

CabinetMaker®

Indispensable Tool for the Small Shop

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Simple warmth — The beadboard backs and doors, along with the concrete fireplace mantel, work together to create an inviting space.

it intuitively, too, not that you're contriving it," says Bowers. "I think that makes a big difference. Then your design is really driven by inspiration."

Know when to change

When the housing market was strong and booming, Bowers was building and renovating homes. But with land costs rising and older homes getting priced out of play, Bowers knew that he had to redirect his efforts. The amount of people looking to renovate their homes to get the most out of their property has led Bowers to return to high-end renovations.

"You always have to be looking for what the next niche is," says Bowers. "The cabinetmaking dovetails very nicely with where we're going now, which is going back to high-end renovation work."

Design to fit

For Bowers, it's about design that is site specific, a philosophy he has used for building as well as renovating. "A lot of time our design kind of evolves," says Bowers. "You try to match your ideas with their lifestyle, how they want to use the room."

Bowers does only rough drawings, because the design often changes so much. "You can spend

more time making a drawing than you can building it," he says. He feels more complicated drawings are just for show.

When Bowers does a design, he pushes what he knows works best and what he likes. He credits the design ability of his wife, Mary Ann and the artistic sense and skills of



Mix critical — The Buddy Rhodes mix that Mike Bowers uses for concrete countertops and mantels has proved itself to be reliable and easy to use.

Press fit — The concrete works more like clay and is sculpted rather than poured.



Doing it all — The jet table saw that Luke Bowers is using does all the ripping and cutting in the shop. Mike Bowers believes that it's best to keep tools simple.

his son, Luke as key to keeping his business strong.

"As it turns out, the fickle finger of design right now says that what we're building and what we design are what

Creating one-of-a-kind

Mike Bowers was looking for a countertop that would add to the wow factor of the kitchens he was creating for his company, Choptank Mills Associates, located in Maryland, Del. Bowers wanted a material that would complement his cabinets and the work he does. He finally found what he felt filled the bill perfectly — concrete.

"You can do anything with it. You can make it a total reflection of both you and the customer by incorporating things into it," he says.

Bowers' first attempts at concrete countertops were with a local subcontractor, but the mixes that were used led to a lot of fissures. "When I started looking at the Buddy Rhodes system for countertops, I realized that building the forms was all carpentry work," he says. "It's the consistency of

the Buddy Rhodes mix that we

