstration areas and a complete display of the furniture available in the Thermwood Furniture Network.

The first CNC router will be making custom cabinet boxes from eCabinet Systems software. Here is a chance to see the entire process from design through assembly. Working with cabinetshops that stop by, we will design custom cabinets, then nest, cut and assemble them. These are not “canned” demos but live design to assembly so you can see the real process.

We claim this is easy. Here is a chance to stop by see the whole process and decide for yourself.

The second machine will be set up to make furniture. We will use designs from the furniture network, machine, carve and assemble. Here is another



chance to watch the entire process.

The profit potential from these furniture designs is huge but a lot of shops are concerned about whether they can actually build these products. Here again you can watch the entire process and decide for yourself.

The only other area where you might have questions is furniture finishing and we will have a supply of finishing videos available for each of the finishes we offer. They are free at the show, while they last.

The third machine will be demonstrating “kicked up” nested based manufacturing. Version 5 brings a series of new nested based features and we will be doing full machining demonstrations of each of these. We will machine dovetail drawer boxes, showing this new and exciting feature. We will also machine MDF doors. In this case, we will model the doors using ball nose and flat bottom modeling tools. This allows us to make MDF doors that look almost identical to five piece doors, something that can't be done with conventional tooling. It creates a real quality look. We will also demonstrate inset carving into these MDF doors which is another new Version 5 feature.

We will also demonstrate modeling a complex section of molding.

We will show, for the first time, a series of painted finishes that can be used for furniture or cabinets. These include a wood colored sealer/undercoat. This base coat is a sealer and so works very well on material such as MDF. There are six color coats which are sanded through in areas to expose the base coat and create a worn painted look. Glazes, spatters and distressing finish the process. We also plan to show some great furniture pieces made from MDF and finished using these schedules.

Worn painted finishes have become very popular and we now have a system where our Members can apply really high quality versions of these fashionable finishes.

We will also display the furniture designs currently available through the Thermwood Furniture Network as well as drawings of proposed future pieces that you can discuss and vote on.

We have also invited Members offering Production Sharing services to be present in our booth so if you are looking for someone to make parts for you, this may be a great opportunity to meet and talk to them face to face.

There is a lot going on in our booth and we encourage you to come to Atlanta and plan to spend a lot of time with us. ■

# Three New Entertainment Credenzas added to the Furniture Network

*Steve Hodges has supplied us with three traditional designs for a new type of product, an entertainment credenza.*

**N**ot all that long ago, stereo consoles, which are basically traditional credenzas, were a popular item. Then with the advent of smaller and smaller stereo components, they fell out of style. Today, the credenza, which was the design focus of rooms as far back as the 1500s, is making a comeback as a way to attractively house the new flat screen plasma and LCD televisions.

Steve has supplied us with three very striking designs for entertainment credenzas. In each of these, the flat screen TV is housed in the rear behind a false back and is lifted through a door in the top using a Wood Technology screen lift (available through eCabinet Systems, of course). It is lowered and hidden when not in use. The lift is controlled by a wireless remote.

The first design, called the Italian Palazzo Entertainment Credenza, is a modern interpretation of the grand credenzas that could be found in and around the villas and palaces of Florence, Italy during the Cinquecento, 1500-1600. Using design themes from this era, this superb credenza combines the look of fine antique Italian furniture while accommodating a flat screen plasma or LCD television that automatically lifts for viewing through the split top. The front functional doors open to allow for a variety

*Everyone thinks this Italian Renaissance Credenza is a true antique until the plasma TV rises through the top*



of electronic components while preserving all the style and ambiance of the Italian Renaissance.

The second new Hodges design is called the Brittany. The Brittany Credenza recalls the age when skilled craftsmen of that rugged peninsular French province made furniture by hand for the landed gentry. This distinctive style drew influences from the British manor houses across the English Channel and the elegant furnishings created for the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century French court, and yet, aware of the informal spirit of French provincial life, craftsmen of that day created a distinctive style that has endured the test of time.

Authority in translating classic design themes is a trademark of this design. Perhaps the most striking element is the dramatic carved frieze that sits upon boldly carved and fluted pilasters with pronounced radiuses. Doors have deep inside profiles with framed panels and tenons indicative of hand-made joinery. The insides of the top of the doors and framed panels culminate in a radius. Doors have flush keyhole escutcheons. Bold crown

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and base moldings add to the drama of this architectural theme. All edges are worn and all surfaces physically distressed to approximate years of wear and impart the patina found only on fine antiques.

Inspiration for this striking credenza was found in the architecture and furniture of French Brittany, primarily armoires and kitchen cupboards.

The third design by Steve Hodges also has a European origin. The Holywell Entertainment Credenza design is based on late 18<sup>th</sup> century antique furniture and woodwork originally crafted in North Wales, England. Holywell, a town in the North Wales Borderlands, derives its name and fame from St. Winefride's Well, a shrine that has existed since the 7<sup>th</sup> century and is still visited by pilgrims who have faith in the healing powers of its waters.

