

The Mat Doctors



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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.

(Editor's Note: The following tip was included here to address a question that Tim often receives while teaching classes.)

Q. In some of the industry workshops that I teach, framers often ask about the differences in matboard when it comes to how it's made, its properties, and what to consider when deciding between different types of matboard. The first type of matboard I will discuss is that described as a "Paper Mat."

Tim replies:

A. A paper mat is a tri-laminated board consisting of: A colored, sometimes, facing paper; a thicker ivory/cream colored core; and a white backing paper.

The face paper is usually a dyed paper that has an acidic pH using non-discriminating virgin and/or recycled fibers. Lightfastness (fade) and colorfastness (bleed) is limited. The core of a paper mat consists of recycled and/or virgin ground wood. This ground wood material consists of lignified fibers, which gives it its distinctive yellowish color over time. The backing paper serves both aesthetically and helps to maintain board flatness.

A paper mat is generally used where longevity is not of a concern. Often pre-framed art utilizes this type of matboard, although this is not always the case.

Q How can I create a Ribbon Mat design using my manual mat cutter?

Brian replies:

A. Shown here is an example of the process for cutting what is called a Ribbon Mat. This example will show a



Figure 1: Set mat guide to 4" and draw two intersecting lines on the back of both mats as shown here. Board A is the main mat; Board B is the mat from which the "ribbon" will be cut. Draw diagonal lines, from point to point where each 4" line meets the edge of the mat. Mark the triangles as A1 and B1.

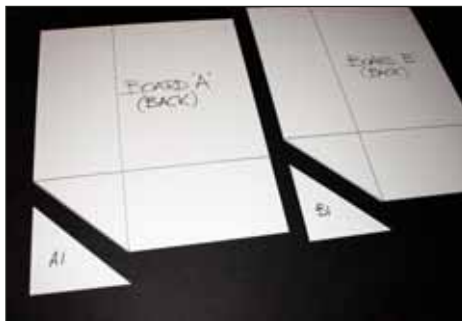


Figure 2: Now, using your mat cutter, make a bevel cut across each corner, being sure the triangular portion is to the left of the cutting bar. Place Triangle A1 aside for a moment. Tape triangle B1 to Board A, matching the bevels to fit. Use 3M #810 tape to attach.

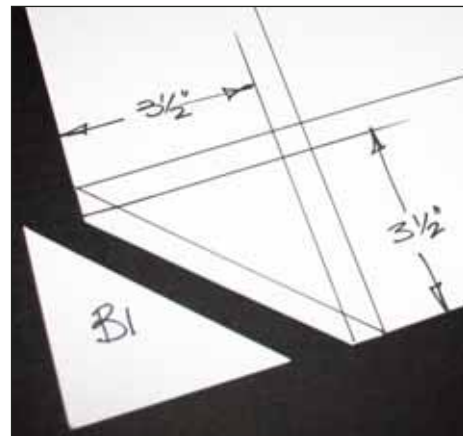


Figure 3: Next, take Board A and, using the mat guide set at 3 1/2", mark the back of the board again with two intersecting lines. Draw a diagonal line between where each 3 1/2" line meets the edge of the mat. Cut across the 3 1/2" diagonal line and discard the rest of Triangle B1.



Figure 4: Next, tape the Triangle A1 to the beveled corner of Board A, again matching the bevels. At this stage, a portion of the triangle will extend beyond the edge of the face mat.

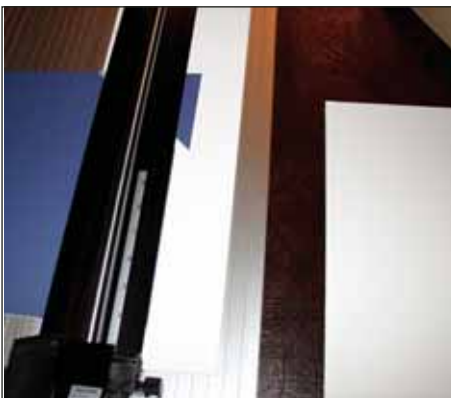


Figure 5: Using the straight cut side of your mat cutter, trim the excess material flush with the outside edge of the face mat. Cut with the face color up so as not to loosen the attachment.

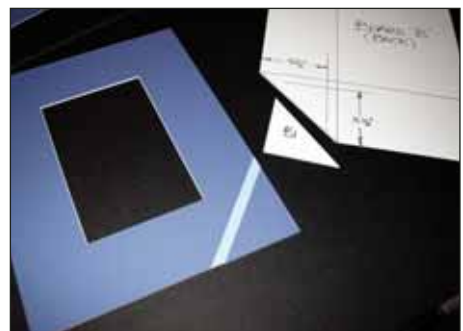


Figure 6: Finally, draw your border lines on the back of the mat around all four sides (or set your measuring stops) and cut the window opening to complete the Ribbon Mat.

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. For more than 30 years

Tim Franer, CPF, has framed artwork for heads of state, corporations, galleries, and fine homes across the globe. Known for his creative design and skilled craftsmanship, Tim consults with industry leaders to define color and design, and is a speaker and educator on art, design, and framing. Tim is an instructor of seminars and workshops throughout North America, Europe, South America, Australia, and New Zealand. Tim is currently development, design, and educational consultant to Nielsen Bainbridge, as well as consultant to The Fletcher-Terry Co. and Roma Moulding.

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.