



The Fimal Concept Saw with Richard Smith, Aiden Frew, Isabelle Pryde, Paul Reid and Cameron McKelvey.

Improving work flows and lightening the load

“We don’t work for builders” says Paul Reid of Tauranga Kitchens. “We specialise in bespoke kitchens and often take on jobs that others won’t”. A carpenter by trade, Paul spent a 30 year OE in the UK doing everything from internal fit-outs installing cabinetry to painting and decorating before returning to New Zealand in 2018.

After a couple of years manufacturing cabinets in Hawera the lure of his roots called him back to Whakatane where he started Woodpecker Cabinets. As the business grew he saw an opportunity to upscale and diversify and so in December last year he purchased Tauranga Kitchens, in Papamoa. Tauranga Kitchens came with three experienced workshop employees: one qualified cabinetmaker with

the other two in the process of certification. “A significant reason for buying the business was the people. We’re an experienced team, and can tackle the hard jobs.”

To get the most of his team’s skills, and to future proof the business, Paul recognised he’d need to upgrade the machinery. He easily identified the edgebander as being ripe for a good return on new investment – with edges being run over a buzzer prior to edgebanding. Paul also noted the workshop’s dimension saw was old with inadequate guarding. Paul knew he had a duty of care to his staff and that an accident could jeopardize the future of the business. He decided to contract Isabelle Pryde from Safe Staff Ltd to help identify the next machines. As part of his research, Paul took a drive up to the Jacks showroom in Auckland, where he was immediately impressed with the

Fimal Concept 350 Saw, which was soon ordered – along with a new Homag edgebander. “The Fimal offered many advantages. We could have replaced our existing saw with a modern version of the same thing, but I felt replacing like for like wasn’t moving us forward enough” says Paul.

The Fimal saw combines the advantages a beamsaw with a dimension saw. The material is held in place by a pressure beam while the fully enclosed sawblade cuts through the material. Unlike a beamsaw, mitre and compound mitre cuts are possible with the sawblade tilt function, and mitre fence. Paul rattles off a list of other advantages - some of which he’d anticipated and others that had been learned since installation. “My guys do far less material handling which reduces fatigue. They tell me they’re not going home tired, smelly and covered

in dust. Because the material is stationary while being cut, the cut quality and accuracy has improved. When we cut something at 650mm, it is 650mm not 650.5mm. Also, we don’t scratch the board because we’re not pushing the material across metal and aluminum surfaces. The phenolic surface of the Fimal is very forgiving.” The workshop layout has improved too. “Our old saw used to dominate the workshop,” says Paul, “whereas the Fimal saw is placed in a corner near the entrance where our board comes in.”

The plus points for the Fimal keep coming: “Another benefit to me is that I had a work experience student in and within 10 minutes I could safely leave him to cut cabinet parts on the Fimal. The joy on his face after cutting and assembled his first cabinet was gold! Also, with the reduction in lifting heavy panels we’ll be able

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to employ from a much wider pool of men and women.”

The Fimal saw has also lifted the moral of staff because it shows the boss cares. On Paul’s approach to upgrading the workshop, Isabell from Safe Staff Ltd says: “I take my hat off to Paul for immediately addressing the most critical risk that was identified during a risk assessment of his workshop. He could have simply put the existing guard back on the saw to keep me happy, but he didn’t. Instead, he removed the original dimension saw from his workshop altogether and replaced it with the Fimal Panel Saw. This has eliminated numerous risks that were associated with the original saw, including manual handling, dust exposure, complacency and fatigue. It has improved the workflows and has also freed up more space in the workshop - resulting in a much improved overall workspace.”

With the issues around the old dimension saw well and truly taken care of, Paul is now looking forward to the time savings he and his team will enjoy with the recent installation of their new Homag 1120FC edgebander - which includes pre-milling and corner rounding. No more double handling by running edges over a buzzer. There’s no doubt that the workshop at Tauranga Kitchens, with the addition of the new machinery, is now one of the safest and productive in the area. It’s no wonder they’re capable of taking on the hard jobs.



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