



Ryan Hill in front of the Format-4 Kappa 400.

accurate and simple as a desk top calculator

From the workshop in Putaruru, Hopkins Joinery provide timber, panel and aluminium joinery for the Southern Waikato region. Established over 35 years ago, Ron Hopkins and his team cater for all types of work: renovations, new builds, kitchens, doors, stairs, retrofitting double glazing and more. Customers are primarily residential or farmers, and much of their work is repeat business – even from happy customers who have moved away (Waiheke Island!)

Hopkins Joinery's busy workshop is headed by Ryan Hill. Ryan did his apprenticeship in Kerikeri and has been moving south ever since, settling in Putaruru about 11 years ago. Over that time Ryan's noticed quite a change in the work they're doing. "10 years ago most of the panel work we did was really only three colours. But today the customer has a huge choice. Multiple coloured board, high-gloss – there's so much choice." Keeping up the technology that allows the customer to have that choice is something that Ron is well known for. A very early adopter of the flatbed CNC, Ron is someone who does his research. His purchasing decision is around two key factors: up to date technology to match the workmanship Hopkins Joinery produces; and investment in machines that will last many years. Their latest machine fits both criteria: a Format-4 Kappa 400 X-motion saw, from the Felder Group.

Format-4 range is Felder Group's premium range of machinery, and the Kappa 400 is a good example of the level of quality and specification Format-4 represents. "The first thing we noticed when it replaced our old saw was an instant improvement in accuracy" says Ryan. "It's precise, and the programmable features make it really simple to use. The overhead controller offers lots of features but it's as simple to use as a desktop calculator."

There are plenty of other features to impress. "There's lots of little things" says Ryan. "For example the remote start buttons on the end of the table – meaning once you've loaded a big sheet you don't have to clamber under the table to turn the saw on. Also the digital display of angle compensation on the cross-cut fence makes setting up angles simple. And it's great having a place to store the blade-changing tools inside the saw. We use three blades and change it a lot, so having the tools right there is a great time-saver. Even better, you identify each blade in the controller and the saw automatically compensates for its width, diameter etc."

Ryan points out another time-saving feature too: minimal maintenance. "We just keep it clean, blow it down regularly. There's no greasing, no wandering around with the CRC can. The X-roll table is as smooth and stable as when we got it."

In a busy workshop the motorised rise and fall, tilt and rip fence positioning are key to ensuring setting up the saw is fast. Ryan explains: "One guy might be doing toe-kicks, and the next person running a groove, or running a group of draw-backs. It doesn't matter. Push a few buttons on the controller and the saw's ready for the next job. It's quick." And although the workshop runs CNCs, the saw is used just as often, and particularly for work that needs a fast turn-around. "We get a lot of repairs," explains Ryan, "and it's a way in for new customers. Because if you can't do a small job well people won't come back for a big job."

The Kappa 400 isn't the only Felder Group machine in the Hopkins Joinery workshop. There's also a FD921 horizontal borer that drills for the dowels they use for their cabinets. As with the Kappa 400, Ryan's impressed with the speed and simplicity of the machine – how quick and easy it is to get excellent results. It's these quality results that keep Hopkins Joinery the only name in town, and it's wise, long-term investment in top technology that has kept them that way for decades.



The Felder range of machinery
is sold in New Zealand by W&R Jacks
www.jacks.co.nz