The key design elements of the collection are its bold beaded coped rails



*This credenza is called "Holywell" after the town in North Wales, England that has a well regarded by many as sacred. It too houses a flat panel TV*

and wide beveled door panels, as well as its architectural-inspired fluted columns with multiple coped crown moldings offset by a detailed keystone.

Inspiration for the collection was derived from several examples of a furniture which originated in Wales. These are enclosed press cupboards, the most important and prestigious piece of furniture that most small households could boast during that period.

Each of these credenza designs can be resized for specific applications and customer needs. In addition to the ability to resize individual carvings, certain carvings are offered in multiple lengths, allowing for longer or shorter sizes without overly distorting the underlying carving design.

As with all furniture network designs, CNC programs can be rented for all the moldings and carvings needed. This rental fee also contains the fee paid to the professional designer for use of the design. ■

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# Thermwood Expanding.... in a **BIG** way

**E**very so often, someone on a forum, sometimes even a competitor, asks whether a program that relies on free software, like eCabinet Systems, can really work long term, or even survive. It appears in the case of eCabinet Systems that not only can it work, it does work and it works really well.

Thermwood, the parent of eCabinet Systems has started the largest building expansion in its history, due in a large extent to success of the eCabinet Systems program.

There are two parts to the expansion. The first is a 20,400 square foot two story office building. This building is primarily focused on customers and eCabinet Systems Members. It will contain four multi-media training rooms for both eCabinet Systems software training as well as CNC router machine training.

Three of these training rooms open to a machine room where students get hands on training using actual machines and controls. The dining room will also be relocated to this building to make it convenient for students and visitors.

This facility will also be used for newly established furniture network training classes that detail machine carving, production sanding techniques for carvings and high-end furniture finishing. These will be hands-on classes and both sanding systems and a finishing spray booth will be installed for these classes.

The demonstration center will also be expanded and moved to this new facility. A new "showroom" approach will use a trade show type showroom, expanded demonstration machines and multi-media presentations of products and features along with three multi-media customer meeting rooms.

The facility will also be used for the continuing development of furniture designs for the furniture network as well as development of rental CNC carving programs. Visitors will be able watch these ongoing efforts during their visit. Several administrative functions will also be relocated to this new facility including marketing, sales, web development and eCabinet Systems support.



# Add Extra Worth to Custom Cabinets and Furniture... ... apply a True Furniture Finish

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There is more information on our web site. [www.thermwood.com](http://www.thermwood.com) or [www.eCabinetSystems.com](http://www.eCabinetSystems.com) and click "Furniture Finishes for Cabinets"



**THERMWOOD** Valspar

[www.thermwood.com](http://www.thermwood.com)  
[www.eCabinetSystems.com](http://www.eCabinetSystems.com)

The second part of this expansion is the addition of 56,000 square feet of production and warehouse space. This 560 foot by 100 foot building will be located to the west of the current facility and will have a 24 foot high ceiling.



*Here is an eCabinet Systems rendering of the new facility. That's right, the entire building was created as an assembly in the Version 5 Cabinet/Assembly Editor. It is a 19 Mb assembly file*



*Here is another angle showing the front of the new office building*



*Here is another eCabinet Systems image of the proposed front lobby. Some of you will recognize the use of some of the shared images from our web site*



Production flow will be reworked with the current facility used to build up sub-assemblies and the new building used for final assembly and testing. The current facility is limited to just over one machine a day which is not adequate for current sales. With the expansion, Thermwood will be able to build 1,000 or more machines a year. The new building will also allow assembly of a new version of Thermwood's aerospace machine that can machine parts up to sixty feet long and over five feet thick. That's the main reason for the tall ceiling.

The expansion almost doubles the size of Thermwood's headquarter facilities. Construction has already started and the buildings should be complete and ready for use in early 2007.

eCabinet Systems does seem to be working for Thermwood and the fact that Thermwood is willing to make these investments clearly demonstrates that they are confident in eCabinet Systems and dedicated to the future of this program. We at Thermwood hope that each of you will have a chance to visit us, we can't wait to show off our new buildings. ■



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## **Design Sharing - An Idea Whose Time Has Come**

**e** Cabinet Systems has become a really powerful design software. Once you learn to use it, you can design almost anything. Therein lays the problem.

For a variety of reasons a lot of Members either can't or don't want to invest the time needed to become proficient with the software. They just want to take cabinets, put them in a job and go. So how can we make the system work for them? The answer is simple, Design Sharing.

The idea has been around awhile, but Version 5 makes it really practical. The idea is that Members who are skilled with the software create libraries of designs that other Members buy from them. Those with extensive libraries profit from their skill and experience and those looking for a fast start can tap into a vast storehouse of developed and tested designs, everybody wins.

There is another aspect that provides even more incentive for Members to share libraries, margin sharing. Version 5 allows us to determine the Member that developed the cabinet when items are purchased through the software. We then credit the developer with 10% of the margin on those sales. We admit we think this may encourage developers to use purchased parts in their designs, which we think is a pretty good idea.

