

# CHATTERBOX

Volume 04 Edition 5 - Nov 2007

Timbecon's official newsletter



## Hi and welcome to the last edition of the CHATTERBOX

Don't worry: we're not going to stop producing our highly-regarded and informative newsletter, we're just going to give it a new name – but more about that, later.

The past four months have been incredibly busy and exciting for us as the new owners of Timbecon. We've taken the Company on the road to Adelaide, Canberra and Melbourne as one of the largest exhibitors at the Timber and Working with Wood shows as well as at the W.A. Wood Show, here in Perth. The Wood Shows are hard work, very busy and lots of fun just like everyone says and we can promise some major improvements to our displays, demonstrations and exhibits for 2008. Best of all we were able to meet so many of our friendly customers.

With the change of ownership this year we were not able to produce a 2007 catalogue, but we're working on the new catalogue for 2008 - the best Timbecon's ever produced. We're already preparing for next year's range of new products and for the first time we'll be able to offer our customers tools, machines and accessories that are exclusive to Timbecon.

Very soon we'll be unveiling our newest and best-ever website, finally delivering all the features and improvements you've been promised in the past. With a new and improved Member's area, on-line video movies, a library of PDF instructions and more frequent Internet specials we're sure you'll love it.

Back to the CHATTERBOX. We're running a competition to decide on the new name for Timbecon's official newsletter so if you have any ideas or if you have any suggestions or comments on the newsletter just send an e-mail to: [chatterbox@timbecon.com.au](mailto:chatterbox@timbecon.com.au)

*You might be lucky enough to win a fabulous prize.*

We would like to thank all of our Timbecon customers for your patience and support during the change of ownership and on behalf of our wonderful Timbecon team wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy (and safe) New Year.

**Robert and Toni Iles**

[robert.toni@timbecon.com.au](mailto:robert.toni@timbecon.com.au)



We are very pleased and proud to announce that Timbecon is now the sole distributor of Milescraft wood working products for Australia and New Zealand.

Timbecon has successfully demonstrated, promoted and sold the clever and innovative Milescraft range of products at the Wood Shows across Australia for the past 3 years.

We always strive to bring new and innovative products to the Australian market place and we've always been very impressed with the good-quality, easy-of-use and value-for-money wood working accessories from Milescraft.

When you turn the page you'll see an instruction on the Milescraft SignCrafter and SignPro to more fully explain their assembly and operation. In future issues of this newsletter we'll show you other items in the Milescraft range to highlight their uses and also bring you features on new products as they become available.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Milescraft range of products available from Timbecon just send an e-mail to: [milescraft@timbecon.com.au](mailto:milescraft@timbecon.com.au)

**We Have A Winner!**

**Well, two to be precise.**

Congratulations to Jim from Eltham and David from Greensborough, Victoria.

Simply by attending the 2007 Timber and Working with Wood show in Melbourne, they've each won a \$100.00 Timbecon voucher.

Fill in one of our entry forms at the Shows next year and you could be a winner, too!

SHERWOOD



*Cut your own moulded profiles to any length. Great for picture framing.*

## The Sherwood 13" Planer/Moulder A great way to get two machines in one!

This sturdy and reliable 2hp-1500W machine has been built with the features of a floor-mounted thicknesser, but with the portability of a bench mount thicknesser.

With a planing width and height of 330mm and 152mm respectively, this machine is It features a two-speed gearbox for feed speeds of 3.6 or 7.2M/min.



It has a three-blade cutterhead and the blades are resharpenable, which makes them much more cost-efficient.

But its most impressive and versatile feature is that it accepts a range of 3-blade cutterhead knives (available separately) and be can used as a moulder.



*Boxed set of 9 different profiles*



## Making Wooden Signs

If you've ever seen those custom-made wooden signs for sale at the weekend markets for 'Bob's Bar', 'Jayne's Room' or 'Jim's Shed' and wondered if you could do it yourself – the answer is yes, you can!



The SignCrafter from Milescraft has everything you need to create stylish and popular wooden signs for fun and decoration, as gifts for family and friends or made-to-order signs for sale.

*Everything you need to make your signs is in the box except for a router and a piece of wood.* You'll certainly want to experiment with different router bits to give your lettering a more personalized look, but there's even a 1/4" shank cove bit in the box to start you off.

