



Daniel Excell, Chris Watson and Hisashi Cole.

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AscentPro smooths peaks in workflow

At Excell Joinery there's a level of resourcefulness far beyond that of most NZ workshops. This independent spirit comes with the territory: Excell Joinery is in TeAnau, gateway to Fiordland, and remote enough that any business located there has to be capable, and resilient.

Owner Daniel Excell grew up in TeAnau, doing his apprenticeship in the same shed his business is located in now, before travelling abroad then returning to set up the company in 2002.

With three full time staff, and covering TeAnau and the Southland region, Excell Joinery offers the complete range of panel-based and solid wood joinery. While the bulk of their work is residential kitchens and commercial joinery, Daniel and his team will turn their hand to anything – from renovation, boat fit-outs, even furniture.

With the importance of tourism to the TeAnau economy, Excell's workload is very seasonal, and so it's winter when most of the

commercial work has to take place. But with skilled labour limited in the area Daniel was finding that at peak times he was having to turn work away because they simply didn't have the capacity. Daniel's solution was to purchase a CNC. He'd been to AWISA and looked at what was available, and eventual settling on the AscentPro E3.

"I knew moving to CNC would be a huge learning curve for us" says Daniel, "so the backup available from Jacks was crucial in our decision. We're still on that learning curve, but with experience of Chris in the workshop and the support we've had from Nick at Jacks, we're getting there".

Chris Watson joined Excell Joinery from Invercargill where he'd previously worked with CNC, so he has taken on the primary responsibility for programming and operating the AscentPro E3. New to PRO100 and Aspan – the CAD/CAM software – Chris has quickly picked up the skills required. "I've fiddled around with design software before and it's all reasonably simple" he says. Confident in working directly in Aspan, Chris has already redrawn

many of the cabinets in their software library to suit the style of manufacture they prefer.

Despite the challenges of adapting to CNC production Daniel has been pleased with their progress. "Our workshop processes have changed dramatically" he explains. "I used to draw up a cutting list, we'd cut it up and assemble, fixing any problems along the way. Now Chris does the bulk of the work on the PC before we've even got to the workshop. There's no winging it any longer!" he laughs. "But we're saving a lot of time. With the saw we'd take 4 to 5 days to prepare a kitchen, and now we're turning them around in 1 or 2."

This new efficiency has meant that Excell Joinery can now take on many of the jobs they were previously turning away. "We're still growing in confidence with what we can do on the machine" says Daniel. "It's still got enormous potential, but it's enabled us to get work done quickly when we're busy."

As well as giving them the capacity to take on more work, the E3 is also starting to provide

the type of flexibility that is useful, especially in a remote location such as TeAnau.

"I've been experimenting with signs – working with different tooling to get different results" says Chris. Other uses of CNC pop up too. "Recently we found ourselves needing the slotted pieces that window louvres fit into. Not the sort of thing always in stock in TeAnau, and we couldn't wait 3 days for stock to arrive. So I drew them up in Aspan and made them!"

Despite being hours from the nearest city it's this mix of resourcefulness, kiwi ingenuity and the willingness to harness new technology that makes Excell Joinery a local success story.



*AscentPro is sold and serviced in New Zealand by W&R Jacks
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