

By Jennifer Bell *Intell p.11*
The Intelligencer *Nov. 20/99*

STIRLING-RAWDON — When it comes to woodworking, Boris Manfreda says no job is too big or too small.

Specially designed cabinets for department stores, custom-built drawers for professional offices, or "just about anything" he's asked to make are on the go in Manfreda's workshop, beside his home just off the Ridge Road near Stirling.

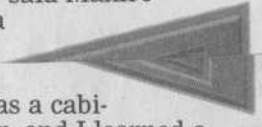
Surrounded by piles of lumber, Formica, particleboard and even a conveyor system to speed up the painting process, Manfreda — who started M.B. Woodwork in 1984 — had a varied and interesting career before finally turning to woodworking as a livelihood.

"I've been a labourer, a dairy farmer, a machinist and an engineer, and I even wanted to be a trapper," said Manfreda with a grin.

"But my father was a cabinetmaker, and I learned a lot about wood from him. I think I knew I'd be doing that eventually."

Raised and educated in Europe, Manfreda trained as a machinist before coming to Canada in 1969.

His employment history includes working as a Computerized Numerical Control operator



at Bata Engineering and a machinist at Trenton Machine Tools before he struck out on his own in 1984.

And he operated a dairy farm near Stirling for four years, before deciding "it was too much work and not enough pay" and went back to machining.

Today, his 4,200 square-foot shop is filled with numerous materials. This enables Manfreda to take an order, design a piece, and get right to work.

He's completed some large contracts for both local and national clients, including manufacturing car stereo display cabinets for the Canadian Tire chain.

He built a prototype for the company several years ago and after he was awarded the contract, had to produce 1,000 units within two months.

"I was definitely busy then," he recalled. "I had to hire 12 people to get everything done."

He still manufactures the cabinets, although on a smaller scale, when new stores open up or mod-

ifications need to be made to existing products, said Manfreda.

And he's currently working on furnishing a veterinary office, building custom cabinets, exam tables, shelving, benches and countertops for Hastings Veterinary Hospital.

Manfreda does all custom work, and can create just about any type of cabinet, cupboard or shelving.

"All I need is an idea," he said with a grin.