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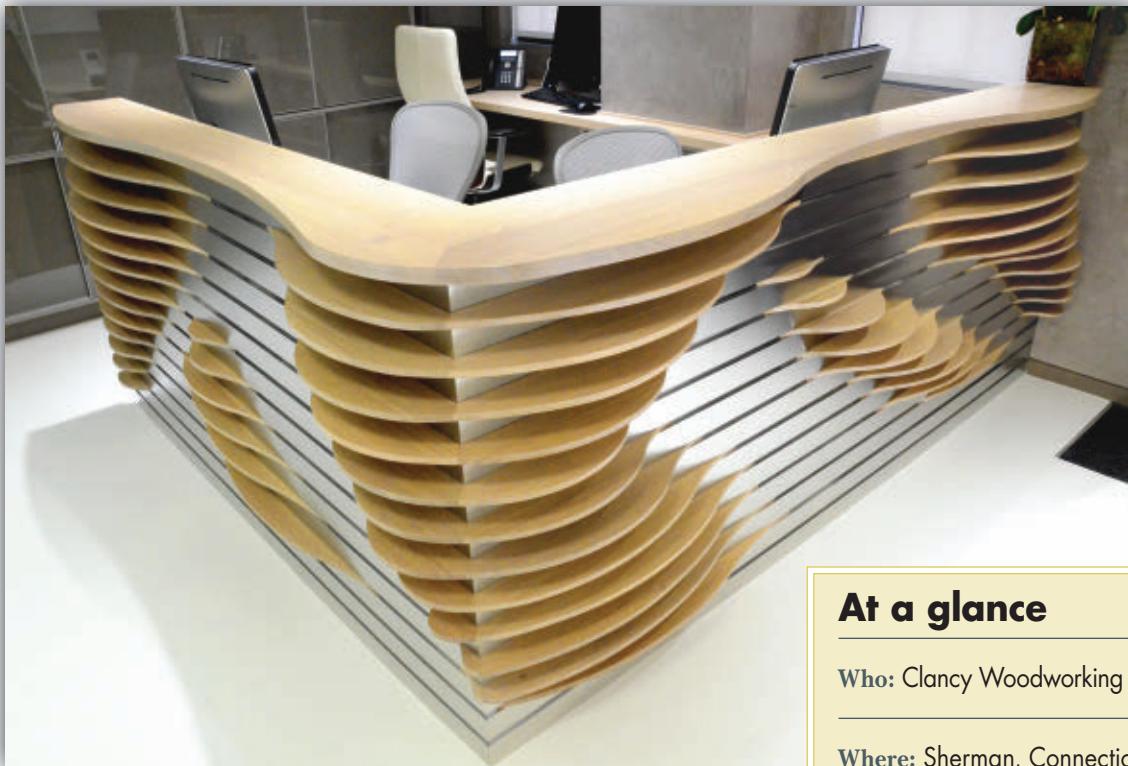
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# Doing homework pays off for new CNC shop owner

Friends and colleagues offered their experience and advice.



Having a CNC router in-house with upgraded software has dramatically improved this Connecticut shop's design and production capabilities.

**B**rian Clancy did his homework before buying his first CNC machine, and he wasn't afraid to ask friends and colleagues for their advice and experiences.

He was looking at expanding Clancy Woodworking, and could either hire more employees or increase the use of technology. He did the latter, and is surprised at what he has been able to accomplish.

Clancy bought a Freedom Machine Tool CNC router with 5 x 10 table and vacuum hold-down. The machine plus tooling cost about \$50,000 and paid for itself in two years, in part because Clancy has discovered so many ways to use it.

The CNC router is used for processing cabinet parts from sheet goods and various solid wood fabrication.

"It's been a game changer," Clancy said. "I have heard it described as like having two employees working tirelessly while you're doing something else, and I have to agree. Parts are processed and jobs get assembled quickly and everything comes off the machine perfectly

## At a glance

**Who:** Clancy Woodworking LLC

**Where:** Sherman, Connecticut

**What:** Custom restaurant interiors, millwork

**Employees:** 1

**Plant size:** 2,500 square feet

**Web site:**  
[www.clancywoodworking.com](http://www.clancywoodworking.com)

**+** SMALL SHOP



About 95 percent of the work completed by the company is for custom restaurant interiors, such as this diner. Most work is in New York and Connecticut.

square. Parts fit and snap together perfectly.”

Clancy visited three other shops before buying this machine, and discovered that it also changed the way they do business. He said he is excited about



In the shop, the flow of work follows a simple “U” shaped process. Raw materials enter on one side, are processed on the machines, then go to the assembly area.

learning something new every day.

“It’s been a good experience,” he said. “I’ve heard about the guy who buys the machine, and only then starts looking for software. I didn’t want to be that guy.”

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Clancy bought a Freedom Machine Tool CNC router with 5 x 10 table. He consulted with other smaller shops before making the purchase.

“Doing my homework really paid off,” he added. “It changed my whole philosophy. I’m excited to be learning something every day.”

Clancy is the only full-time person in the Sherman, Connecticut, shop, with three part-time people. He can also work with other shops when things get especially busy. He recently got help from another local cabinet shop for a large window project.

Having good relationships with other shops and with equipment users has really helped Clancy. He is also a member of the Cabinet Makers Association, and regularly monitors online forums such as Woodweb, camheads and the Vectric software group.

Clancy also bought software, V-Carve Pro from Vectric, for design and CNC machining, CabinetPartsPro, and he recently added Mozaik.

The CNC router is made in Colorado by Freedom Machine



Brian Clancy at the controls of the CNC machine. The new capability has allowed him to do things he couldn’t have imaged earlier.

Tool. This is the company’s economy line for smaller shops. FMT and its technicians have been responsive, Clancy said, or he can contact one of his group of shop owners who are using the same equipment.

### Move to commercial

The CNC machine has also led to a change from residential to mostly commercial work, and has helped in quality and consistency. Clancy showed interlocking ceiling pieces that can be cut on a CNC machine much more easily than on a table saw.

He’s able to do things he never would have even thought of, such as signs for the local Sherman Library, that he would never have attempted by hand.

About 95 percent of the work completed by the company is for restaurant interiors with the other 5 percent being miscellaneous CNC milling for other local shops and one residential contractor.

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Most restaurant contractor customers are in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area.

Clancy's work is for one-time restaurant custom jobs, not repetitive work for large chains. The contractors take care of installation and finishing, which frees

Clancy to process, assemble and deliver the job. Dining interiors can vary from laminate and melamine to veneer, metal laminate and solid wood fabrication.

"Our turnaround time for restaurants has been the priority and this has been accomplished by the introduction of the CNC router," he said. "Getting a quality product to the customer in a timely manner has been one of our strong points."

In the shop, the flow of work follows a simple "U" shaped process. Raw materials enter on one side, are processed on the machines, then go to the assembly area and then out the other end for delivery.

Also in the shop are a Martin sliding table saw, SCMI shaper, Wysong edge sander, Festool miter saw, Holz-Her Genesis edgebander, Blum hinge boring machine, Oliver planer, Northfield jointer and table saw.

### Outsourcing if needed

The CNC machine is doing what used to be done on a half-dozen other machines. But if he can't do something well, Clancy isn't afraid to outsource work such as cabinet doors.

"Anything I can outsource, I do," he said. I get laminate laid up on the substrates, so I don't have to do it here in the shop."

What's next? "It's been just over two years since I automated processes with the CNC router and began outsourcing and I





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haven't looked back," Clancy said. "I plan on attending the IWF show in Atlanta this summer to see all the latest advancements and see how I can continually improve my processes." <

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