

Working with ornamental mouldings

By DAVID AGRELL of Agrell Architectural Carving



➡ **THE PURPOSE OF** architectural mouldings is to give definition to a room or piece of furniture by providing a contrast of light and dark. To add further texture and character, they can be decorated with repeating motifs, such as those hand-carved by Astor & Mallet, the made-to-order product line of Agrell Architectural Carving.

When choosing an ornamental moulding, it is important to understand the scale of your space and what you are hoping to achieve with the decoration – only then will you meet your budget while not sacrificing quality workmanship. For example, don't choose a highly complex and therefore expensive design carved into a 75mm-tall profile if you're installing it 6 metres in the air. Obviously the end result will not be visually effective and you'll be spending money on detail that's not seen or appreciated. In that instance,

seek a stronger, bolder and typically more straightforward design. A simple design can be just as pleasing when executed properly. By contrast, poorly designed, badly executed or machine-carved ornamentation can be a disaster and you're better off with no decoration at all!

Astor & Mallet's mouldings are carved into one of five standard profiles – cyma recta, cyma reversa, ovolo, torus or shallow torus – all shapes commonly found in traditional architectural ornamentation. You'll notice no fillets (flat areas), dentils, ogees or other extraneous details have been added to the profiles. Instead, Astor & Mallet has kept them simple – stripped down to their essential shapes – to allow the designer more flexibility in how the mouldings are integrated into a scheme.

Here's a little primer on Astor & Mallet's moulding profiles. Cyma recta mouldings have a sweeping upper convex curve, so they're ideal for use in cornices and crown mouldings. Some cyma recta mouldings feature a beak at the top to give the impression that foliage motifs are folding over, as if affected by gravity. Cyma reversa mouldings are similar to cyma recta mouldings, but flipped upside down. They're thicker toward the top so are typically used to visually support upper elements. Many cyma reversa mouldings can also be used in cyma recta applications. Either way, the mouldings are sprung at 45 degrees, meaning they attach at a 45-degree angle via two beveled edges.

Use ovolo or quarter-round mouldings to frame panels, or pair them with cyma-type mouldings to upgrade a cornice. Though the most recognisable ovolo ornament is egg and dart, Astor & Mallet offers many alternatives. As with the cyma-type mouldings, Astor & Mallet's ovolo profiles are sprung at 45 degrees for flawless installation.

Torus mouldings typically have a half-round profile and are often used as a visual separation of two design ideas, such as at the transition from a cornice to an unembellished wall. They integrate well into baseboards, door casings, chair rails and other typical trim applications. Shallow torus mouldings are similar, but in large sizes can act as friezes for entablatures or overdoors, fireplaces or cornices.

Astor & Mallet offers nearly 50 different hand-carved mouldings, each available in an exhaustive range of sizes. Best of all, you can order exactly the amount you need to fit a project. □



ASTOR & MALLETT



Shop online for the finest hand-carved decoration

WWW.ASTORANDMALLET.COM

UK AGENT: KATE@AGRELLCARVING.CO.UK
(+44) 01233-500252