

THE CRAFTSMEN:

Southern Lumber and Millwork Corporation

THE CRAFT:

Anything out of wood! The company is particularly known for custom millwork and special mouldings. Most of the lumber the company uses comes from within a 500-mile radius, minimizing environmental impact (popular local species include poplar and Southern yellow pine).

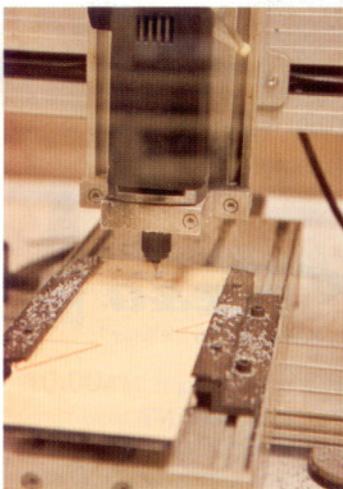
THE BACKSTORY:

In 1940, Herman Albrecht, Jr. started a small millwork business based out of his own backyard in downtown Charleston. Following steady growth (and a few growing pains), the company relocated in 1945 to a spacious plant and seven acre lot on King Street. Incorporated in 1964, Southern Lumber has since become a Lowcountry shopping staple for millwork, moulding, and other building materials. A true family affair, it is run today by Herman's daughter Joye and his grandsons Thad Shuler, Ben Albrecht, Jr., and Will Albrecht.

THE PROCESS:

When a homeowner requests a special moulding, Southern Lumber gets measurements, which are drawn into AutoCAD. A computerized machine uses the AutoCAD drawing to cut a template. This template is used—by the craftsmen at the company—as a guide for grinding their own steel knives, a skill that is still done completely by hand. From there, the knives are set into digital equipment that matches the moulding to the template closer than what the visible eye can see. For millwork, drawings are typically either submitted by an architect associated with a project or are drawn by Ben in AutoCAD. A computerized AutoCAD machine runs all of the parts and pieces individually, so they can then be pieced together per the original drawings by Southern Lumber's carpenters or "millwrights." A hands-on process, creating the millwork is considered such an art form that some carvers even engrave their names on the back of each piece they complete.

For more information, call Southern Lumber and Millwork Corp. at (843) 744-6281 or visit southernlumbermillwork.com.



Interior finishes in a home, such as doors, window casings, baseboards, and crown moulding often make a room. These additions, while seeming simple, require a very specific design and execution. Above shows their process and ultimate finished product. Anyone can agree, these "millwrights" are artists!