The program is currently under development and may be out by the time you get this magazine. Libraries can be reviewed on our web site by clicking "Design Sharing". They are purchased on-line using a credit card and can either be downloaded or you can request a CD be mailed to you for those with slow connections.

If you request download, we prepare the files and then email you a link where you can access the files. This small delay is so we can tag each file. Each is tagged with the name of the developer and the client. That's right, when you get a library your name is on every file. In this way, you are free to use the files for your own business without having to deal with pesky software security. You can even send them to Production Sharing Members to make parts for you, but if you improperly provide files to others, or if you improperly use files from others, we will eventually find out. Tags stay with files regardless of how much they are modified.

This is necessary to make sure that design developers are properly compensated for their work and to provide adequate incentive. Without

some protection, it is unlikely we would have many designs available. We think this is the least invasive way to approach the problem.

Initial libraries have come from Beta Test Members that participated in the development of Version 5, but now any Member that has designs they think others might want, can offer them through the program and perhaps make some money. Libraries are developed from your existing designs right in the eCabinet Systems software. Your offering is prepared and then burned to a CD which you send to us. We use this CD to prepare and post your offering. We then split all fees received from the sale of your designs. You will also receive 10% of the margin on any items purchased through the software to build your designs.

We have also opened an area on our web site for developers and clients to communicate. If you buy a library, this is where you ask questions and if you offer libraries, this is where you answer questions and provide guidance.

This looks like it will be a great program for everyone. Those that want a quick start can just buy a few libraries and avoid the entire design process with the knowledge that designs were developed by real cabinetmakers. They can however, modify them if needed since they are still using a full function design software. Those with existing designs that have worked for them can make additional money selling them to others. Those who develop something special, from an entertainment center to a library, now have another source of income after the initial project is complete.

Design Sharing is another example of eCabinet Systems becoming more and more of a cooperative. ■

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# High-End Painted Finishes on MDF- WOW!!

**T**he latest offering from Thermwood/Valspar is a series of eight antique painted finishes. These type of finishes are becoming very popular for cabinets and furniture today. These work great on solid wood, but work equally well on MDF, opening some really promising opportunities to our Members.

Now, MDF cabinets and doors can be given a really high-end painted furniture finish. The finishes are available in both lacquer top coats, for furniture pieces, or in pre-cat top coats for kitchen and bath use.

As with all high-end finishes these are somewhat involved requiring 12-14 steps, but the final result is well worth the effort and should command a premium price.



*Old Paint Worn Black*



*Old Paint Dusty Blue*



*Old Paint Aged Green*



*Old Paint Barn Red*



If you combine these new finishes with the new capability to model MDF doors in Version 5, you create a killer combination that works, even in really high-end applications. During the development, we showed sample doors to several people with many years of experience in the industry and the reaction was the same from each. They could not believe they were MDF! ■



*Old Paint Worn White*



*Old Paint Faded Yellow*

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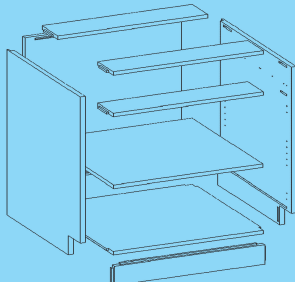
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# What is eCabWorld?



**F**irst, **eCabWorld** is an independent effort. It is not officially part of eCabinet Systems or Thermwood although, it is endorsed by both. It is operated by an enthusiastic eCabinet Systems Member that is also an experienced computer programmer, me.

I am Dan Epps and have been invited to contribute to this Member Magazine, providing tips, tricks and ideas from my perspective.

In an effort to support the training and free exchange between eCabinet Systems Members, I established **eCabWorld**. In the beginning, **eCabWorld** was intended to be an interactive eCabinet Systems training website, but things got out of hand.

We found a need for eCabinet Systems Members to display or “Showcase” the products they design and build so we added an area where they can maintain their own *Designer’s Showcase*, a photo gallery of their work. Now, potential clients can search for a designer/builder in their area. This feature is in its first stage and we hope to add automated slideshows, searches and the capability for clients to request information from the showcase owner. Once indexed by major internet search engines, these showcases should be easily located via internet searches and we hope results in more business for eCabinet Systems Members.

In addition, every Sunday at 7:00 Eastern time, we have an online chat called *Round Table Discussion*. This provides Members a chat room dedicated to cabinet making and eCabinet Systems. Members discuss issues with business, designing, building and, of course, eCabinet Systems software. More than a forum where you post a question and hope to get an answer quickly, information here is shared in a real-time environment—ask a question and get answers immediately. Sessions generally last about an hour and at the end of each session, members choose a topic for the next session. Stop in and share or just listen.

Other sections of **eCabWorld** include *Shop Talk*, *Shop Talk LIVE!*, *Links*, *Classifieds*, *KnowledgeBase*, *Tips & Tricks*, *Enhancement Requests*, *Downloads* and *Newsletters*.

