

# Frame Design

by Tim Franer, CPF, CMG

## Form & Function

### A Touch of Gold

**D**esigning with gilded mouldings and gilded mat enhancements is perhaps one of the highlights of picture framing. For some frame shops, these types of jobs don't come in that often. But when they do, the opportunity is unlimited in showing your creative abilities in designing for this high benchmark of quality.

The design shown here features a 23 karat, yellow gold-leafed frame. Also surrounding the piece is a hand-wrapped, white linen mat. Installed



under the linen mat is a separate 23 karat, yellow gold-leafed mat bevel, which serves as a continuous fillet. The artwork is an original pastel drawing on thick, textured illustration board. In creating the design, I took into account the fact that this was an original piece of artwork and decided to create a classic look for it.

### The Frame

The gilded, closed corner frame used for this piece features a fluted pattern all along its profile. This fluting “worked” with the period and characteristics of the building, the “Cafe Texan,” that is shown in the artwork.

The finish of the frame was hand-rubbed to create a soft, antiqued look with bits of clay showing in the surface. This type of “soft” surface was

selected to complement the warm gold finishes in the subject matter. A 1½" wide moulding was chosen to give support to the subject—without competing, but enhancing. I also applied compo ornament to each corner of the frame, and gilded each piece as I had done for the moulding.

## The Matting

Selecting a neutral color for the matting in a “classic” design often works well from a design standpoint. When neutral mat colors are selected, they represent natural value which, in turn, helps complement and give strong focal support to the subject matter. The 4-ply mat used in this piece was hand-wrapped with a white linen featuring minimal texture.

The gilded mat fillet was placed under the inner edge of the top mat for additional dimension and a customized look to coordinate with the finish of the outer frame. I used an 8-ply matboard for this component. A 4" mat proportion on all sides was selected to give a balanced appearance to the final composition. The finished piece measures 28"x28".

In reviewing the overall frame design, we see a classic piece that encompasses the elements of good design. It utilizes a gilded frame focusing on elements of the subject matter, a neutral mat to enhance and create strong focal support, and museum glazing to protect the piece for future generations.

Corner Detail—Here you see the soft sheen of the gilded elements, as well as the subtle texture of the linen mat.

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Over the years I have studied many forms of frame designs. This month, I'd like to share this quotation that encompasses the idea of what a frame should do for the art it surrounds: *The form and character of the frame are governed by the laws of aesthetics and of human sensation. The intention must be to engender a sense of harmony and to concentrate the beholder's attention on the painting. A frame constructed in accordance with a proper understanding of art and science will enliven the painting's colors, detach*

*them from their surroundings, and unite them into a harmonious and effective whole. — Guggenheim (1897) ■*

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Tim Franer, CPF, CMG, has spent more than 30 years in the art and custom framing industry. Known for his creative design and skilled craftsmanship, Tim is a former gallery owner and is currently a chairholder with the Color Marketing Group. He is currently development, design, and educational consultant for Nielsen Bainbridge.

