

Dimter S90

provides speed and accuracy for Wiri Timber

Managing Director of Wiri Timber Lance Worthington recalls establishing the business back in 1986. “We were located just down the road from where we are today, just where the motorway on-ramp is now” he says. “We named the business for this location.” And what a location it is! Five acres of prime real estate in heart of Wiri’s industrial area, very near Auckland airport.

Given the economic situation at the time, it was a tumultuous beginning for Wiri Timber. But having weathered the stock market crash and its subsequent fallout then the only way for the business was up, and that’s where Lance and his partner Danny Brown have taken it. He moved from wholesale timber supply into pre-nail, and aligned Wiri with timber connection specialists Pryda. Founding members of the Frame and Truss Manufacturer’s Association (FTMA), today Wiri Timber is now very much a family business, with Lance’s son and daughter both involved. There are 40 staff, including 12 on the workshop floor and 5 in design. Their market is predominantly from Mangawai to Pokeno, with a side business (Wiri Pacific) that exports to the Pacific Islands. There’s a timber hardware warehouse on site too.

Wiri Timber’s main market today is providing pre-nailed structures for mid to high-range homes. “We work closely with project managers, builders and developers” explains Lance. “Our brand is key, and what supports our brand is ensuring we provide the best possible result for every job we undertake.” In Wiri Timber’s case such a focus on quality is key when you consider that every truss and frame they produce is a custom size. “We



Wiri Timber have found their new Dimter S90 Speed optimising saw simple, accurate and productive.

have a very strong emphasis on quality control” says Lance. “We have to. Quality starts at the cutting. If the initial cutting isn’t pin-point accurate then there will be problems further down the assembly chain.”

Sitting at the heart of Wiri Timber’s cutting accuracy is a Dimter S90 Speed optimising saw, from German woodworking machinery specialists Weinig. “I struggle to comprehend how we manufactured without it” says Lance. “We should have had it years ago. Its simplicity and accuracy and the productivity it gives us means our business can only go forward. The Dimter complements everything else we’ve got here.”

What led to Lance’s interest in the Dimter was a need to improve Wiri’s processing of short timber lengths. Wiri’s Razer 5-axis CNC saws offer excellent accuracy and productivity on complex, angled cuts, but are a very expensive resource when tied up cutting simple blocks for length. The manual alternative for preparing

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these shorter sections was time-consuming, and lacked accuracy. “I did some research” says Lance, “and saw the Dimter operating in Australia and the US.” From there Lance worked with Peter Cook at W & R Jack Ltd – agents for the Weinig Dimter saw – to specify the right model and specifications to suit Wiri’s requirements.

Putting the Dimter S90 in the middle of Wiri’s cutting process quickly helped their efficiency, but for shorter lengths they saw huge improvements in both speed, and accuracy. “We’ve linked the saw to our Pryda software, so design

software is generating the cutting list for all our cut components – not just the angled cuts on the Razers. What this means is on our Dimter S90 we do in 20 minutes what we used to do in 2 hours,” explains Lance.

The Dimter S90 Speed is capable of taking timber up to 6.3 metres long, and isn’t named ‘Speed’ for nothing. A crossfeed chain buffers and feeds timber onto the infeed table, over which a pusher incorporating a laser photo-eye is mounted. This pusher scans each ingoing piece during the back stroke (at up to 240m/min) measuring the timber length and optimising according to a pre-determined cut list for length. The saw is capable of scanning for grading marks of up to four grades too, but in Wiri’s case this isn’t required as they’re using stress-graded framing timber.

A powerful 13.5kW motor housed inside a strong steel frame, combined with precise and dynamic pushing and positioning

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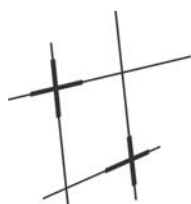
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Dimter S90 (continued)



The saw takes data from Pryda’s cutlist, as well as its own measuring software, and labels each workpiece accordingly, with length, wall and stud number. Such detail on every workpiece is invaluable for assembly.

results in a fast, reliably accurate cut, and a very high daily output. Wiri’s S90 also features a long 10 metre outfeed table, with a variable speed belt controlled by frequency converter, and five kickers. This means accurate handling of timber of various sizes and weights – with very heavy or long lengths triggering the belt to automatically work a stop-and-go operation.

Another key element to Wiri Timber’s efficiency for assembly is the Dimter’s workpiece labelling. Mounted before the sawblade on the fence side is an HP cartridge printer, clearly marking each workpiece even before it’s cut. The saw takes data from Pryda’s cutlist, as well as its own measuring software, and labels each workpiece accordingly, with length, wall and stud number. Such detail on every workpiece is invaluable for assembly. Having a smooth and automatic system passing clear information all the way from design through to fabrication is crucial to Wiri’s efficient operation.

“Our Dimter wasn’t cheap” says Lance, “but the benefits have been huge and it has been well worth the investment. If I was to start up another pre-cut operation

elsewhere, the Dimter would be the first piece of kit I’d buy.” As well as being core to their productivity, Lance also speaks highly of how simple it is to operate. “It’s well built, and logical to use” he explains. “Installation was quick and easy, and Pryda connected their software without any dramas. We’re currently working a nine-hour shift, and with three trained operators we’ve got production humming.”

Although they have the systems, machinery and space to do so, Wiri Timber isn’t chasing volume. “We’re focused on quality, not quantity” says Lance. “I know what happens when you go down the volume-based route – you create a monster that needs constant feeding, and the first thing to suffer is the price.” Over their long history, Lance and his team at Wiri aren’t about to tinker with their successful formula. “Over 30 years we’ve created a successful brand based on quality and accuracy,” says Lance. “Reputation is everything in this game and I’m very proud of ours.”

