

More Accented Accents

Making a simple triangle—or two—look like a million dollars.

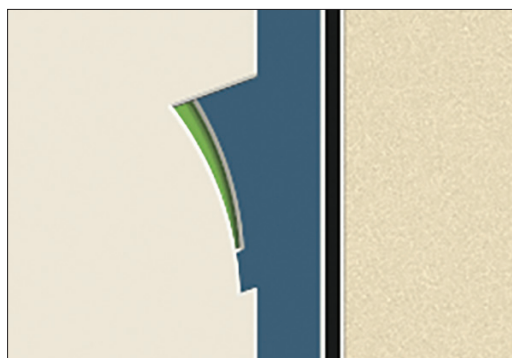
One effective formula for including decoration is to add small shapes at the sides, but sometimes, little shapes can be awfully plain. More detail in the cutting or maybe more color would perk them up. The concern though is that inventing more cutting detail usually invites cutting problems. The fix then is to enlarge the decoration, and suddenly the elements are no longer small shapes at the sides.

There was once an article called “Accented Accents.” One relatively simple decorative shape was cut on the top layer. A smaller shape was cut on the bottom layer, and part of it was exposed through the shape cut in the top layer, adding cutting detail and a spot of a third color. The elements were useable and attractive, but the shapes in this earlier article were drawing program projects full of curves and critically measured placements, a time-consuming impractical effort.

There is another way. The accented accents here use geometric shapes from the template library, which offers variety without drawing program work and practically guaranteed to cut nicely. The shapes can be aligned using the standard tools in the design program. The only necessary drawing program operation is setting the accent shapes to cut on the layer underneath.



Brian Wolf began framing pictures while attending Iowa State University. In 1973, he won the Janice Petersen Andersen award for outstanding design student. He began demonstrating his hand-carving technique for mats at conventions and teaching for the PPFA. Brian started his own framing business in Cedar Rapids, IA, in 1983. Since 1989, he has focused on leading workshops around the world on his matting techniques. He has authored books, appeared in videos, and contributed to trade magazines. He joined Wizard International, where he contributed his artistic touch to product development. He continues his work with Wizard through education, events, and design content.



Making Accented Accents

To contrast with the complicated examples in the earlier article, the beginning shapes here are triangles, the simplest shape possi-

Top: Merging decorative shapes at the sides of the opening is a more unified presentation, but there is also simplification and a loss of cutting detail. Adding accent shapes (the narrow green curved shapes here) cut in the bottom layer restores the cutting intricacy, and there is an additional color.

Bottom: The curve parameter for the shape on the top layer is set to a negative value to make it concave. The arcs in both shapes are about 3" in diameter, and the element is 1" high.



Top: Accented accents begin as small cutout shapes in the top layer of a mat. Then part of a smaller cutout shape cut in the bottom layer shows through it to add the illusion of more detailed cutting. The triangle on the top layer is 0.55" x 0.45" wide.

Bottom: The rounded shape cut in the bottom layer has a curve 0.85" in diameter allowing a strip about 0.17" wide to show through the triangle.

ble. Begin testing with a small rectangular opening and add a triangle shaped opening about half an inch wide. Position it about 0.2" away from the rectangular opening. A test cut will verify that this cuts nicely and looks good. Adjust the spacing to correct any cutting problems, and keep notes. Keep track of the preferred minimum distance between the triangle and the rectangular opening, and the triangle sizes and shapes that are pleasing. The critical technical details are now determined.

Now add the accent shape. Look at the illustration of the three triangles in the drawing program. The element at the bottom is the easiest to make. The faint accent triangle is identical to the blue triangle on the top layer. Copy

and paste to duplicate as desired. Use the alignment tools to center the new triangle and move it horizontally to form the inner accent. To make its position easier to evaluate in the design program, set the accent triangle as a V-Groove. It will be easy to see through it to judge the size of the inner accent while it is being moved from spot to spot.

For reference, the final step to finish an accented accent project is to send it to the drawing program and set the accent shape to cut as a normal bevel on the bottom layer. But before that, there are a few more points still to discuss.

A Snapshot

The first example using the accented accent begins where the initial testing has left off. The rectangular opening for the picture is the correct size and it is two layers. Triangle for the top layer is in position at one side, but the accent shape has been changed. Look again at the illustration with the three triangles.

To make either of the other accents in the illustration, or to invent new ones, explore the options in the template library and change the shape and size of the accent shape. Here it is as an arc top template. In the illustration with the three triangles, the element in this example is the one on top.

More Choices

The rounded accent shape is at one corner of the triangle. This seemingly random placement raises questions about symmetry. If an accented accent is to be a medallion centered at the bottom—another very nice idea, by the way—the accent shape will only look correct if it is centered within the triangle. However, if accented accents are intended to be used at the sides of an opening, the accent shapes can be decidedly off center. Symmetry comes when the two elements are mirrored at the sides.

The Drawing Program Steps

Here is the status of the project. The rectangular opening for the picture, its borders and outside size are all set. One triangle has been positioned on one side of the opening to be cut on the top layer. One accent shape has been added and positioned behind the triangle, but it has been changed to be a groove. The project could be nearly finished here using the tools in the design program. The shapes could be duplicated and moved to the other side of the opening where they could be rotated and the alignment tools could

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line them up and space them evenly. But there would still be a step in the drawing program to set the accent shapes to cut on the bottom layer.

