

John's Formica Shop: family owned and operated

Just the name, John's Formica Shop, Inc., lets customers know that this custom cabinet and countertop shop has been in business for a really long time. The shop opened in 1966, when "Formica", by then a brand synonymous with laminate countertops, was at its peak popularity. Located in Santa Rosa, CA, John's Formica is a third generation, family-owned business with just under 20 employees. Founded by John Deas, John's Formica is now run by John's son, Mark, and grandson, Zac, is learning the ropes.



John's Formica Shop, Santa Rosa, California

John's Formica specializes in the fabrication of custom cabinetry, solid surface countertops, laminate countertops, and tub and shower surrounds for both residential and commercial customers. As most professionals know, longevity is one of the surest signs of success. One of the keys to that kind of success is a quality product. As Mark Deas recently said, "We only design, build and fabricate things that I myself would put in my own house or office space."

In addition to its longevity, what makes John's Formica even more impressive is that all of their business comes from "word-of-mouth" referrals – they do not advertise – so it's their quality work and customer service which drives their business. Mark estimates that 90% of their business comes from residential projects, with 60% of that being cabinets and 40% "everything else." Always busy, John's Formica typically has 60 to 100 open jobs at any given time and keeps fairly standard hours of operation, Monday through Friday.

John's Formica is a truly custom shop: they build all of their own carcasses and do all surface and countertop fabrication in-house. The shop also provides complete installation services. So, what does a successful shop like John's Formica use for design, tools and machinery?



"We only design, build and fabricate things that I myself would put in my own house or office space." - Mark Deas, owner

All design drawings are done with Mozaik™ and cut lists are done manually. When asked about which machines were most important to their manufacturing process, Mark says that John's Formica relies on the shop's Altendorf sliding table saw and Castle Pocket Cutting Machines. Prior to using Castle Pocket Cutting Machines, John's Formica relied on dowel and glue joinery. Other tools and machinery include an edgebander, elbow head wide belt sander, face frame table and line borer for shelf holes.

When we asked Mark what has changed the most in his business over their 55 years in operation, he says, "That's easy - it's the technology, hands down." Recently, John's Formica decided to incorporate some newer pocket joinery technology, by integrating Castle's 1.5D Pocket Cutter/Screw Inserter machine into the shop's manufacturing and assembly process.



Mark and his son Zac operating a CSI

At John's Formica, Mark says that, "Our goal is to make our job easier without any quality concessions. The CSI helps us achieve that. It's one of the most impressive machines out there. It completely upped our process and I think I'm saving 50% in my assembly labor costs." He ended with, "We hardly ever even use bar clamps anymore. And, like everyone else, we are stretched in our manufacturing due to labor and supply chain challenges. The CSI really helps us be more efficient and quickly paid for itself."

For more information about Castle USA's line of pocket cutting machines and assembly tables, please visit www.CastleUSA.com, call 800-282-8338 or email sales@CastleUSA.com. Be sure to ask about the new "Try It First" program for the CSI 1.5D Pocket Cutter/Screw Inserter: use the machine for up to 60 days on a demo basis to see how easily and cost effectively it would work in your shop without risking the capital expenditure.

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