

The V-Groove

The v-groove is one of the most frequently used forms of mat decoration. It is best described as two bevels that run side by side and come together within the core of the mat. If you were to look at a cross-section of that mat, you'd see how the two bevels meet to form a "V."

While a simple and elegant presentation can be made with a single rectangular v-groove that outlines the opening of the window mat, v-groove can be used for much more than that. They can outline mats of any shape (oval, octagonal, or anything else) or be used in combination so that two or three v-grooves enhance a single mat opening.

V-grooves can also be used to add a hint of color. A white v-groove certainly adds a dramatic element to a dark colored matboard, but a black core mat with a v-groove can also be distinctive. Consider painting your v-groove as you might a bevel, or using one of the newer "bright core" matboards now available. For a more understated look, consider a white v-groove on a white mat, a black mat with a black core v-groove, and similar tone-on-tone combinations.

And while v-grooves can lend a subtle, contemporary flair to modern pieces of art, they can be used to highlight items in a shadowbox or collage frame design as well.

Try using them as a corner decoration, to create pinstripes or a lattice design on a mat, or anything else you can think of. With practice, you'll find v-grooves are easy to execute and—due to their design flexibility—are a staple of a good mat design repertoire.

Instructions

Step One: Draw a diagonal orientation line in pencil on the reverse side of the mat. This will be used to indicate which way the fallout fits back into the opening after it is cut out. Once the fallout is taped back in, a second set of lines will indicate the location of the mat window.

Step Two: On most mat cutters, the disc between the mat cutter bar and the mat guide bar is the v-groove setting. Determine the location of the v-groove and set the guides on the mat to that setting. If you will be using production stops, set them at this time as well.

Step Three: The mat guide should slide over the v-groove setting on your mat cutter, leaving just enough space to cut the groove. Cut a window opening in the mat and place the fallout, face up, under the mat cutter bar. Set the v-groove position on your cutter and trim the bevel edge on all four sides of the fallout.

Step Four: Tape the fallout back into place, being certain to line up the fallout and the mat using the orientation lines you made earlier. You should now have a mat with a v-groove, but no window.

Step Five: Determine the location of the mat opening and set the guide to that width. Cut out the window. Your mat is now complete.

These instructions, written by Greg Perkins, CPF, Merchandising Manager at Larson-Juhl, originally appeared in our March 1996 issue.



Frame design show here by Val McClure, Beyond the Image.
The mat is Bainbridge fabric mat #4972, Garnet Rose.