

■ Kitchen & Bath

Resources for Cabinetmakers

Grow Your Own

While there's more than one way to build a cabinet, I've seen quite a few whose construction left more than a little to be desired. Quarter-scale *DonMar-Wiesing-method cabinet models* are effective teaching tools that make clear the components and assembly sequence in this solid, economical, and professional system. I realize that model-building may seem a little too basic for a seasoned pro like you, but this efficient method of cabinet-making may actually present a new idea or two.

Each base or wall-hung cabinet kit includes a one-piece plastic face frame, but the other components are fashioned from 1/8-inch or 1/4-inch (thickness not to scale) birch veneer plywood. Once you complete the model, you can scale up and label individual pieces to full size for use as a construction reference. A set of both models costs about \$50 — a little steep, but chalk it up to tuition.

Even assembling models goes better with three hands, a fact recognized by DonMar's *Universal Assembly Jig*, made of hefty (8-pound) anodized aluminum. The jig makes it easy to assemble, square, and glue full-size face frames and side

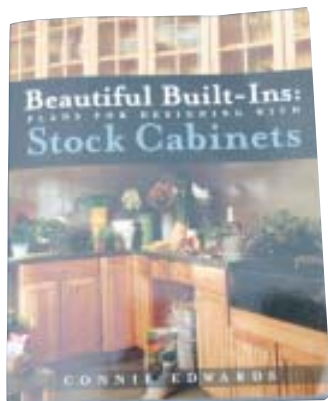


panels absolutely square and flush. While the jig is designed to accommodate the projecting face frame edge on set-back cabinet sides, it can be used for frameless cabinet assembly with equal precision. Jigs can be purchased singly for \$90 but are much handier used in pairs at a cost-saving \$146. The models and jigs are distributed exclusively through the GarrettWade Tool Catalog, New York, N.Y.; 800/221-2942, www.garrettwade.com.

E Unum, Pluribus

I've had it in mind for some time to ask builders which books (aside from *JLC*) they consider indispensable to their work. It's a good idea and I'll get to it, but I'd also like to suggest this book: *Beautiful Built-Ins: Plans for Designing with Stock Cabinets* by Connie Edwards (McGraw-Hill, www.books.mcgraw-hill.com; \$40). Whether you build your own cabinets or buy them off the shelf, the ideas in this book will snap you out of that limited and limiting side-by-side mentality. Floating vanities, bedroom furniture, and entertainment centers are but a few among the more than 200 clever cabinet combinations in

this versatile collection. The designs are presented in black-and-white line drawings and include a list of cabinets, accessories, and materials required for each concept. The thing is, once you think about cabinets in this way, you realize that Edwards is only scratching the surface. Once you get yourself rolling, maybe you'll be so kind as to share your innovations with the rest of us, right here.



Cam Countertop Connector

Show me a cool piece of hardware and I'll look for a dozen ways to use it, like the tail wagging the dog. Case in point: The toolless *FlipBolt* (FastCap, Bellingham, Wash.; 888/443-3748, www.fastcap.com), made to draw two sections of countertop tightly together with no knuckle-banging required. The bolt installs in routed cavities just like a standard countertop bolt. But after fitting it finger tight, you simply flip a cam lever, and the two sections are drawn tightly together. It's an ingenious device that could readily serve other applications

requiring a snug but reversible connection. The connectors cost about \$1 each purchased in lots of ten.



RADIANT HEATING



Blanket Application. This electric-blanket-like mat is designed for direct installation between ceramic tile and the subfloor, using the same mastic used to bond the flooring. Because of its closely spaced conductors, nail or staple penetrations are strongly discouraged. Mats are available in many standard sizes and may also be ordered in customized configurations, at extra cost and only minimal delay. The installed cost for a typical 30-square-foot bathroom is said to be approximately \$500.

Nuheat, 800/778-9276, www.nuheat.com.



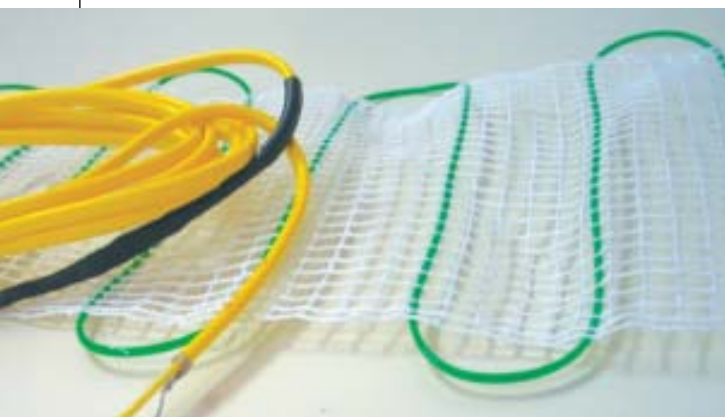
Laminate Companion. Laminate flooring, with its thin profile and “floating” installation, is a popular option in kitchens and bathrooms. The *Enviro II Heating* mat uses ultra-thin ($1/12$ -inch) heating wire embedded in foil, and may be installed directly under the flooring, over the standard foam underlayment pad. The foam provides a modicum of insulation between the mat and the subfloor. No cement or adhesive bonding is required. The mat is said to be equally well suited for installation under carpeting. The average material cost is around \$12 per square foot for installations under 50 square feet, \$10 over 50 square feet. The thermostatic control costs an additional \$149.