When using the SignCrafter to make your signs you will only be making a relatively shallow plunge into the timber and you won't be using a large diameter cutting bit, so you don't need an overly powerful or heavy router for the task. Even the smallest 1/4" shank router can be used providing it has a plunge function, which can be set to the desired depth. I've even used a Dremel mounted in a Milescraft Plunger, which was fitted with Milescraft Rotary Tool Bits to make signs with the SignCrafter - and that's just a 1/8" shank tool.



The SignCrafter includes two sizes of letters, numbers and various punctuation templates (1 1/2" and 2 1/2") and there are 164 templates in total. This means that you'll get multiple letters and numbers – not just one of each. Whilst you won't be able to make every long and complicated word in the dictionary without changing templates from time to time, you will find that commonplace words can be completed with minimal template changes.

At the heart of this system is the TurnLock BasePlate, which you attach to your router. Depending on your other requirements for your router, you can easily leave the TurnLock BasePlate permanently attached as it can take the place of your existing router base plate.

It is called a TurnLock BasePlate because the all-important TurnLock bushings simply turn and lock into the base plate, so there's no tooling required to change or remove the bushings. Best of all, unlike a lot of other base plate/bushing sets you can buy, with the TurnLock BasePlate you don't have to remove the base plate when changing or removing bushings. *How's that for a time-saver?*

So, why did we say the bushings were all-important? Because when using the Milescraft SignCrafter the bushings allow the router (and therefore, the router bit) to accurately follow the letter templates and that is how you achieve

clean and consistent lettering every time. The principal may seem familiar to experienced router users as this is essentially just 'pattern following' with the letter template being the 'pattern' and the bushing 'following' the edge of the template. The beauty of the Milescraft SignCrafter is that the bushings are matched perfectly to the sizes of the letter templates and the bushings fit perfectly into the TurnLock BasePlate, which is attached to your router. And that is why the TurnLock BasePlate is at the heart of this clever and versatile Milescraft system. *Everything matches and is designed work together to produce a clean, even and consistent result.*

### Assembling the SignCrafter

You'll need to assemble the jig out of the box for the first time and then it stays together - unless you have a reason for dismantling and re-assembling it each time you use it. You'll just need to find a convenient place to store it once it is assembled, together with the sets of letter/number templates.

When assembled, the SignCrafter measures approximately 550mm in length but it comes with extender bars, which when fitted make the SignCrafter 1 metre long. This means that you can choose which ever SignCrafter length suits your project and work piece you use.

When using the SignCrafter on flat-sided timber you can make a sign as long as the work piece by simply loosening the SignCrafter, sliding it along and re-clamping in place. You just change the templates as necessary and continue routing. You can do the same vertically on work pieces up to 300mm wide. Just loosen the screws on the guide rods, slide the SignCrafter up or down, re-tighten, change the templates and continue routing. If you replace the kit's 15" x 1/4" guide rods with your own longer ones, you'll be able to use the SignCrafter on wider work pieces using the same method.

### Attaching the TurnLock BasePlate

To attach the TurnLock BasePlate to your router (*after you've completely disconnected it from the power*) you must first remove the existing plastic router base by carefully removing the screws, which hold it onto your router. Be sure to keep these screws as they are made to fit the thread in the holes in the bottom of your router and you'll need them to attach the TurnLock BasePlate back onto your router. The TurnLock BasePlate has plenty of pre-drilled and counter-sunk holes and guides for you to align it to the screw holes in the base of your router. *In some case you'll get all of these holes to align or sometimes only some of them will.* This will depend on your brand of router. If you cannot get all the holes to align it is simply a matter of drilling and counter-sinking your own custom holes in the TurnLock BasePlate and/or modifying the existing ones. *But do not fully tighten the screws once you've aligned the holes.*



It is at this point you need to use the centering pin, which comes with the kit. The double-ended 1/4" or 1/2" centering pin is used to ensure the TurnLock BasePlate is as close to centre as you can get before you tighten the screws to fix it in place. The centering of the base plate is critical to the function of the SignCrafter as the router bit needs to pass through the centre of the bushing. If it does not, there is a possibility of the router bit touching the inside of the bushing, which can damage it and may make it unusable.

If you are using the Milescraft Plunger with your Dremel tool attached to make your signs, you will be able to fit the TurnLock Bushes directly into the base of the Plunger and the alignment will be assured.

*Once you've assembled the SignCrafter and you've correctly aligned and attached the TurnLock BasePlate to your router, you're ready to start making signs.*

To make signs on flat-sided pieces of timber.

1. Align the fixed guides with the lower edge of your work piece to give you the required baseline for your text.
2. Slide the SignCrafter left or right to your chosen start position on the work piece.
3. Lower and tighten the adjustable guides on the top edge, firmly attaching the SignCrafter to your work piece.