*Shop Talk* is a traditional forum where members post questions and answers while *Shop Talk LIVE!* is a chat room that is always available and makes a good place to check for quick answers anytime, not just Sunday evenings in the *Round Table Discussion*.

*KnowledgeBase* provides a single location for downloading all Thermwood produced documentation such as the *Learning Guide*, *User Guide* and *eCabinet Systems Made Easy*. Also located here are Thermwood’s latest recommendations for computer systems.

*Tips & Tricks* is a library of, well, tips and tricks by members. Look here for tidbits that will help you get the most out of eCabinet Systems.

The *Enhancement Requests* section provides members with an area to post ideas that

would improve eCabinet Systems usability and functionality. Members can vote on the level of importance for each item posted and the entire list transferred to Thermwood for consideration. This area is intended to consolidate enhancement requests in a single, more manageable location and free Thermwood staff from the tedious task of determining users' needs from forum posts.

In the *Downloads* section you will find useful computer programs from **eCabWorld** and other sources. Programs found here include eCabWorld's *Backup Wizard*, *Registry Wizard*, various calculators and other programs that are useful to the cabinetmaker.

The *Newsletters* area contains all monthly **eCabWorld** newsletters. Newsletters can be viewed online or downloaded.

That brings us back to our original intent for **eCabWorld**, training. We haven't forgotten and interactive training is being developed as you read this.

Until next issue, I'll see you in *Shop Talk* or *Shop Talk LIVE!* Come and join in the fun, you never know what you'll learn. ■



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# **KERRY'S CORNER**



Welcome to Kerry's Corner. The folks at Thermwood ask if I would like to write a little piece in each issue of this new magazine focusing on different aspects of the eCabinet Systems software. I am really looking forward to talking about eCabinets but for this first article I chose to tell you a little bit about the people who created the software.

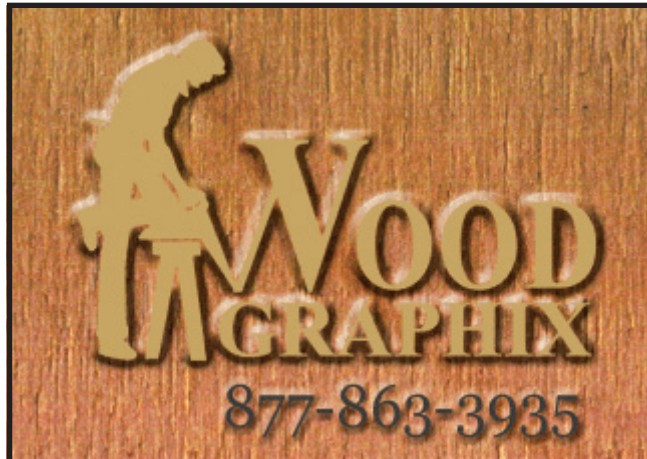
Thermwood was founded in 1969 and has weathered many storms as technology and the markets have changed in the world. They began as a company producing wood grained thermoplastic furniture parts, ventured into robotics for a while which led them to the position they hold today, an industry leading CNC machine manufacturer.

In preparation for the release of this magazine I had a chance to travel to Dale Indiana and visit the headquarters of Thermwood. It was a truly wonderful experience. Those of us that frequent the eCabinet and Thermwood online forums already have a feeling of how dedicated and enthusiastic all of the people at Thermwood are and my visit confirmed that. Upon entering the building at Thermwood you are immediately struck with the feeling that all of the employees are glad to be working here. There are friendly smiling faces and an enthusiasm that is infectious. As I tour the building there is talk in every department of new ideas, improvements and where that department is headed. . Even through lunch at the plant these discussions go on, ideas get tossed around and none are rejected until they are thoroughly discussed. This was significant to me because Thermwood treats the suggestions of the thousands of eCabinet Cooperative members this same way. They look at those suggestions, toss them around the group and decide if they should be implemented. They do listen to what we, the members have to say and are eager for us to share ideas. They understand it will take this kind of teamwork to make eCabinet Systems the best cabinet design and manufacturing software available.

One of the reasons Thermwood has been so successful and has been able to survive the rough times in the market is because they truly embrace the technology of the day. They understand that the future of the cabinet and furniture industries is going to be directed by the use of this technology. This is evident in every department in this company. The design of the Thermwood routers is amazing. They use state of the art engineering software to examine the position of every hole drilled in the machine and the bolt that will fit that hole. This software is so sophisticated that it can measure the stresses exerted on the steel components of a machine in virtual environment before the first piece is fabricated. This use of this virtual prototype is very cost effective. Another area where the company is extremely cost effective is customer machine support. When needed a customer can contact Thermwood from their machine control, then, from his office at Thermwood, an on-call technician can look at the customers controller for problems. There is even a camera located on the control

so that the technician and customer can see each other while they talk. If necessary, the technician can use this camera to examine parts on the machine. Many problems can be fixed in this manner eliminating the need to send a tech out into the field for minor problems. This saves Thermwood and the customer money as well as getting the machine up and running in the shortest time possible. Thermwood uses computers to track and test everything in the manufacturing process. From the moment steel enters one end of the building and is put into inventory control to the final testing of the machine as it is ready to ship on the other end. Final alignment of the machines is now done with laser technology to insure perfection. Before each machine leaves the plant, it must undergo a 40+ page checklist of tolerances to pass quality control. This dedication to quality is also exhibited in the eCabinet Software division of Thermwood. We will be looking at that in future articles.

