

Mat Designs With A Click

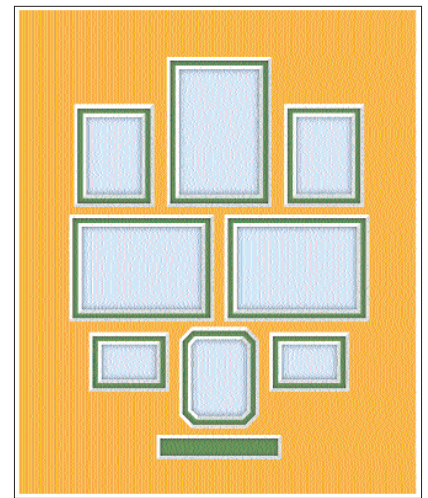
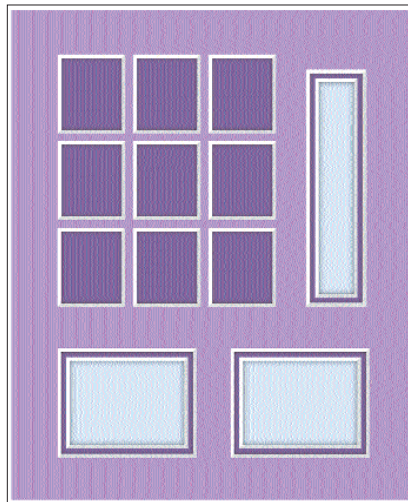
by Anne Vazquez

While mat designs created by hand will no doubt remain one of the distinctions of custom framing, the growing number of computerized mat cutters (CMCs) being used by custom framers is resulting in more and more intricate designs. Framers who use a CMC in their operation can offer designs that they previously did not, whether due to skill level or lack of time.

More than ever, offering designs that are a cut above what's found in other framing venues is important to custom framing businesses. Combined with your personal service and product selection, using a CMC to create mat designs that you may not have the time or skills to produce otherwise expands your repertoire. If you do so, be sure to display samples, whether on your wall or in a binder at the design counter, to educate customers about what is possible with a CMC.



This example demonstrates the "mat art," and intricacies, that can be created with a CMC. (Image courtesy of Wizard International)



Designs that may seem daunting to cut manually can be within reach with the use of a computerized mat cutter. (Images courtesy of The Fletcher-Terry Co.)

If you'd like to offer mat designs beyond the scope of your manual skills, but are not planning on bringing a CMC into your operation at this time, some suppliers can do the work for you. For instance, the FramersSolutions.com service takes your mat cutting order via software that you install on your computer. You send the measurements and other relevant information, and it is cut at their facility and shipped to you.

For designs that may not be highly intricate, but require a series of uniform openings, the Speed-Mat Smart from H.F. Esterly can be attached to that company's mat cutter for automated cutting. This includes squares and rectangles, as well as double mats.

Time is money. An investment in technology may be what you need to bring your services to a new level, both creatively and financially. ■



This Asian latticework double mat, created with the use of a CMC, features 142 openings. (Image courtesy of Eclipse)