You can either insert the letter/number templates before or after you've attached the SignCrafter to your work piece, but in either case you'll need to ensure everything is properly attached and tightened before you begin routing. Also, remember to check and double-check (or have someone else check) your spelling and punctuation before you begin routing, as there is no "white out" you can use if you discover you've got it wrong half-way through. *Any "typo's" and you'll be starting again on a new piece of wood.*

Before you connect and switch on the power to your router you should make sure the TurnLock BasePlate is firmly attached, the correct TurnLock Bush to suit the size of letter/number template you're using is locked in place and your chosen router bit is inserted, tightened and properly adjusted. *If this is the first time you used the TurnLock BasePlate you should also check to ensure the router bit passes through the centre of the bushing.*



You then need to test and set the depth of plunge on your router by placing the router in place on the SignCrafter with the sliding bridges either side of the template and lowering the bit onto the workpiece. After a few test runs you'll discover the depth that you like to use, which will take away the guess work from this part of the set up for future use.

*This may all seem quite labourious to begin with, but once you've made a few signs and are happy with the results you'll find the set-up takes no time at all and you'll be making signs one after the other with ease.*

**Making signs on short or narrow, flat-sided timber or uneven and naturally-shaped timber.**

As you've just seen, the SignCrafter works by being firmly attached to your work piece. This ensures that your letter and numbers follow the same base line, which keeps everything straight and aligned, especially when you move the SignCrafter on longer work pieces. When you cannot use the guide bars and clamps in the usual method, due to the size and/or shape of your work piece, you'll need to find another way to attach the SignCrafter to the work piece.



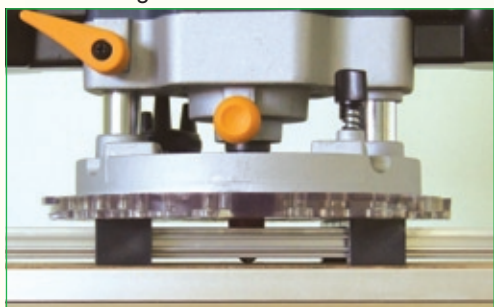
*You can probably work out some ingenious ways of doing this yourself, but here are a few to start you off.*



1. Use straight-edges to compensate for the size and shape of the work piece.
2. Clamp the SignCrafter onto the work piece
3. Screw the SignCrafter onto the work piece

By using these methods or others of your choosing, you can use the SignCrafter to make signs on an endless variety of timber shapes and sizes. Bear in mind that if you elect to screw the SignCrafter directly onto your workpiece you may wish to fill the holes left by the screws when you remove the SignCrafter.

Depending on your skill and experience with your router you'll get varying results the first time you use the SignCrafter, but you do not need to be an expert router user by any means. Provided you exercise due care and caution you will very quickly learn how simple and enjoyable it is to produce custom-made wooden signs with your router and the Milecraft SignCrafter.



When the SignCrafter is correctly attached, the templates are all securely in place and your router has been fully checked and is correctly prepared - you're ready to start making signs. Place the bridge supports on either side of the template you wish to rout and place the router bush inside the template. *Without turning the router on, get used to the shape of the template by trying a few dry-runs to get the feel of following the template.* If you do this each time you use a new letter it will give you a greater appreciation of the differences between them, some of which may not be apparent until you start routing. Always remember to follow the outside of the template and trace the letter or number all the way around. Using this method you'll always be sure to rout the full shape of the template and avoid mis-shaped cuts, cut-corners or jagged edges.

As you proceed along the work piece keep moving the bridge supports to sit beneath your router. The bridge supports keep the SignCrafter from sagging under the weight of your router and prevent the router from catching on the template holder bars as it follows the template. You can purchase extra pairs of bridge supports should you wish to use them when the extender bars are fitted so you can have them on each side of the joiners for ease of use.

*And that's all there is to it.* You're now routing your signs. In a very short time you'll be able to master these techniques and produce signs quickly and easily - even if you've had little or no experience using a router. In fact, this kind of work is a very good way to learn the basics of router use, while enabling you to put your learning to good use. More experienced router users may find this a way of enhancing their skills for fun and profit.

*But, what to do once you've finished routing your sign?* This is where you can get really creative and make your signs stand out from the rest. If you've used flat-edged and/or square sided timber you can now trim your work piece to the right size and stylize the edges with chamfers or beads with your router and choice of decorative bits. You can also apply paint with a brush or spray can to the face of your sign to fill in all the letters and numbers. Once the paint has dried you then sand back the surface of the work piece leaving a smooth timber finish with paint-filled text. *Yes, that's how they do it.* You can use pyrography, inlays or stencils to further enhance your completed work. The decorative possibilities are endless, so let your imagination run wild.

