

TED BADEA INC. PRESSES FORWARD IN HIGH-END VENEER NICHE

Ted Badea's Brooklyn, NY-based company, Ted Badea Inc., once specialized in high-end architectural millwork for high-profile clients such as Mary Tyler Moore, Bill Cosby and Madonna. Badea, founder and president of the 17-year-old company, has kept the high profile clientele, but narrowed the focus of his business to doing veneer layups.

"I decided to go into this highly specialized niche work because I realized there was a real need for quality veneer and marquetry work. Our clients work with the best of the exotic and domestic veneers." Badea estimates that the veneer layup orders constitute 98 percent of his work. He also produces conference tables.

To accommodate the specialty veneer work, Badea has spent more than \$1,000,000 to upgrade his machinery line. "We have the most sophisticated machinery available," he said. One of his recent purchases includes the Joos USA HP 120 veneer press, installed a year ago, which replaced an older model press.

"We like this one for its speed and accuracy. It's very well built," said Badea. "The exotic and domestic veneers we work with can be quite pricey — costing from \$10 to \$15 a square foot. We don't want to take chances with the material. We need a press that is very reliable and won't give us delamination problems."

Quality and consistency are important issues, especially in light of the kind of work Badea does. The veneer press from Joos is in use an average of six to eight hours per day. Many of his jobs involve pressing numerous sequenced panels that must pass exacting quality checks. After pressing, the company uses a Heesemann KSA-8 three-head computerized sander to fine sand the veneer.

"We recently did 200 to 300 decorative anigre panels in sequence for a client, J.P. Morgan Bank. We cannot afford to



ABOVE: Created by Ted Badea Inc., the furniture in this entertainment room features lacewood veneered panels and coffee table. A Joos HP 120 was used to press the veneers into beautiful designs.

LEFT: The speed and accuracy of the Joos HP 120 veneer press helped enable Ted Badea Inc. to manufacture this high-end residential kitchen featuring figured European ash with special veneer detail work.

'miss' on any one panel. It's like flying an airplane, you can't afford that one mistake."

Other recent jobs include 24-foot by 30-foot wall panels in plain-sliced cherry for Columbia University. The stacked, end- and book-matched panels made a stunning wall treatment, Badea said. Ted Badea Inc. also produced some 2,000 panels of plain-sliced sapele for two floors of the McGraw Hill Publishing Co. A conference table, which cost \$100,000, featured marquetry, another specialty, and used 50 to 60 different species of woods to create the unique patterns and flowers of the design.

"Our goal is to create a work of art, so we are very precise and demanding. Our policy is to buy the best in what's available in machinery for the application. For the important job of veneer layup, we chose the Joos veneer press."

Determination Leads to Success

Ted Badea leads an exciting and fast-paced life with a roster filled with high profile clients. But his life was filled with another kind of drama long before he entered his present career.

Badea, a native of Romania, studied woodworking there, earning a bachelor degree after 5½ years of study. He worked as a woodworker in Romania, but spent three years plotting his escape from the Communist regime. In 1981, he found a way out of the country, arriving first in Yugoslavia and then in Austria, where he applied for political asylum in the United States. His request was granted and he moved to California in 1982 where he found work with Raymond Enkeboll, the well-known architectural woodcarving expert. After

working with Enkeboll, Badea moved east to New York and got a job with furniture designer/manufacturer Dakota Jackson, where he worked until opening his own business in 1985.

Today, Badea's company is a leader in high-end veneer work. Much of that success can be attributed to the quality he receives from his Joos press.



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