In all, I was tremendously impressed with the whole Thermwood operation. If any of you are considering an eCabinets training class, I would suggest that you take the class that is offered in Dale. You will get this same tour of the Thermwood operations and I will guarantee that you will be impressed. After being invigorated by the air of enthusiasm evident in everyone working at Thermwood and by breathing in this air, you will return home filled with ideas of how to improve your own business. ■



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# VENDOR PROFILE



## Wood Technology, Inc.

By Mark Fink

*(Editor Note - Mark is the President of Wood Technology and he and his late father have been enthusiastic supporters of the eCabinet Systems program from the very beginning. Mark lives with his wife of seventeen years and his two sons in Chapel Hill, NC and can be reached at [markfink@woodtechnology.com](mailto:markfink@woodtechnology.com) )*

Turning 44 in May 2006 got me thinking about the past and how far we've come. My dad, Ed Fink, started Wood Technology on May 4, 1978 and as it happens it was my sixteenth birthday. I remember it well although I'm fairly sure that getting my drivers license seemed more important at the time. I have come to admire his bold move at 40 years old. After all he had a good job for 18 years with Bendix Moldings where he attained the position of Vice President. It was there that he gained his early experience with European hardware. Before the big German companies came to the USA, Ed was the guy introducing the 32mm system and European concealed hinges to our industry. In fact when one of these big firms decided to begin operations here Ed was hand picked to run the company and even become part owner. He declined the offer and instead decided to start from scratch; a true American entrepreneur.

And start from scratch he did. In a working class New Jersey neighborhood a basement was converted into the newly formed company's business office. I wasn't too pleased since I had adopted the basement as my bedroom. It could be accessed without coming through the front door. Anyway the makings of a family business began to take shape. My mother did everything my father couldn't get to and as we later moved the company out of our house I helped with what little inventory we had at the time. After finishing college my older sister joined the company eventually becoming Vice President. There were very few women in the industry then and she had to work very hard to be taken seriously. As we grew into larger facilities I continued to help where I could while going to college. After successive growth moves we relocated in 1984 to Martinsville VA. Just down the road from American of Martinsville, Hooker, Stanley, Pulaski, Basset and Lane Furniture Industries to name a few. In those days my labrador retriever was our acting front office receptionist. In 1989 we purchased several acres in Pittsboro, NC, just outside of beautiful Chapel Hill. Here we built the modern office and warehouse facility that we occupy today. During the past 17 years we have been fortunate to have assembled an outstanding team that contributes to our success every day. It's great to work with people who care so much about what they do and plus we have a much better front office person these days.



We had a lot to learn over the years but from the start we have been dedicated to offering new and innovative hardware products with the highest level of customer service, quality and value. We were honored when Ken Susnjara and the great team at Thermwood invited us to become part of the eCabinet Systems program. We recognized it to be a uniquely innovative total approach concept linking design software and the distribution of supplies. The result being unparalleled value and design possibilities to eCabinet Systems users as well a sea change which challenges current distribution models in our industry.

Our own innovative efforts met with success when we won the coveted Challengers award at IWF 2004 for our Evolve Silent-Close Hinge. Evolve changes the way cabinet doors operate by incorporating pneumatic technology into our high quality clip-on hinge. We have a lot of new surprises in store for IWF 2006 including our Whisper-Ride electronic flat screen TV Lift. This will be on display in both the Thermwood and Wood Technology booth spaces. If you're coming to Atlanta this August I hope that you'll stop by and say hi. We would love to show you what else we have to offer through eCabinet Systems.

Well, 28 years later the company has grown up as have I. A lot has changed in 28 years and we still have a lot more to learn but you can bet we will keep our eyes on the future while fondly remembering the past. ■



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## **Training Seminar & eCabinets System Training Schedule**

All courses conducted at Thermwood are 5 days. While all seminars are 3 days

To enroll in a Seminar/Training Class, call Thermwood at 1-800-533-6901 or sign up on line at [www.eCabinetSystems.com](http://www.eCabinetSystems.com) and click on the training tab and follow the link

### **July 2006:**

July 24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> at Thermwood Corporation

904 Buffaloville Rd. Dale, IN 47523

Note: this class is now full

### **July/August, 2006:**

July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 4<sup>th</sup> at Thermwood Corporation

