

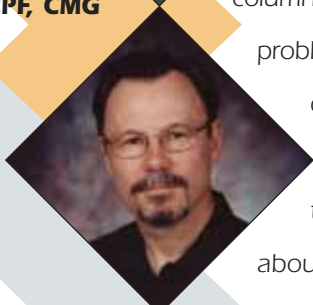
The Mat Doctors



Brian Barnett, CPF



Tim Franer, CPF, CMG



John E. Ranes II, CPF, GCF

Three leading mat designers in the picture framing industry are here each month to answer some frequently (and not so frequently) asked questions about mat cutting or design techniques. With an average of 26 years of framing experience, they bring a wealth of knowledge to this column. If you've got a nagging problem with an aspect of cutting mats, or simply want to find out what the experts have to say about a certain technique, send in your question to pmeditor@hobbypub.com and The Mat Doctors will prescribe a remedy.

Q. I really like offering mat designs to my customers that are not "run-of-the-mill." I have seen a number of pieces matted with what is referred to as a slant, notched corner mat. How can I achieve this cut without using measuring stops [also referred to as production stops], or a special angle attachment?

Brian replies:

A. Thank you for your question. The slant, notched corner mat is the result of cutting two types of mats. Once this aspect becomes clear, it makes the process much easier to execute. The following step-by-step procedures and sketches will clarify what I mean. For the example described, I suggest you start with an 11"x14" mat blank. Let's begin...

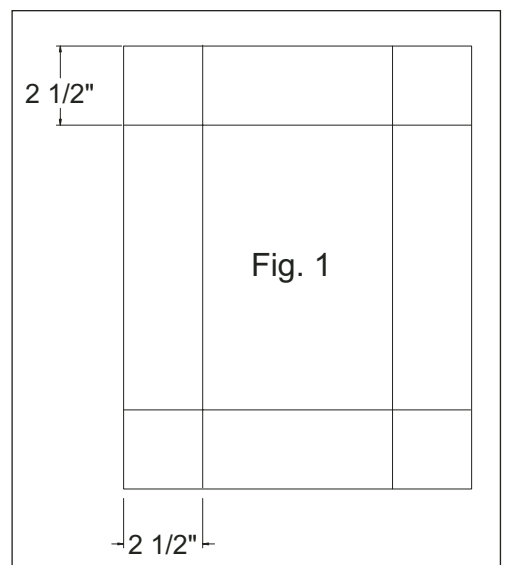


Figure 1: Set your mat guide to 2 1/2" and then place the mat face-down under the guide. With the matboard in place, draw a pencil line onto the board, using the mat guide as the edge. Do this for all four sides of the mat, turning it and placing it under the mat guide each time. You will then have four lines as shown in the drawing here.

Figure 2: Next, set your mat guide to 4" and then draw, on all four sides (as in the previous step), short lines which intersect with the 2½" lines.

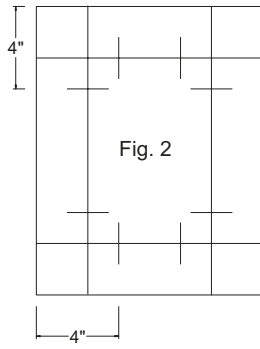


Figure 3: Next, place the matboard under your mat guide bar, diagonally across two of the corner intersecting lines. Draw a line between these two intersecting lines. Repeat for the other three corners of the board.

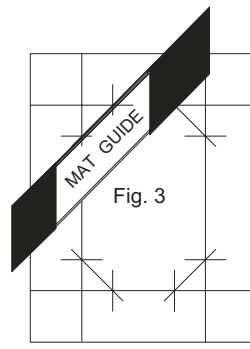


Figure 4: Remove the board from under the mat guide. Draw a circle at each intersecting point as shown.

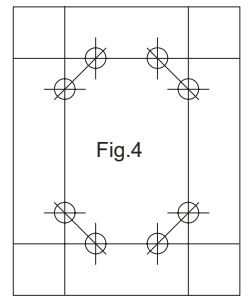


Figure 5: Next you will cut the window opening in the mat. Place the board back under the mat guide, face-down. For each straight side as well as diagonal, cut from circle to circle all the way around. (Your stop points will be the intersections housed in the circles you've drawn.) The result will be an octagonal mat as seen here. Keep the dropout from the mat window. You will need this in the next step.

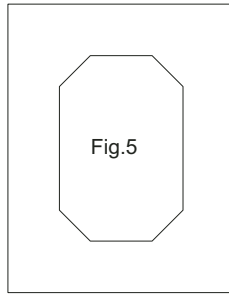


Figure 6: Take the dropout that you saved and place it back into the mat window. Tape it back in for temporary positioning. To convert this octagonal mat into a slant, notched corner mat (the objective here), move your mat guide to 2¾". With the mat placed back under the mat guide, face-down, draw a line along each of the four sides, as done previously. Next, draw a circle at each intersecting point of those four lines as shown.

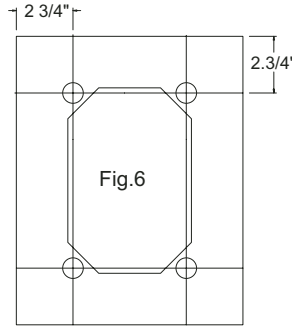
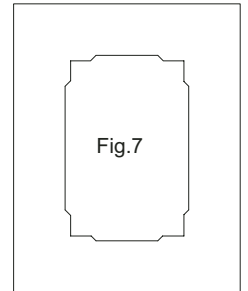


Figure 7: Place the board back under the mat guide set to 2¾". Now cut from circle to circle all round, as was done in Figure 4. The result will be a slant, notched corner mat as seen here—all without using measuring (production) stops or an angle attachment.



Brian Barnett, CPF, an industrial designer by profession, has spent 25 years in custom framing sales, product and graphic design, merchandising, operations, production control, and financial management. He appears in training videos, has authored numerous training manuals and magazine articles, and teaches at educational venues. He currently is Larson-Juhl's consultant to the retail framing industry, consults with The Fletcher-Terry Co., and contracts for special projects with large industry retailers.

Tim Franer, CPF, CMG, has spent over 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.

John E. Ranes II, CPF, GCF, is an instructor of workshops and seminars throughout North America, Europe, South America, Australia, and New Zealand. He and his wife, Sarah, own a frame shop and gallery in Appleton, WI, which has won more than 60 framing awards. John also consults for The Fletcher-Terry Company.