

Kitchens by Computer

by Patrick J. Galvin

Builders who face the problem of designing kitchens and bathrooms in custom or spec homes can benefit from recent high-tech developments, as can those who make their own cabinets.

CAD/CAM has come. There are now at least three dozen companies that offer software for Computer-Assisted Design (CAD) and Computer-Assisted Manufacturing (CAM) in kitchen and bath.

For spec homes, they speed up the job of drawing floor plans and elevations, and they fill in the proper cabinets and appliances. Just tell them the room dimensions and door-and-window placements. For custom homes, they can also be used to show alternatives in cabinet selection and for cost/price comparisons.

Builders who build their own cabinets can use a computer to spit out a complete cutting list that will minimize waste. Remodelers can use computer programs to design, price, cost, and draw the plans. Some will even create perspective drawings.

Best of all, these systems cut down on—or cut out—the most costly of all problems: human error.

Builders who own IBM-compatible computers will find software readily available, since most programs are designed for IBM products. But some software is designed for exclusive use on Apple or other brands of computers. In some cases, the job can be done over the phone or by mail on the supplier's computer and the builder pays only a membership fee.

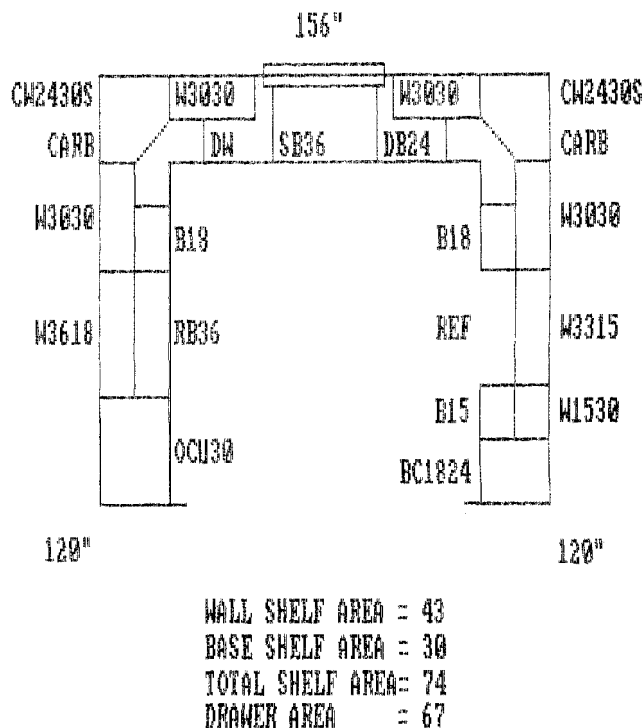
These software programs are available for as little as \$400 to as much as \$5,000. Integrated software-hardware packages run up to \$10,000. In at least one case, the supplier offers "modules" so you can select only the functions you need and can add on later.

The following are representative systems.

Autograph Computerized Designing Systems has one of the most comprehensive and versatile systems. It will design kitchens and bathrooms automatically or computer-aided on a Mac Plus with 20-megabyte hard disk and dot-matrix printer. It gives 3-D and custom views from any angle, can zoom in and out, can give several views on a page, and do perspectives, angles, curves, and jogs. It also calculates markups and discounts. The software system is about \$3,500, or \$7,500 including the required hardware. 213/737-0300 (Los Angeles).

Cabinets Built by Computer Systems (CBCS) is for building cabinets. It uses IBM-compatible hardware with a dot-matrix printer, does individual and master cutting lists, door-and-drawer cutting lists, materials lists and job costs, and turns out cutting labels for framed or

TYPE U SHAPE KITCHEN DRAWING #1



Comkit president Pete Simpson used his company's program to generate this U-shaped kitchen design. The program follows up with a materials list, and a contract and shipping order, if desired.

frameless cabinets to 1/16-inch tolerances. The software uses cassettes to interface with woodworking-equipment controls. The software is about \$2,500 (\$3,495 with hardware). You can get a sample disk for \$95. 800/824-7888, ext. M1240 (New Jersey).

Comkit Corp. offers design and pricing software in modules for IBM, Compaq, or AT&T. The QuickBild module does kitchen or bath layout and pricing, \$2,450; the Contract module does multiple alternate layouts, \$1,500; Purchase Orders does kitchen or vanity cabinets and countertops, \$1,500; the Comparative Price module is \$350, and Job Bid is \$150. You can have all five modules for \$4,995 (\$9,500 with hardware). This system can tie in with cabinet manufacturers by modem, and you can even set parameters for truck or trailer loads or single orders. (See accompanying sample printouts.) 301/279-7371 (Maryland).

Design-A-Kitchen is for smaller users. It uses a Commodore computer with the Epson FX-85 printer,

curves or angles. It does pricing, including sinks, appliances, fixtures and accessories and, if you like, it works in metric. The software is \$1,995, the package is \$4,000. 603/882-2439 (New Hampshire).

20-20 is the system endorsed for kitchen dealers by the National Kitchen & Bath Assn. It uses IBM or compatible, and covers such cabinet lines as Home-Crest, Wood-Hu, Capri, American Woodmark, Merilat, KrafMaid, Wood-Mode, Diamond, and Crystal. It does just about everything in designing and pricing. The software is \$2,750, the full package is about \$7,500, and a sample disk is \$100. Updates are free for a year, and \$400 per year thereafter. 514/332-4110 (Quebec).

Patrick J. Galvin is the author of Kitchen Planning Guide for Builders, Designers and Architects, and the former editor and publisher of Kitchen & Bath Business.

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and is now being reworked for use with Apple and IBM. It will design and price kitchens and baths, and produces elevations to 1/16 inch. It produces computer-aided design, but not automatic, and can be updated by the user. Software is \$465 (\$1,950 for a full package). 612/385-4420 (Minnesota).

Graphic 100 is one of the pioneers in the field. It works on IBM (or compatible) or Apple IIe and a dot-matrix printer. It covers all cabinet lines, draws perspectives, floor plans, and elevations—including islands and peninsulas—but not