904 Buffaloville Rd. Dale, IN 47523

eCabinets System Training Seminar

August 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> IWF 2006 at

Crown Plaza Hotel-Atlanta-Perimeter NW 6345

Powers Ferry Road, Atlanta GA. 30339, 8am – 7pm

**August 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> a second seminar will be held at the Crown Plaza Hotel if the August 23 class becomes filled. Please contact Thermwood to see if this class will be available.**

### **September 2006:**

September 18<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> at Thermwood Corporation

904 Buffaloville Rd. Dale, IN 47523

### **October 2006:**

October 16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> at Thermwood Corporation

904 Buffaloville Rd. Dale, IN 47523

*Please understand that these dates may change and we recommend you contact Thermwood Corporation prior to reserving any of the training classes or seminars. 1-800-533-6901*

## Seminars

*During these three days you will learn how to:*

*Seminars are held from 8 am-4 pm (beverages and lunch are provided). Seminars are limited to no more than 25 students. Cost will be determined before each seminar - payable in advance by check or major credit card (sign up online or give us a call at 1-800-533-6901). To get the most from the seminar, students should have a computer (preferably laptop/notebook due to space limitations) with the latest version of eCabinet Systems registered and functioning. Note: Seminars are conducted in English only.*

- Create a material library and setup costs
- Modify and profile cabinet parts
- Design cabinets both frame and frameless
- Design and use a profile tool
- Work with different joinery techniques
- Create cutouts on parts
- Combine cabinets into assemblies
- Generate Cut Lists
- Create furniture
- Maintain Buy List/Bill of Material
- Design a room and install cabinets
- Generate photo-realistic views
- Create line drawings
- Electronically purchase for a job
- Create sales proposal
- Save and exchange cabinet/job files

## Training Classes

*During these five days you will learn how to:*

*The training at our facility also transitions the cabinet project(s) to the machine - You will have smaller class sizes which enables more one-on-one assistance with the instructor.*

*Training Classes are held at our facility in Dale, IN from 7:00am-4:00pm. They are five days long, (beverages and lunch are provided). Training Classes are limited to no more than 10 students. The cost is payable in advance by check or major credit card (sign up online or give us a call at 1-800-533-6901).*

*Note: Training classes are conducted in English only.*

- Create a material library and setup cost specifications
- Design a variety cabinets both frameless and framed
- Incorporate a variety of joinery techniques and materials
- Modify cabinet parts to create specialized cabinets, such as a clipped corner cabinet
- Design a profile for a cutter and add profiles to a part
- Design and apply cutouts on a part for such as items as wire loom installations
- Attach and design cabinet parts and display items
- Create furniture from simple cabinets
- Create assemblies
- Incorporate hardware with your door or drawer installation resulting in accurate bills-of-material
- Design a room and install cabinets via the Custom Layout features
- Create special objects for a room, such as curved walls
- Modify cabinets after they've been installed
- Review and print a variety of reports, i.e., buy lists, cut lists, cost sheets, including a nested diagram of the parts to be cut on each sheet and individual part diagrams
- Create specialized drawings, such as plan and elevation views, orthographic projections of a cabinet and part drawings
- Generate sales proposals
- Create sales materials for photo-realistic presentations, as well as generate a slide show
- Purchase your materials from a single source.



# American Home Furnishings



## A Quick History

By Mike Hodges

*(Editor's Note – Mike is the International Sales & Marketing Manager of the Wood Coatings Group at Valspar and has probably had more influence on furniture finishing by major furniture manufacturers than any other person. Mike and his people have developed the finishes being offered through Thermwood's Furniture network program.)*

Over the years home furnishing styles in the US have typically favored what we commonly refer to as traditional design themes. The reason is quite simple. Our heritage stems primarily from the British Isles and we therefore, over the years, developed furniture that emulated styles from our past. These styles transcended a wide range of design themes over time; through the periods of Queen Anne, William and Mary Jacobean, Tudor and others.

During the 18th century, a number of notable cabinetmakers emerged such as Thomas Chippendale, Hepplewhite and the Adams Brothers who left an indelible trademark on these long-lasting traditional designs that have stood the test of time. Most of the meaningful furniture crafted during this period was made in mahogany. The wood was prized not only for its inherent warm color but from the standpoint of workability as well. The wood was considered to be a cabinetmaker's dream. Finishes during this period were typically rich and warm, with pieces rubbed to a high luster.

As the colonization of America got underway, early cabinetmakers had little else to draw from, so they relied on templates from those who had gone before them in interpreting furniture that they made. As they were starting from a more humble position with respect to cabinetmaking, early expressions of furniture being made in this country were somewhat less

ornate than their English counterparts. These early craftsmen did not have the necessary tools available to them nor did they have the particular level of skill.

Mahogany, if available, was used in interpreting their designs as well but more often than not, they relied on cherry, which was more abundant in this country. Others used maple or oak to translate their patterns and to a lesser extent, pine. Cherry also yielded a rich warm color tone reminiscent to the color of mahogany.