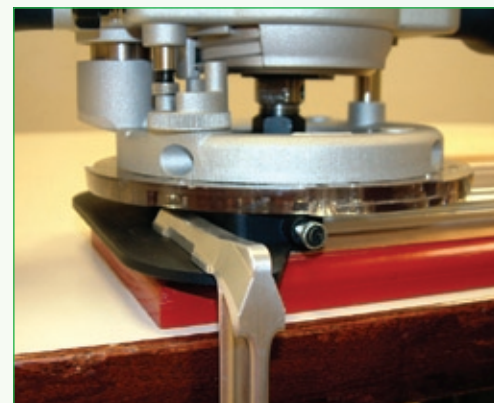
**Introducing the SignPro**

This is the latest version of the SignCrafter from Milecraft. It works in the same way as the original SignCrafter but has some



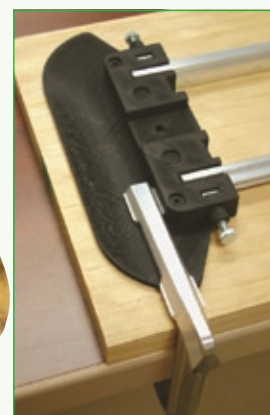
differences. The most significant change is in the way it attaches to the work piece.

1. The SignPro does away with the self-clamping guide rods and has a new flange on each end of the unit, which clamps directly onto the work piece with the C-clamps that are included in the kit.
2. Another excellent addition is a set of 1 1/2" and 2 1/2" vertical number templates
3. The SignPro now comes with metal-nosed bushes for longer life
4. The SignPro now comes with two 1/4" shank router bits for each template size



The SignPro gives you the versatility to attach the unit to existing vertical work pieces like fence posts and letterbox posts to rout numbers in them while they are in place. The metal-nosed bushings are less easily damaged should the router bit come into contact with the nose while running.

*If you already have an original SignCrafter you can now purchase both sizes of the vertical number templates to enhance your sign-making capabilities.*



## Flocking as a Wood Craft Finish

Most outer surfaces of a project are finished in clear varnish to bring out the grain and colour of beautiful timber, but there are some places where a covering finish, which hides the timber is preferable. For example, the inside of a box can be coated with a flocking material which gives a professional, soft finish and can hide the ply surface of a veneered box.

Years ago, people used "contact suede" similar to the surface of a billiard table. It comes in rolls about 400mm wide with a peel off self-stick back. It was acceptable for the flat bottom of objects but was a nightmare to use lining a box or on a curved surface or irregular shape. The problem is cutting it exactly to size and sticking it flat with no wrinkles. Additionally, it is very difficult (if not, impossible) to get the inside corners completely covered or the cut edges perfectly and neatly aligned.

Now flocking powder is available to rescue you from these problems. It gives you the same velvet-like finish but is a lot easier to apply and allows a joint-less continuous finish. It comes in two separate parts. One is a tin of glue, the other is a bag of flocking powder. These both need to be the same colour as the flocking material is thin and can look "hungry" without the use of a coloured undercoat which gives the flocking a rich deep appearance.

Royal blue powder is always used with royal blue glue, etc.

### It is easy to work with

Firstly seal the surface to be flocked with a sanding sealer or varnish; this stops the glue being absorbed into the wood. Apply the glue carefully and neatly because this determines where the flocking is going to stick. A small paint brush of about 25mm is ideal. The glue needs to be applied generously but not running, just as you would if you were painting a door; streak free and wet. Avoid build up in the corners as you want the corners crisp and if you want a neat top edge you will need to paint the glue edge neatly and wipe off excess glue round the top edges to get a crisp line. Then apply the flocking powder by sprinkling it onto the wet glue surface. You have about ten minutes working time before the glue starts to "skin off".

Put plenty of flocking powder onto the surface for a luxurious finish and shake vigorously. Tip excess off for re-use to minimise waste. At this stage some excess powder will fall off however the surface will look motley.

Leave the box to dry for 24 hours and then shake off the rest of the excess powder again. The final coat will look smooth and the powder that falls off can be used again so always work over a clean tray so the excess is easy to reclaim and is not contaminated with dirt. Try to use your flocking in a clean, dust free environment as loose wood shavings will contaminate the surface.

