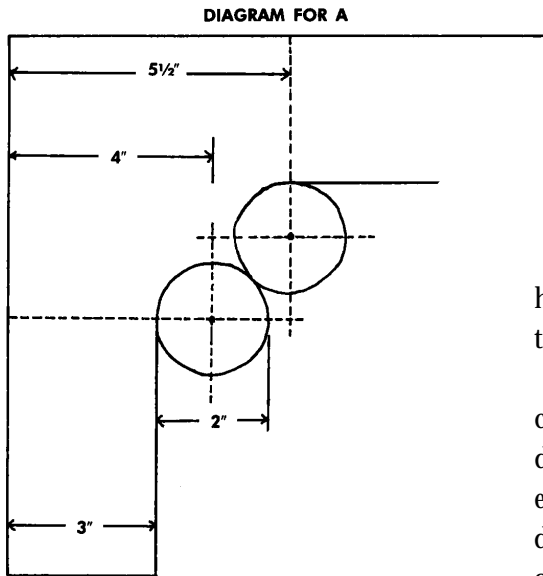




Frame design courtesy of Nielsen & Bainbridge. Framed by Val McClure, CPF. Frame: Nielsen profile #51, color #21. Mats: top—#8646—Khaki Alparag Artcare, bottom—#8644—Ebony Alparag Artcare.

The Kobe Corner Mat

This versatile cut can be used to create a dramatic look.



This is a 3" mat border with 2" circles. As you can see in the diagram, the circles don't overlap at all; they just sit side by side. Because of this, the point of the Kobe cut is very dramatic. The larger the circles are, the more dramatic the corner.

To cut this particular mat you'd start with a mat trimmed to the correct outside dimension, then cut your circles. On most oval/circle mat cutters it is necessary to set vertical and horizontal rulers to find the centerpoint of the circle you want to cut. If you were doing a simple, rounded corner mat, these two rulers would be at the same setting. With a Kobe cut however, they are not the same since the circles aren't in line with the corner. In this case, set your vertical ruler at 4" and the horizontal at 5 1/2". Cut one circle in each corner, then reverse the ruler settings and cut the second circle per corner. Complete the cutting on your straightline mat cutter with a 3" border. It is more important to line up the circles correctly than it is to have an exact 3" border.

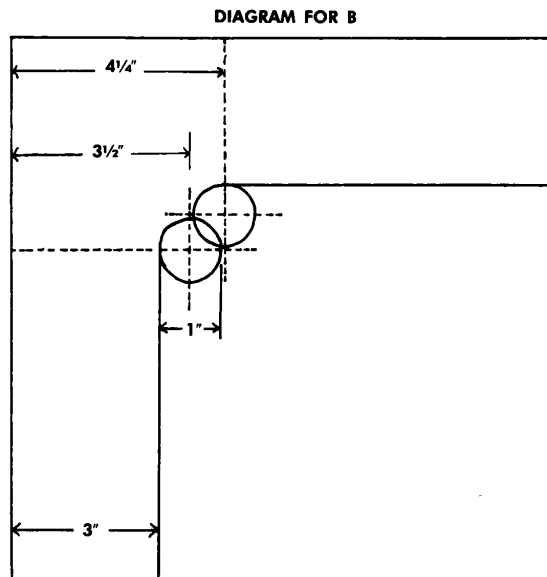
One of the most innovative of all specialty mats for you to create is the Kobe (*ko-bee*). Named after a Japanese town known for frame making, the Kobe corner indeed has a distinct Asian flair to it. However, Kobe mats are very versatile and appealing on all types of artwork.

One of the most challenging things about the Kobe is that you have to use both an oval cutter and a straight edge cutter. To master this, you must have a little patience and a lot of attention to detail.

Once you get the hang of it, you'll be able to create beautiful Kobe corner mats. It may be a good idea to display samples in your shop to draw your customers' attention. Once they see how the unique cut enhances the artwork, they will want you to use it in their frame design, too. Kobe corners are yet another way to create upscale framing options for your customers.

1. Begin by sizing your board to the required dimensions.
2. Use a 2" circle (for illustration purposes). Set the bottom scale on the oval cutter at 2" and make sure that the top scale is set at 0".
3. Set either one of the mat guides on your cutter to the width of the border you would like to use, plus one half of your circle. (We will use 3" for the border and one half of the 2" circle: $3" + 1" = 4"$.)
4. Set the other guide on the width of the border plus the diameter of the whole circle ($3" + 2" = 5"$).
5. With the two guides set as above, make a circle in each corner of your mat. Don't worry if the circles are not in the same place in all four corners or if they don't seem to line up.
6. Reverse the two mat guides. The one that was previously set on 4" should be moved to 5" and the one that was set on 5" should now be on 4".
7. Now that the guides are reset, make another circle in each corner of your mat. These circles will intersect and create the points for your Kobe corner.
8. At this point, go to the straight line cutter and connect the circles you created in steps 3 through 7. Remember, this will be done from the back of your mat.

Kobe Corner Mat



This is a 3" mat border with 1" circles. Notice how the circles overlap onto each other. Due to the overlap, the point of the Kobe cut is minimized, keeping the look quite subtle. The greater the amount of the overlap, the more subtle it will be.

Cut this mat following the same basic steps you did for the other. Set the vertical ruler at 3 1/2" and the horizontal at 4 1/4". As before, cut one set of circles before reversing the ruler settings. Finish by cutting a 3" border on your straightline cutter.

When you connect the circles with your straight line cutter you will have a certain amount of hand work to do. This is because the bevels on the two cutters will not match perfectly.

A sharp razor blade and some #220 grit sandpaper are the best tools to use for blending them together. (Emery boards, while very useful for cleaning up straight cuts, do not have sufficient flexibility to blend in these corners.)

Due to the extra time involved cleaning up these corners, I would suggest a flat fee of \$20; this is in addition to the charge for the board and any other embellishments (i.e. V-groove).

This versatile cut works very well on many other subjects and does not have to be limited to Oriental art. Because of this and the many other techniques that can easily be accomplished, an oval/circle cutter will pay for itself in a very short time and will allow your frame shop to offer a complete range of matting services. ■

Instructions for this article originally appeared in our July 92 and May 91 issues.