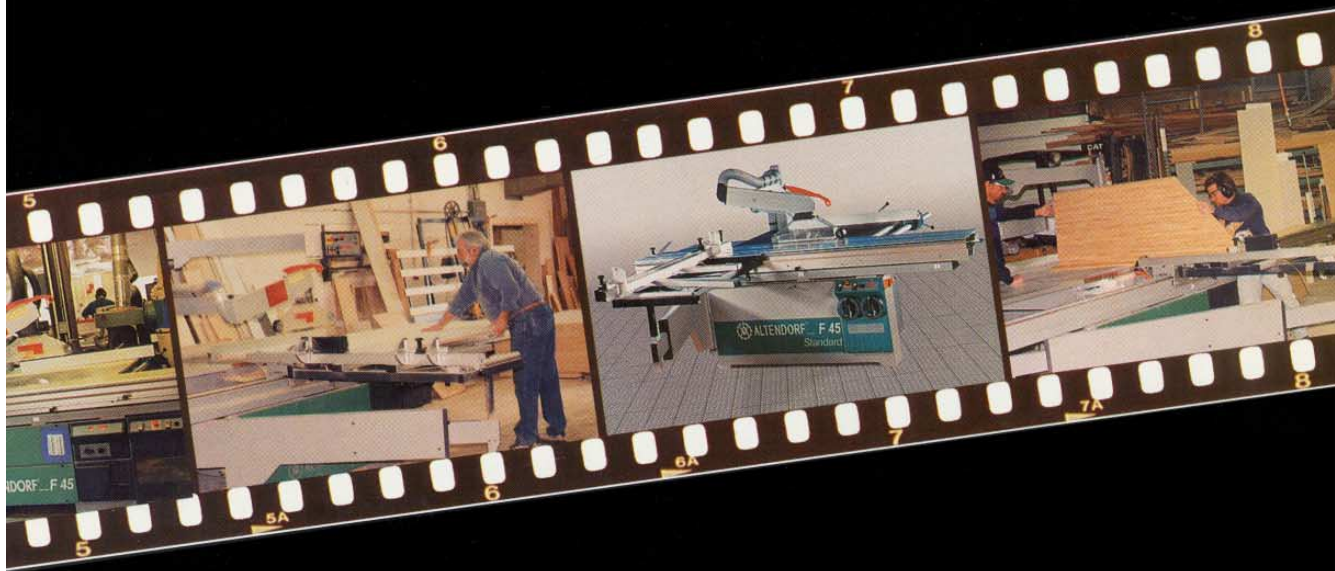


SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

# THE ALTENDORF STORIES



**FEATURING:**  
**SUCCESS STORIES**  
**FROM ALTENDORF CUSTOMERS**  
**SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT**  
**AVAILABLE FROM ALTENDORF AMERICA**

**CWB**  
Custom Woodworking Business

 **ALTENDORF** America

Division of Stiles Machinery, Inc.

# Cabinet shop flourishes in the BLUE GRASS STATE



WELL-ROOTED GROWTH HAS BEEN THE KEY TO SUCCESS FOR LEININGER CABINET & WOODWORKING INC. OF LEXINGTON, KY.

BY BEVERLY DUNNE

Leininger Cabinet & Woodworking Inc. is a small shop that "kind of evolved" into a \$2 million business, said company president John Leininger. His father Bob founded the company in

1952 with the intent of making furniture, having studied with Tage Frid at the RIT School of American Craftsmen. Finding it difficult to make a living as a furniture maker, he switched the focus to residential cabinetry. With a strong base of loyal customers, the shop was able to enjoy steady

growth for a number of years. "We have always been interested in sustaining vigorous, well-rooted growth," Leininger said.

By the late '70s, the residential market was booming and Leininger invested in high-production equipment to keep up with market demands. The increase in manufacturing capabilities enabled the shop to take advantage of the burgeoning commercial segment as well, as the Lexington area is home to many corporate headquarters and healthcare centers. Today, 80 percent of the company's business comes from commercial contracts; kitchen cabinets and furniture items make up the remainder.

With a six-week lead time on \$50,000 to \$100,000 commercial projects, quick turnaround is key. Pre-laminated boards move quickly through the 3,000-square-foot panel processing center, Leininger said. An Altendorf F-45 panel saw supplies a steady flow of cabinet parts to a Weeke BP12 Optimat point-to-point machining center from Stiles Machinery. A Brandt edgebander from Altendorf America accommodates the variety of small batches demanded by a custom cabinet shop. Then, boards move to a dowel insertion machine and to a case clamp.

Kitchen jobs, while they make up a small portion of the shop's business, are still important, Leininger said. These jobs also give cabinetmakers a chance to do something a little more creative, he added, as residential work often calls for raised panel doors, face-frame cabinets and specialty finishes.

Furthermore, they help instill a sense of pride as the cabinetmaker gets to know for whom the product is being built. At Leininger, each cabinetmaker is responsible for all phases of



For the corporate headquarters of Century Offshore Management, Leininger provided the mahogany millwork, mouldings, casework and custom conference table.

## AT A GLANCE

Company: Leininger Cabinet & Woodworking Inc.  
Products Manufactured: Residential and commercial cabinets, furniture  
No. of Employees: 19  
Date of Establishment: 1952  
Annual Sales: \$2 million



Pre-laminated boards are cut to size on an Altendorf F-45 panel saw.



Butternut paneling extends from floor to ceiling in this den/music room in Lexington. Leininger also fabricated the kitchen and all the casework on this residential project.

production on a job, which can mean a great deal of interaction with the customer. "What we may sacrifice in production efficiency, we make up in quality because the job goes out right the first time," Leininger said. And, because the residential jobs are smaller, they can be worked in between large commercial projects. "It's difficult to keep one big job flowing after another. So we slip in the residential work during slower times.

"We've learned not to thumb our noses at small jobs," he continued. One customer was so pleased with a kitchen job that he commissioned Leininger to renovate the entire house. The \$110,000 project took 12 weeks to complete.

Commercial projects are equally complex. The headquarters for Century Offshore Management featured mahogany millwork, moulding and casework that "went on forever," Leininger said. Factoring in the custom doors, windows, paneling and a custom conference table, this \$160,000 project required 16 weeks to complete.

For most jobs, millwork is handled in house. If a job were to require more than 20 doors, Leininger would typically find a door manufacturer that could work on a custom basis. The 18,000-square-foot shop also houses the "basic



The pulpit for the Centenary United Methodist Church in Lexington measures 11 feet in diameter. It was built in three parts. Leininger also fabricated the altar and lecterns.

woodworking equipment" such as shapers, thicknessers and widebelt sanders, he said.

Leininger is currently running at full capacity and looking to expand its assembly operations by 16,000 square feet. "We're right at the point that if we had more space we could tackle bigger projects," Leininger said.

Along with automation, Leininger credits the company's success to the caliber of its 19 employees. Established as a family business,

Leininger's brother Jim handles the financial aspects of the shop. Uncles Don and Roger are two of the most productive cabinetmakers of a very talented staff, Leininger added. "We try to pay attention to our employees' needs and offer insurance, education opportunities and other benefits," he said. "We find that if you can find good employees, treat them well, purchase machinery carefully and produce good work, it is easy enough to keep people busy."