



James Mackay (right), and colleague Zac Norris in front of the Homag S-300 with XES unit on the right.

## XES unit - PUR without the hassle

Located in the flourishing industrial area of Silverdale, in North Auckland, Perfect Lines is a fine example of the growth and potential of the area. Taking up around half of a purpose-built commercial building within five minutes of the motorway, Perfect Lines looks brand new from the street. Inside the large workshop and the impression of new doesn't change, spotlessly clean, the feel is of speed and efficiency, and this is backed up by the machines along the rear wall. Most recent of all is a Homag S-300, model 1440 FC Edition – the latest example of efficiency from German edgebander specialists Homag.

Perfect Lines is run by James Mackay. With around 10 years joinery experience behind him he represents the new generation of joiners within Auckland's busy residential scene. It's clear he is busy, organised, and planning for significant growth in the future. With European machinery, including the very latest in edgebanding technology, the future of Perfect Lines looks strong.

Family connections within joinery in both Auckland and Christchurch has meant James grew up in the industry. From building, joinery, stair-making and kitchen design, he knows what's required to complete a job and get a customer's satisfaction. Perfect Lines is focused on the Auckland

market, with a focus on mid to high end kitchens, and a willingness to produce whatever else a customer requires. James and colleague Zac Norris offer a complete service – from design through manufacture to installation. James does the customer-facing and design work while Zac is responsible for manufacturing. Together they carry out the installations, predominantly to ensure complete quality control from a project's start to finish.

The Perfect Lines workshop would be the envy of many. Designs created in Microvellum are machined on a Weeke CNC, then edged on one of the most recent Homag machines in the country. What's more the S-300 is equipped with the latest PUR

glue technology from Homag, with James and Zac proving that the benefits of PUR glue are not just for large companies with significant production.

“The benefits of PUR glue are pretty clear” explains James, pointing to a PUR-edged panel of mdf that has been sitting in a bucket of water for over six weeks and looks as good as the day it was edged. (Check out the Perfect Lines Instagram page for updates – PUR is part of their marketing strategy too.) “You get a near invisible glue-line and a water and heatproof bond that you cannot separate. The price difference for the glue isn't a significant factor, and with good planning then managing the glue itself isn't a problem”



After six weeks in a bucket of water this PUR edged MDF looks as good as the day it was edged.

Unlike EVA glue, PUR crosslinks with exposure to moisture in the atmosphere. A certain amount of management is required to avoid PUR solidifying in the workings of an edgebander or inside the glue-pot, and cleaning the resulting mess is the stuff

of nightmares. In years gone by various methods of prolonging the crosslinking period have been used. The most successful being storage tanks with nitrogen gas. Last year, however, Homag introduced the XES unit to service and store glue-pots with PUR glue in them. The beauty of the XES is that it's compact and doesn't require nitrogen gas. This makes it ideal for small to medium-sized joinery shops wanting the benefits of PUR glue without the hassle. Catering for two glue tanks and incorporating a cleaning station that doubles as a pre-heater, the XES enables glue-pots containing PUR glue to remain useful for around 72 hours – significantly longer than the few hours that PUR usually lasts when exposed to the open atmosphere.

“Those two days are more than enough to work through any rework we have to do on a job” says James. “If we cut and edge on a Monday we've got til Wednesday before the glue goes off. We use the PUR on all our finished panels, and what's left and not used we can use on the carcasses. Once we've cleaned the PUR tank then any more carcass work we process with standard EVA.”

James says the cleaning and purging process is a small price to pay for the quality of edging the Homag produces. “The cleaning process takes around 40 minutes overall, but you only need to be in front of the XES for about 15 minutes. The rest of the time the flushing agent is being melted or dumped and you can be away doing other work.”

The Homag S-300 comes equipped with the ease-of-use, automation and speed that means Perfect Lines are fast and efficient. “Other than changing the tape roll then everything is pretty-much controlled from the easyTouch controller” says James. “It's got servo motors driving most settings, and so changing programmes is fast and easy. We've been building a library of edging styles and moving between them is just a few taps on the screen.”

With their old machine James estimates they spent around an hour cleaning panels after every hour edging. With the Homag, for every hour spend edging then they're saving that hour of cleaning. The time saving in clean-up in conjunction with the quality of finish and speed of changeover has effectively meant their production output has grown without the need for another member of staff.

James is well aware his Homag is currently under-utilised. But as with having a larger than required workshop, having the scope to expand is part of his growth strategy. “Both our CNC and the Homag have the capacity to do much, much more. And doing more is what we're planning to do.” James is realistic about what's required to grow. “Sure, the investment level for the machine was higher up front” he says. But why buy a machine we're going to outgrow in a year or so? We may as well invest in the bigger machine and enjoy the benefits now.”

It was a similar reasoning that led James to invest in three glue pots. With Homag's quick change gluepot system, along with the ability for each pot to take PUR or standard EVA glue, then he has a pot for all occasions, and can swap between them fast. “We have no limits now,” says James.

“No limits” sounds like millennial talk, but in James's case it's absolutely true. With just the two of them at Perfect Lines, word-of-mouth filling their order book, and a rising reputation around Auckland, then growth is inevitable. Already they've been approached for commercial work, and as well as kitchens have been working on laundries, wardrobes and even solid-timber mantelpieces of late.

“We'll take on most things” says James. “The plan is to grow. And we have the space, the skills and the machines to do it.”

