



Using the Cabinotch system, all the cabinet components are fully labeled, making assembly fast and easy. The interlocking system allows for sure and speedy assembly.

Conventional shop uses Cabinotch system to compete

Rather than automating, Gann's Cabinets outsources from Cabinotch to meet custom customer needs efficiently.

When you visit Gann's Cabinets in Lavergne, Tenn., don't expect to see state-of-the-art machinery and automation. Owner Ray Gann has been building custom residential cabinets with conventional machinery in the same location since 1983. Rather than converting the manufacturing equipment, he has converted the way he does business, adopting an outsourced cabinet box system and design software.

"Some people build the same way they've always done. I'm all for change," says the 62-year-old Gann, who has been building cabinets since he left school at age 15. "If it speeds me up and saves me money and it doesn't hurt the quality of the cabinet, then I'm for it."

Since opening his own shop in the same location 30 years ago, he's proud to say he's never done any

advertising. He admits that times have been tough in the cabinet business the past few years, but that's one of the reasons he went with the Cabinotch system.

Saving time

The Cabinotch system, which won a Challengers award in 2010, features cabinet box components that have a unique interlocking design and are manufactured with nested based CNC routers. The idea is that shops can order the Cabinotch boxes, using them as a core for a cabinet project and then adding their own customized touches.

"The time you save building them is humongous," says Gann. "They're probably built better than my cabinets. The first set I got, I knew this was the way to go."

Gann still builds his own cabinets, but he estimates that he does at least half of his business these days with Cabinotch cabinets. He also likes that the boxes use plywood from Columbia Forest Products. "We don't use particleboard," he says.

"Every two minutes, we can put a set of cabinets



A bank of three vintage table saws is at the center of the shop. The saws are preset for various operations to speed conventional production.



A worker finishes up a cabinet box assembly. Gann changed his face frames to 1-1/2 inches to match the size of the Cabinotch face frames.

together," he says. "There's no nails, no pulling, just glue and it's not going anywhere. It's a great product."

Knowing what you get

Another reason Gann likes the system is cost control. Because he is purchasing the boxes instead of manufacturing them in his own shop, he worries less about manufacturing time and expense. "With Cabinotch, I know what it's going to cost me," he says.

He also makes sure customers have a clearer picture of what they are getting. He uses KCD software integrated with the Cabinotch system. That way he can design a custom kitchen and present customers detailed 3-D renderings to show exactly what their kitchen is going to look like. Gann says that is a powerful selling tool, and it also helps to avoid misunderstandings as customers sign off on the design for their project.

Changing face of business

Having been in the cabinet trade most of his



At a glance

Who: Ray Gann,
Gann's Cabinets

Where: Lavergne, Tenn.

What: Custom residential
cabinetry

Employees: 4

Website:
www.gannscabinets.com

Ray Gann has been building cabinets for more than 40 years.

life, Gann has a good perspective on changes in the industry. At one time, he says, his business was doing 250 to 300 new houses a year. Since 2008, he says, the company has done only six new houses, and his current business is all remodeling projects. Before the economic downturn, he had eight employees in the shop, but now

he's down to three, plus himself.

He is saddened by what he sees as the changing face of business in the industry. "When we opened, we got tax breaks for expanding and



+ CABINOTCH SYSTEM

This finished kitchen with a traditional look is a sample of the kind of work Gann's Cabinets does using the Cabinotch cabinet box system.

adding employees," he says. "It's tougher now to make money."

He also deplors cutthroat competition that has shops constantly trying to underbid each other. "I don't bid against nobody," he says in his characteristic crusty plain talk. He says it is better to work with competitors and help each other out. "You've gotta help everybody 'cause you never know when you'll need help."

Gann talks about helping a competitor who suffered a shop fire. That's something he is intimately familiar with. At one time his entire shop went up in flames. But that didn't stop him.

"We were building cabinets on the slab," he recalls. "We ran a 220 cable from the house (next door) and borrowed a saw."

+ Cabinotch offers CNC solution without CNC in your shop

Ray Gann has considered upgrading his equipment to CNC nested based manufacturing, but since adopting the Cabinotch cabinet box system, he doesn't feel the need.

Cabinotch is a ready-to-assemble face-frame cabinet box system. It uses a patent-pending interlocking joint. Each all-wood, custom-sized cabinet chassis includes face frame, sides, backs, bottoms, tops and shelves, all cut on a CNC machine. Boxes are made with formaldehyde-free PureBond hardwood plywood made in America by Columbia Forest Products.

The unfinished components are ready for shops to customize them with their own drawers, doors and

Cabinotch box parts have a patent-pending interlocking design that makes for speedy and sure assembly.

finishes. Gann had to make one small adjustment to use the system, changing his own cabinets to use the same 1-1/2-inch size face frames that are featured on Cabinotch.

He relies on KCD software to specify the boxes, which can be ordered in any custom dimension and a variety of species.



Don't be afraid.

Although Gann's shop is completely conventional, centered on a bank of three vintage table saws, Gann

is not averse to modern manufacturing technology.

Despite not having finished high school, he started using software in his business with a DOS program in



+ CABINOTCH SYSTEM

1986. He has strong advice for those just starting out with software today.

“Don’t be scared of it,” he says. “You can’t hurt nothing.”

Still, he recognizes that sometimes machinery upgrades can be a challenge. He relates a story of a machine he bought as a big investment years ago that just didn’t do what he thought it should have done. But it’s more his age than previous experience that holds him back from automating his shop.

“I’d have CNC if I wasn’t as old. If I had it to do over again, I have a shop like Bob’s,” Gann says referring to a nearby shop that was a CNC operation but recently closed when the owner retired.

Without updated manufacturing, Gann is happy to rely on simple solutions. For example, he purposely keeps his finish room door the same size as a

For more info:

- > **Cabinotch**, cabinet box system
 270.685.0803 www.cabinotch.com
- > **Columbia Forest Products**, PureBond plywood
 800.637.1609 www.cfpwood.com
- > **KCD Software**, cabinet software
 508.760.1140 www.kcdsoftware.com

Or go to www.CabinetMakerFDM.com

conventional home entry door. “If a cabinet won’t go through that door, I know it won’t work on the job,” he says.

His choice to increasingly rely on outsourced cabinet boxes from Cabinotch is another simple solution. It gives him the precision and speed of CNC-manufactured boxes without having to buy or maintain the equipment himself. ◀