

## with Mark Gottlieb

Mark Gottlieb helped found Universal Framing Products, Sylmar, CA, in 1995. He is now the company president. Universal prides itself on quality, service and value, and it offers a wide selection of products, including Universal Wood and Valucore™, its new line of polystyrene mouldings.

**DECOR:** How did you get into the art and framing industry?

**Gottlieb:** I was raised by an artistic family. My mother is a painter, and my father a writer. Art was always around me. I graduated from college with a fine art degree and worked at an art supply store. That was my first exposure to the business and supply end of the arts.

**D:** What advice would you give a beginner in the moulding industry?

**G:** The moulding industry today is very challenging. Mostly relying on imports, it has become very competitive both locally and around the globe. Due to the current climate of world affairs, the amount of inventory needs to increase to cover all the delays and the demand of the market, which creates issues of space and cost increase.

**D:** What goals do you have for your business?

**G:** The goal for our business is to make Universal Framing Products the best moulding supplier this industry has ever seen. We would like to excel in every way, from service to quality and price, and strive to meet the expectations of the most demanding customers.

**D:** Where do you think the art and framing industry is headed over the next five or 10 years?

**G:** I think this industry is constantly evolving and creating new avenues in which to prosper. It is a fashion product industry that is updating itself on a regular basis.

**D:** What does Universal pride itself on?

**G:** Universal Framing Products prides itself in movement—adjusting to the needs of the industry and not standing still.

**D:** What are some of Universal's new products?

**G:** From the new Valucore collection to the fashion statements of

LaPietra and Serengeti collections, our new products offer a wide selection.

**D:** What advantage do they give framers?

**G:** Our goal is to provide the framer with the tools they need to make their business more profitable. That's the advantage of working with Universal Framing Products.

**D:** What do you think about polystyrene mouldings?

**G:** Polystyrene products have formed a niche in the marketplace. I believe it will continue to grow as long as new innovative finishes are introduced. Our new Valucore collection is the perfect example. It is so different that it has attracted the attention of the wall decor industry as well as the custom framer who had never considered polystyrene products before.

**D:** Do you see China as a threat or a help to the marketplace?

**G:** China impacts our industry in several ways. Manufacturing mass produced art products is their specialty, which can certainly affect employment in that segment of the market. On the other hand, when it comes to creativity, on hand availability, quality and reliability for many different products, our domestic industry has them beat. I think that working hand in hand can create many benefits in a creative industry like ours.

**D:** What do you have hanging on your walls at home?

**G:** The artwork that I show at home must have personal meaning to me. I need to connect with it in some way, possibly an event in my life or a particular memory or trip, surrounding myself with fragments of past experiences.

*For more information about Universal Framing Products, call 818-686-0700, or visit [www.universalframing.com](http://www.universalframing.com).*

