

TECHNICAL SOURCE GUIDE

DURAFLEX

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Last November the UMVN video studio (at the University of Missouri--Kansas City) chose to work with a permanent stage set rather than build anew each year. The design selected was a Victorian English Drawing Room which included the requisite quantities of molding detail. The lack of available construction labor required that we purchase all the specified molding including curved pieces applied around two Gothic arch doorways. We investigated several solutions to obtaining the curved details we needed. Kerfing wood moldings proved too labor intensive for our budget, as did both casting from WEP (water expanded polyester) and vac-u-form. Additionally, we felt that the vac-u-form and carved foam were just not durable enough for a set that could be used "in perpetuity."

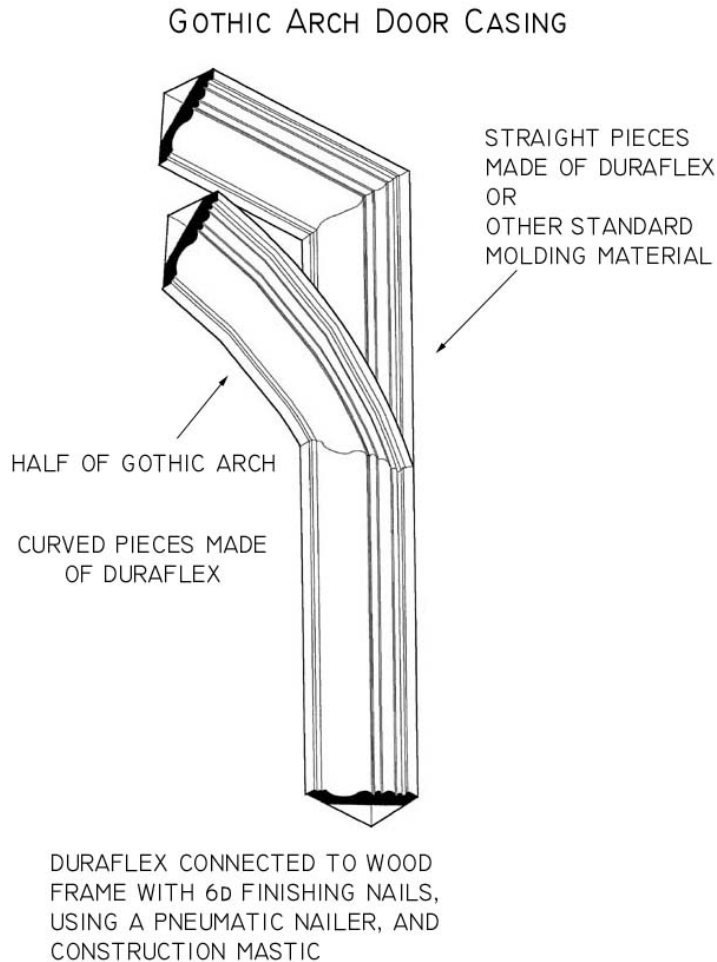
After a great deal of research, much of it on the World Wide Web, we found a product that would allow us to accomplish these doorways without the need for kerfing, casting, or carving. We settled upon a product from a company called RESINART called DURAFLEX. Billed as "the original flexible molding," it is made of a dense polyester resin composite. Having been available since 1968, it is a tested alternative to curved wood applications that can be cut, shaped, and sanded with the woodworking equipment available in any scene shop. Construction mastic and pneumatic nailers are sufficient for fastening. Finishing methods are also the same as with solid wood since DURAFLEX is compatible with any common form of paint without a need for primer coats. The material takes stain, and for that reason is available in three different grain finish styles: oak, pine, or smooth. DURAFLEX, is available in 6' to 12' lengths or in custom formed sweeps to fit any radius requirement. Because it is flexible, it is easy to ensure a perfect fit around any arc. RESINART will supply most standard molding patterns as well as custom shapes.

We discovered a few notes on usage in the course of our project. Although, a sharp saw blade makes cutting easiest, we found that rather than producing "sawdust," thin slices came off the blade in peels--much like apple's skin. As with many plastic products, we found that working this material caused few equipment problems other than dulling saw blades. In fastening the material, the company recommends that the nails be kept at least 6" apart and 3/8" from any edge. Pre-drilling is not necessary, as long as you are using 6d. or smaller finish nails. In finishing, RESINART suggests that a heavily pigmented stain will produce the best results. We successfully used FEV (French Enamel Varnish--a mixture of clear shellac, leather dye, and denatured alcohol over a paint base coat. We found that the material may require multiple coats of stain since it does not absorb the finish as quickly as some wood. On another, but important note, The MSDS shows that the safety precautions required in working this material closely mirror those for any standard woodworking project, primarily protection from dust exposure.

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DURAFLEX is not necessarily an option for every production budget level. Our project had a substantial allotment for materials, and this was fortunate since we used an expensive crown molding as a door casing. For that reason, we ordered enough to use for both the straight casing as well as the pre-formed arcs we required. All together, we purchased 50' of this molding, which cost \$540.00 (about \$11.00 a foot). Projects on a more modest budget could buy what is needed need solely for the curved portions, since the standard patterns found in wood moldings are available from this company, so you can use a combination of both. Ordering specially formed arcs is quite simple. A fax of a shop drawing noting pertinent details of radius, width, and molding style will suffice. Turn-around time was less than a week for our order.

RESINART only sells through its distributors, usually local lumber and building suppliers, but is more than happy to assist you in finding or setting up a distributor. Also, the company will ship directly to you once you have ordered through the distributor.



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For more information, or to locate a local dealer you can contact the RESINART company at:

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Costa Mesa, CA 92627
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