

# Crystal Clear Choice

Crystal Cabinet Works says it will make almost anything for its customers.



Crystal Cabinet Works offers cabinetry products for kitchens as well as bathrooms, entertainment centers, laundry rooms, home offices, professional offices and banks.



For nearly 60 years, Crystal Cabinet Works says, it has been manufacturing high-quality cabinetry for customers nationwide. Tom Hammer founded the company as a custom cabinet shop serving the builder trade in Minneapolis. In 1949, he moved the shop to a northern suburb called Crystal and formally named it Crystal Cabinet Works Inc.

Today, the company maintains two manufacturing operations in Princeton and Sauk Rapids, Minn., and remains family owned. According to Boyd Hedin, vice president of operations and COO, the company is dedicated to high-end, furniture-grade cabinetry built to custom specifications. “Nothing is built to stock,” he explains. “Everything is built to order. We originally started as a custom shop and built for the new homebuilder market. The company then evolved, selling what was known at the time as pre-fab cabinets. Gradually, pre-fabricated cabinets gave way to the emergence of a modular custom market and Crystal Cabinets was among the first to innovate products to fill this need. In the last eight years, we’ve focused 100 percent on furniture-grade custom cabinetry – much more high end.”

In addition to its kitchen products, Crystal Cabinet Works builds cabinets for bathrooms, entertainment centers, laundry rooms and home offices, as well as high-end professional offices and banks. “We manufacture our own doors and our own moldings and panels,” Hedin explains. “We’re very vertically integrated. We can do pretty much anything the customer wants with virtually any wood species.”

Although the company’s work is done primarily for residential customers, Hedin says these jobs often lead to other opportunities in the commercial market. “A lot of the time, our customers are professional business people,” he says. “We often get into doing customized offices for the same customer. Sometimes, we get into high-end condominium complexes or something more on the commercial side, but generally, it’s residential.”

A high percentage of the work is done for remodeling projects, Hedin adds. “Customers don’t often make the cabinet choices in new home construction because the contractor has already done that for them, so we have a lot of customers looking to upgrade after living in their new homes for several years,” he says.

## Endless Possibilities

Crystal Cabinet Works distributes its products primarily through independent kitchen design dealerships and architectural firms. “We operate in many segments of the market,” Hedin explains, “from high-end architecture or residential remodeling to a dealer that is associated with a lumber yard or regional home center.”

He emphasizes that the company is committed to working with independent dealers to ensure its customers receive specialized, personal service. “We don’t work with national home centers, but with smaller regional outlets – wherever we determine we have a talented design-oriented sales force. They have to be able to design using a higher-end product – not what you typically see in a home center where you basically buy boxes with doors to fill a kitchen space. We work with over 400 independent dealerships that are active across the nation.”

Aside from a focus on high-quality, dependable products, Hedin says, the

Crystal Cabinet Works  
www.crystalcabinets.com  
2003 sales: \$55 million  
Headquarters: Princeton, Minn.  
Employees: 600  
Products: Custom cabinets  
Boyd Hedin, vice president of operations and COO: "We'll do virtually anything the customer desires."

eleven hundred crystal drive  
princeton, minnesota 55371

www.crystalcabinets.com



# CRYSTAL

*a fine name in cabinetry*

## Company Profile

company's biggest priority is flexibility in design and high-quality finishes. "Generally, a company operates with a catalog of products," he explains. "We have that, but we're not limited to those shapes and designs. We'll take a drawing and create a product to meet the needs of the customer."

That means grinding cutters for custom door styles to meet customer needs or duplicating a complex custom finish to fit a certain look or match something in their home. "We source exotic wood species, create stain and paint colors, process multi-step finishes and craft products that look like antiques," he says. "We'll do virtually anything the customer desires. That's where our customer service staff comes in – we require highly-trained personnel to interact with our designers, understand the customers' needs and communicate them effectively to our skilled craftspeople."

Hedin says the company's customer service staff leads the way in maintaining long-term customer relationships. Crystal Cabinet Works maintains a large staff of customer service personnel and regional sales managers in every area of the country, he notes.

### Sustainable Growth

Hedin says the company considers itself the largest custom manufacturer in the United States. "There are many more large stock and semi-custom man-

ufacturers who serve the kitchen market," he explains. "We are among the few fully custom operations, and fewer yet to still be privately owned."

In 2003, the company had sales of \$55 million and introduced 27 new colors and a new wood species called Lyptus – a hybrid eucalyptus plantation-grown species.

"One of the directions we're starting to take is in providing sustainable wood species to our customers," he says. "Whether it's species that are plantation grown or environmentally managed forestry, all the wood products come from responsible sources."

Currently, he notes, Crystal Cabinet Works is looking at a new material for its Quest frameless product line. Agricorn is a pressed board alternative to particleboard made from straw and similar rapidly renewable materials to conserve wood materials. He says the company continues to look for new ways to use all-natural resources responsibly.

"We have a track record over the years of continuing to lower our VOC [volatile organic compounds] emissions in finishes," Hedin emphasizes.

"We have a very active and aggressive plan to continue to meet or exceed regulatory requirements and stay significantly under required limits. [This provides] a safe working environment for our employees and safe products for our customers." ■