Resist the temptation to touch the wet flock as it will leave a dimple in the final coat. If you notice some foreign material in the wet coat leave it to dry overnight and it can be picked out later with a needle. Corner build up can be moved with a dry brush.

If you make a mistake and miss an area simply wait 24 hours, paint on more glue & apply more flocking powder. The coverage of one pack (50gm Flocking Powder & 250ml Flocking Glue) is approximately 15 square feet (1.5m<sup>2</sup>). This can vary depending upon the amount of coverage and absorption, so can only be used as a guide. The flocking glue is water-based so wash up your glue brushes in water.

The powder can tend to pile up in the bag so a tip is to always sift the powder through a flour sieve before use. This loosens the powder and also statically charges the fibres so they will tend to stand up in the glue and give a deeper looking finish.

The fibres are made of rayon so are water resistant, but have a velvet-

feel to the touch and are hard wearing. The softness of the flock fibres will also protect items like jewellery from damage.

Flocking is available in seven magnificent colours: Royal Blue, Emerald Green, Burgundy, Red, Wheat, Rust and Black.

Black flocking is great to line a display box for coins, pistols and knives etc. as it will make these objects really stand out.

Royal Blue is the most popular colour as it makes a bold statement but is soft on the eye.

Emerald green is a classic colour and is often used by model makers to imitate grass, say on a train track.

Burgundy matches Jarrah and Red Gum and is popular for larger boxes.

The colour contrast with wood gives a great effect and artefacts where flocking is used just ooze style and quality. When you want to give your projects an interesting and sophisticated look and feel, flocking is an ideal way to achieve professional-looking results quickly and easily. Try it on your next masterpiece.

## How to Build a Great Home Workshop

The Editors of WOOD® Magazine. rrp \$29.90

This fascinating book will help you turn your shed, garage or any spare room into the workshop of your dreams. Covering lighting and ventilation, smooth workflow, handy storage for tools and materials, sturdy fold-away work surfaces and many other tips and tricks all to suit your budget - large or small.

You can choose any one of five basic layouts and then customize the one that is best for you. There are dozens of great projects, including workbenches, wall-hung and floor-mounted cabinets, moveable power tool accessory chests, rolling sheet goods racks and much more.

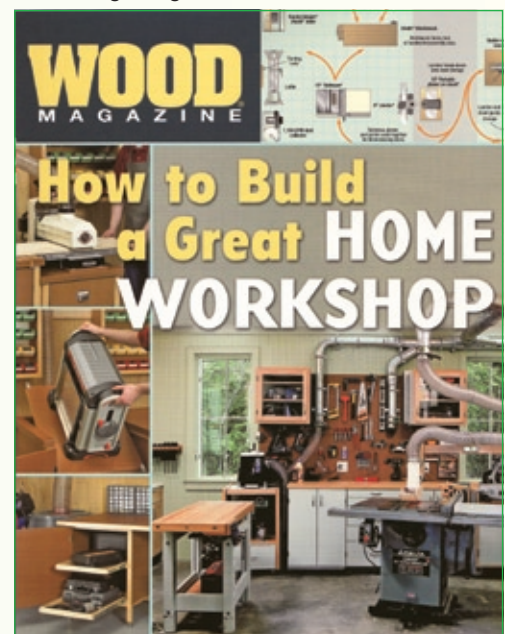
Imagine a workshop where:

- Everything you need is safely stored within easy reach
- The lighting is perfect for every task
- Good ventilation controls dust and moisture
- A climate-control system keeps the temperature comfortable all year round
- The workspace is organised for your requirements and optimal workflow on the jobs you do most often
- Sturdy work surfaces - available when you need them - fold away when you don't
- Heavy sheet goods and sturdy tool carts roll around on wheels for ease of use

The editors of WOOD® Magazine consider every aspect of building the perfect workshop and provide dozens of ideas so that you can choose the designs that are just right for the space you have. Everything from multi-purpose benches to customized power tool accessory holders. It's all in this book, along with important information on safety, security and climate control.

You'll even find floor plans that will help you place essential components in the best locations for your individual needs.

You're given the choice of saving time by using commercially available storage cabinets or saving money by building them yourself. For instance, you can install ready-made kitchen cabinets or you can custom-make your own using the guidelines in the book.



The WOOD® Magazine is known for offering innovative plans, skill-building techniques and other vital information for more than a half a million readers, from novices to fine craftsmen.

Timbecon always brings you the best books and DVD's as they become available, so why not add this title to your wood working library and start those workshop renovations - today!