During the Colonial period, traditional designs flourished and the Early American style of furniture prevailed for years to come.

Exposure to other European countries also produced a fascination with Italian and French styles of furniture. This was especially true of the provincial styles of French furniture relating to the Louis XIV, XV and XVI periods. The Louis XIV style, in particular was well received because it offered ornately carved pieces that were rendered in many painted expressions that were enhanced with gold leaf and striping.

The dawn of mechanization in this country spawned the Victorian period and brought with it, a new outlook in styling. This period was defined with ornate turnings and many carved embellishments. Oak was the wood of choice

for this style, which was sturdy and durable. Finish colors ran a wide range of colors but typically, were quite simple in appearance and execution.

Later, the Arts & Crafts movement gathered prominence in an effort to offer furniture in more of a simple, straightforward manner. This style of furniture yielded an approach to design that offered less complicated motifs with a sturdier form of construction. This style, for the most part, was crafted in solid oak and typically, featured a “fumed” oak finish. Rift-cut oak veneers quite often were used to impart design interest while a certain amount of pieces in this style were crafted in cherry.

Another theme was borne out of the settlements of various Shaker sects across the country. The Shakers dedicated their lives to a simple existence and their hand-crafted home furnishing reflected this belief. The pieces found in their home were developed with a basic simplicity in design, form and function. The woods used for these designs were usually cherry or maple, the two woods most common to them.

In the sixties, a transformation took place within the industry as Spanish and other Mediterranean themes were introduced with extremely favorable reception. With the development of these styles, two notable trends were started. One, it was really the introduction so-called mixed media to the industry in a big way. In reproducing designs that emulated original pieces, wrought iron and metals were incorporated into the design and construction of certain selections along with the use of slate, tile or ceramic inserts for tops. The second and probably most significant practice was that of finishes becoming less formal. Physical and cosmetic distressing really took hold at this point. Rock, chains, clinkers, rasps and other implements were used to impart physical

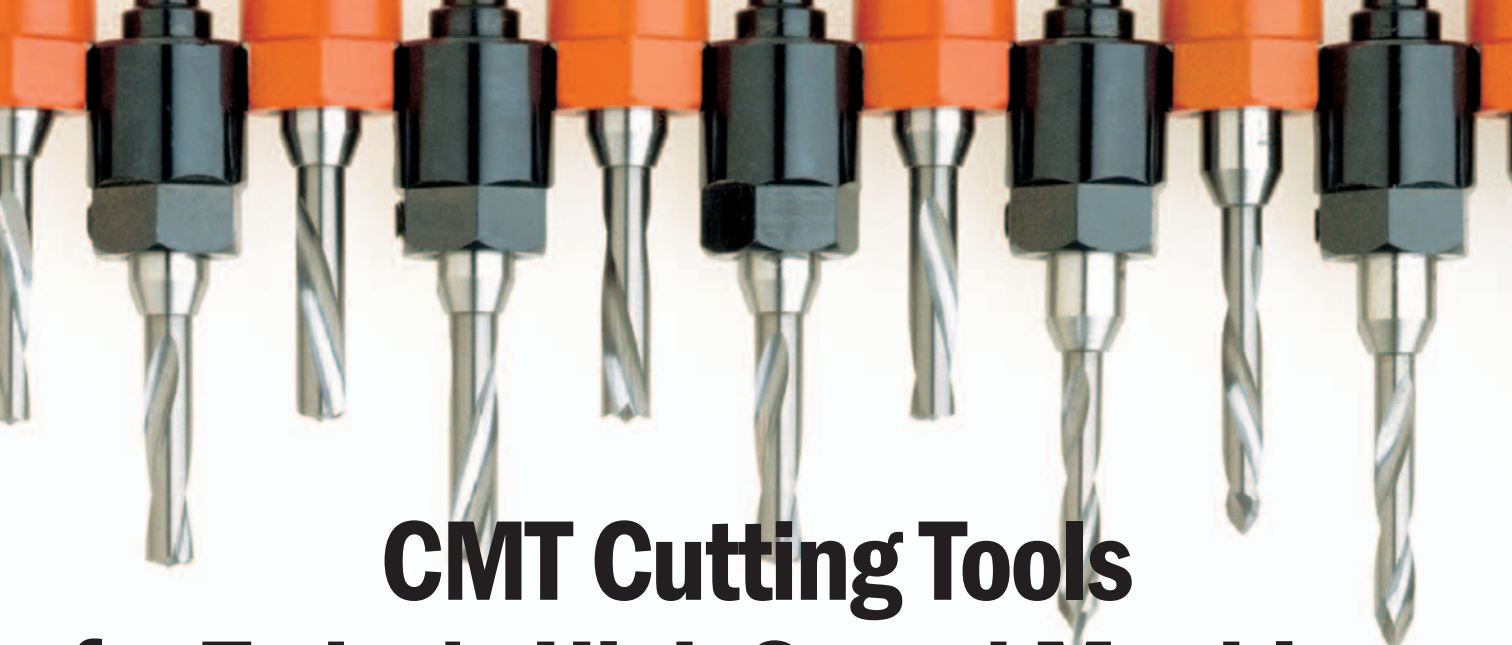
texture while cosmetic applications such as spatter, cow-tailing and stipple padding were employed to create certain effects. These are all techniques that are being used today, although with a bit more refinement than before.

