

# Frame Design

by Tim Franer, CPF, CMG

## Form & Function

### Stacked Moulding



How often have you created a frame design where your selection of 4" or 5" wide mouldings was limited? And what large mouldings you had did not really work with the piece you were framing? One option in addressing this design issue is to create a series of stacked mouldings to build a frame that enhances and complements the

subject. The advantages in using stacked mouldings are unlimited when designing and selecting mouldings.

#### Design Approach

When designing with stacked moulding it is recommended to select a style, design, and finish that is appropriate (as with all the designs you create). In the example seen here, an original artwork by John J. Audubon has a traditional style format. The artwork is a hand-colored etching featuring nature colors with the leaves and earthtone colors in the gray mockingbirds. A complementary slate textured, green mat with an 8" border was used with a silver leaf fillet to support the leaves and bird colors. Next, a hand drawn

silver ink line was drawn  $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the fillet to give a customized finish.

Four moulding profiles were used here to create the resulting 5" wide frame. The moulding collection used for this piece was selected for its compatibility with the artwork in design, style, and finish. In the design of each

moulding profile used here, you see various ornamentation of leaves, acorns, and linear design that tie into the traditional theme and subject. The mahogany furniture finish frame accents the mahogany color in the leaves and gives closure to the well-balanced designed composition.

As stated before, four different size profiles were used to create one 5" wide moulding. The outside dimension of this finished piece is 42"x50". It is recommended that, when measuring and preparing to cut your mouldings for a stacked design, you start with the profile that will be closest to the art image (in other words, the inside frame). Once the inside frame is cut and assembled, you can determine the measurements for the next profile, moving outward until the last frame is completed. Upon completion of all frames, join together from the backside to create one frame.

### Thoughts on Stacking

When stacking profiles to create one impressive frame, there are a number of advantages. From the creative side, it gives you the opportunity to show your design abilities using a large assortment of readily available mouldings. Also, the stacking technique allows you to create a variety of depth, resulting in a strong direction that draws your eye into the subject matter.

From the technical standpoint, combining multiple profiles to create a wider moulding enables you to cut narrower mouldings, with the finished product being a wide frame with impact. (If your gallery does not cut frames, you can order chop moulding from your supplier. If you give them the dimensions for the inside frame, they can compute the dimensions for the remaining profiles with you.)

Stacked moulding designs can be an alternative when you want to use a wide frame, and don't have "just the right" profile in that category. This technique shows your customer what can be done to create a custom product and gives you a competitive edge with larger frame design alternatives. ■



*The depth created by stacking multiple moulding profiles can be just as impressive from the side, as it is from the front view. In this detail shot, notice how the ornamentation on each separate profile complement each other and the artwork. (Moulding: Larson-Juhl Queen Victoria collection)*

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Tim Franer, CPE, 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.