Consider this. Though many

framers regard the drawing program with trepidation, all the remaining steps could be finished with just a handful of clicks in the drawing program and no actual drawing. First set

Accented Accents Ideas and Construction

The top illustration shows three ideas for accented accent elements while they are in the drawing program. The blue items are the shapes that will be cut on the top layer of the mat. The faint red items are the accent shapes that have been set to cut on the bottom layer.

All the triangles on the top layer are 0.55" x 0.45" wide.

All are 0.2" from the opening.

Top Design

The curved accent shape is an arc top template.

It is 0.75" x 0.375" wide.

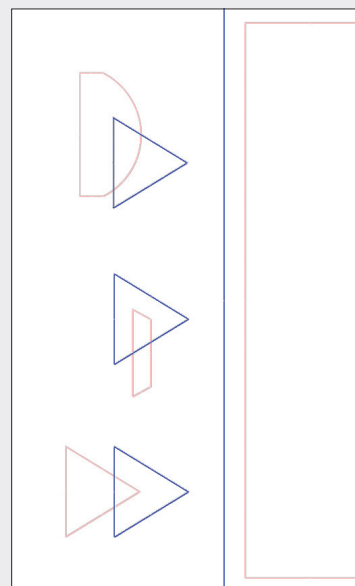
It has been rotated 90°.

The arc is 0.85" in diameter.

Its placement is an artistic decision. Move it to be larger, smaller, higher, or lower.

Here, its bottom visible point is 0.1" above the bottom point of the triangle.

Its top visible point is 0.17" away from the left edge of the triangle.



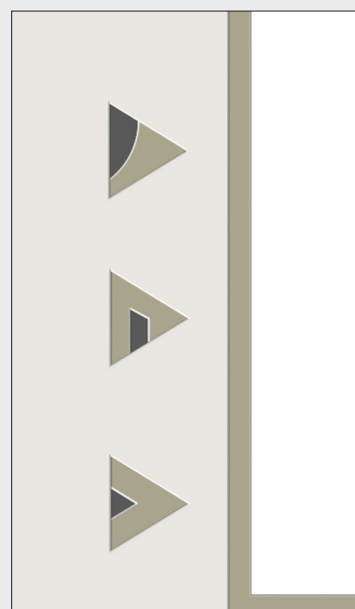
Middle Design

The trapezoid accent shape is 0.4" x 0.11" wide.

It is 0.11" away from the left edge of the triangle.

Its top side is 0.16" down from the top of the triangle.

Vary its width and vertical placement.



Bottom Design

The triangle accent shape is 0.55" high x 0.45" wide.

There is 0.17" of the accent triangle showing.

Vary its exposure and its vertical placement.

The bottom illustration shows all three finished accented accent ideas.

the accent shape to cut as a normal opening on the bottom layer. Then mirror both the triangle and the accent shape onto the other side of the rectangular opening. With these few clicks in the drawing program, the accent shapes are set to cut correctly, the accented accents are symmetrical on the sides of the opening, and the project is ready to cut.

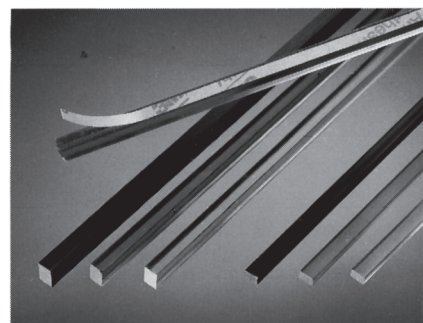
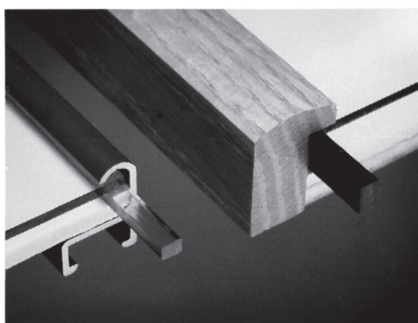
These are the steps using the Wizard program. Other CMC programs may have these functions in different places, but finishing the design will require these same steps, no matter the program.

Another Direction

Experiment with other shapes. The accented accent in the second example uses rotated arc top templates for both shapes. The quick description in the caption under the illustration is likely not sufficient data to reproduce this example precisely, but it is enough to launch further exploration. The more important aspect of this example is that the top layer shapes of the accented accents are merged with the opening. The elements become part of the opening, and there is no need for test cuts to determine a workable spacing distance between the items.

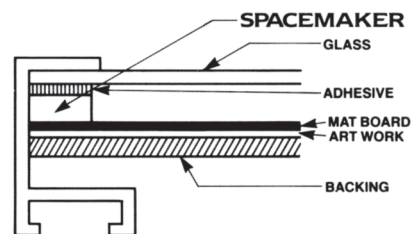
Amid all the explanation about merging, spacing, and drawing program work, remember that accented accents exist to add cutout detail behind a simple cutout shape. The added detail creates the illusion of more intricate cutting but without adding any of the cutting problems that actual intricate cutting normally brings. Plus, the opportunity to add a spot of a new color is a welcome surprise in any presentation. **PfM**

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