Continuing on until the present time, these styles have undergone vast changes and perhaps improvements, until we have our present-day style preferences which have pretty much revolved around those styles that have stood the test of time and typically, have been in the area of traditional design themes.

Improvements have been made of course, especially with the scale and function of pieces. A unique interpretation with the individual piece selection has also developed as we seek to find a piece of furniture that not only fills a certain need within the household but also depicts a style that is suitable in response to our individual tastes.

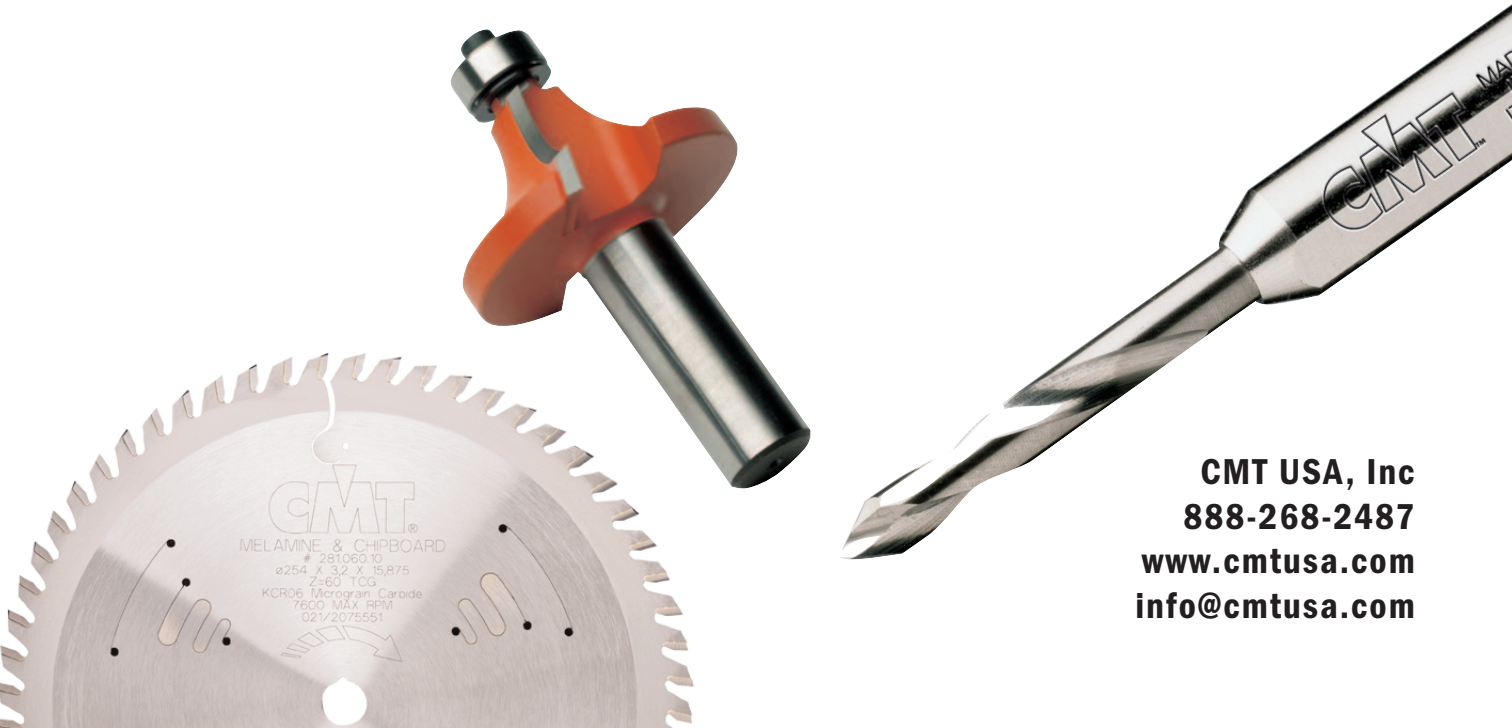
With so much attention being given to product development, styles are being looked at and rediscovered constantly. This is true not only for our furniture but in our kitchen cabinetry as well. There is an attempt to promote continuity throughout the entire home and as a result, anything made of wood is being adapted with a “character” finish for today’s homes.

Finishes today have become the focal point for all furnishing throughout the home, no matter which room we’re in. Colors and techniques are limitless in today’s environment and all one has to do is visualize it and it can be accomplished. We have developed the techniques to provide the visual impact that we desire for our furniture and cabinetry and all that’s left is to make sure that it happens. ■



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