Warmly Yours, 800/875-5285, www.warmlyyours.com.



Z-qual Time. Thin, bronze *Zmesh* can be directly stapled to a wood subfloor and does not require embedment in thinset adhesive, concrete, or self-leveling underlayment. The low-volt mesh, which closely resembles conventional insect screen, can be freely penetrated without damage to the conductive matrix, permitting conventional nail-down wood flooring application. Vinyl, ceramic tile, stone, carpet, and wood floor coverings may be installed directly over the mesh. In smaller areas, such as a bathroom, a floor sensing thermostatic control is recommended. Better economies of scale are attained in floor areas of 100 square feet or more — a small bathroom application could run \$20 per square foot.

Warmzone, 888/488-9276, www.warmzone.com.



Flexible Mat. Don't try to simplify the layout by through-installing electrical warming mat under bathroom fixtures or kitchen cabinets — heat must always be allowed to dissipate from the floor into the room air to prevent excessive buildup. The backing mesh on this 12- or 18-inch-wide *Radiant Floor Warming Mat* can be cut to allow returns in the layout; the wire heating element flexes around bends. Mat lengths range from 6 feet to 50 feet in the 12-inch width, and from 25 to 50 feet in the 18-inch width. The mat is bonded to the subfloor with an appropriate thinset adhesive. The material cost per square foot is \$11, plus thermostatic control and supplemental wiring.

Radiant Floor Warming, 203/228-0209,
www.radiantfloorwarming.com.

KITCHEN FAUCETS

Modular Faucet. If you've got a particular client who likes the look of one faucet but wishes it had a feature found on another, maybe you need to peruse just one

more catalog. The *Systema* kitchen line offers an array of features that can be opted in or out to arrive at an individualized faucet. A variety of 14 designs and options that include a single-lever mixer, integrated soap dispenser, pull-down aerator, and pro-style pre-rinse spray should give you at least an even shot at customer satisfaction. Prices range from \$799 to \$1,399, depending on the options chosen.

KWC, 877/592-3287,
www.kwcfaucets.com.



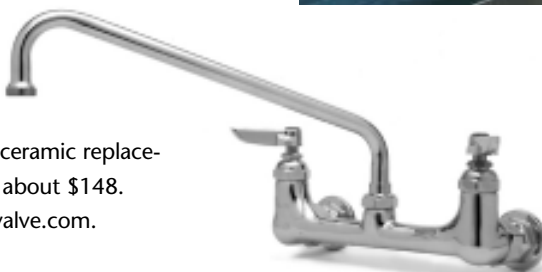
Go Pro. If you've ever experienced the unparalleled pleasure of professional dishwashing, you can appreciate the convenience of a free-hanging pressure sprayer for pre- and post-wash rinsing. The *Master Gourmet* kitchen faucet also features a high arc spout and single-lever mixing valve. Like much good pro-style kitchen gear, the finish is stainless steel and the list price is high — \$1,100.

Blanco America, 856/829-2720, www.blancoamerica.com.



Clearing the Deck. A wall-mounted faucet can give the kitchen sink a less cluttered appearance, provide wipe-down access at the back rim, and offer better fill clearance over tall pots. The *Polaris SL-0231* faucet is available with a 6- or 12-inch swivel spout and easy-to-use wing handles. The construction is cast brass with a chrome finish and an optional ceramic replacement cartridge. The faucet should retail for about \$148.

Sloan Valve, 800/982-5839, www.sloanvalve.com.



Suite Simplicity. Choosing a theme is an effective decorating trick that can save you some selection time. The *Waterhill* kitchen and bath suite provides consistency of style from one room to the next. The two-handle bridge kitchen faucet updates a classic form with a rotating spout and side spray in chrome, stainless-steel (shown), and wrought-iron (black) finishes. The suggested retail price is \$935, or \$693 in chrome.

Moen, 877/663-6741, www.showhouse.moen.com.