

# Kamo Kitchens

## family values and smart machinery drive success

*Jake Fox once considered a career in architecture - until the thought of six more years of study changed his mind. A trade expo introduced him to cabinetmaking and a chat with the team at Alloy Yachts led to an apprenticeship in high-end marine cabinetry.*

He qualified as a boatbuilder specialising in superyacht interiors, but the GFC hit the industry hard. It was time to move on and Jake shifted into a range of roles - from building and furniture-making to a ten-year stint at Fonterra.

Even while at Fonterra, Jake kept his cabinetmaking skills sharp. "I was busy most weekends," he says. "I reckon a lot of my family and mates have a kitchen or some cabinetry I've built."

In late 2022 an ideal workshop came up for lease just minutes from home. With the timing right and already set up for cabinetry, Jake launched Kamo Kitchens in January 2024.

"Kamo Kitchens is a family-run customer service business. Quality and the customer experience are at the heart of everything we do. We also back ourselves on delivering excellent value," says Jake. "All our carcasses are made from plywood core board - it's tougher, more water-resistant, better for the environment and it holds hardware way better than MDF or chipboard. We also only use Blum door and drawer hardware, which is known to be one of the best."

The inherited machinery got things started but Jake knew early on that the edgebander needed an upgrade. "The old machine just applied tape - no trimming."

Working with Wesley at Jacks, Jake chose a Felder P200 pre-glued edgebander. "It's compact, easy to use and great for a small business getting established. Jobs that used to take a whole day are now done in a couple of hours."



Wesley Welman (Jacks Technical Sales Consultant) with Jake Fox and his new Felder sliding table saw.

Switching between finishes is also much easier. "Most of our carcasses are white, but we usually have a black box in the mix - especially around ovens. With the P200 we can jump from white to black and back in minutes. No mucking around with glue pots. And the pre-glued tape has colour-matched glue, so the join line is clean."

Next up was the sliding table saw. After researching and visiting showrooms in Auckland, Jake decided on the Format-4 Kappa 450 x-motion, also supplied and installed by Jacks.

"It cost a bit more than other saws, but we're using it every day - it's our main money maker, so why not get the best? Once the Kappa arrived I couldn't wait for our first scheduled job. I ended up coming in on Sunday just to cut the kitchen myself!"

The Kappa 450 features a programmable overhead control panel for blade height, angle and rip fence position. "It's smart too.

When you flip the fence down to get it closer to the blade, it automatically adjusts the readout to compensate."

They also regularly use the automatic feature for rebates. "We do a fair bit of rebating. Being able to program them saves so much time."

Another feature liked by the team at Kamo Kitchens is the remote start and stop buttons mounted conveniently on the sliding table. "When you've loaded a full sheet on the table, it's a huge help to start the machine without awkwardly trying to reach back to the control panel."

The automatic rip fence alone has sped up cutting by about a third - but it's the repeatable accuracy that's made the biggest difference. "We used to batch cut components of the same size, then move the fence and cut the next lot. It meant job parts were scattered all over the place. Now we can just cut one panel at a time, knowing it's bang-on every time."

A year and a half in, Kamo Kitchens is already building a strong local reputation. "We've done a fair bit of advertising but we're already noticing a lot of work coming in from word of mouth. We're currently booked three months ahead. I thought it would take a while to get to this point, but the community has backed us - and we are living up to the hype."

Next on Kamo Kitchens' radar is a range of outdoor kitchens using durable materials. Their new Hammer Planer and Thicknesser 410mm will make light work of machining solid timber components. With a clear focus on quality, strong community support and plans to extend the product range, Kamo Kitchens looks set to become a long-term fixture in the local cabinetry scene.

