

# Shaping the **future**

## CNC machining center addition increases profitability for Alabama millwork company

By Jeff Crissey

**L**ocated on the plains of Alabama, J.P. Millwork has become one of the fastest growing millwork companies in the state. The Wetumpka, Ala.-based company started 26 years ago as a small family-owned cabinet shop and slowly found its way into the architectural millwork market that it thrives in today.

Through the years, the company added casework and other wood products to its product offering to gain a broader client base. Several years ago, it dropped the cabinetry side of the business to concentrate solely on the high-end custom millwork market.

“We were enjoying the high-end residential market

that the custom millwork side of the business allowed us to reach, and we decided to switch gears and concentrate on that business,” says Henry Presnell, general manager. “There’s less competition in the custom millwork market than there is in cabinetry, and there are fewer large millwork companies to compete with.”

As the company’s client base grew, it began to research other methods of efficient processing. In August of 2003, the company added its first CNC machine, a Busellato JET series CNC machining center, available from Delmac Machinery Group, to handle the radius work and hinge preparation for its door and window line.



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## Process Of The Month



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Two Weing Unimat 23E moulders handle all the milling for the company's door, window and molding lines.

"We purchased the Busellato with the intention of increasing our production capacity and making radius work profitable rather than something we had to take on to get the job," says Presnell.

To ensure its product offering will meet whatever molding profiles an architect may specify, J.P. Millwork has the ability to custom grind on site using a Weing Rondamat

grinder. The company has amassed a library of more than 700 profiles over the years and has come to rely heavily on its grinder in its day-to-day operations.

"I can't see how we could operate our moulders and not have a grinder," says Presnell. "If you hit a nail or a piece of debris and it nicks the knife and you still have 1,500 feet of molding that you have to ship the

next day, you're in trouble. For us, that's not feasible. We reuse a lot of our custom knife profiles, and it's nice to know that if there's a problem with a knife we can fix it instantly and still satisfy our customer on time rather than having to ship the knife to be repaired and lose a couple days. By the time another company would be getting the knife back from the grinding service, our product is already being delivered and installed."

To further streamline the production process, J.P. Millwork is in the process of employing lean concepts to its manufacturing setup, a transition that Presnell says will be aided immensely by the efficiency of the Busellato CNC machining center.

"We foresee the addition of the Busellato will help us cut down on our lead times and be able to give us a more concrete idea of producing items, especially those with custom profiles because it will eliminate the layout time," says Presnell. "It already has paid off in terms of helping meet our production schedules now, and there's a lot we still have to learn, so we aren't even near realizing its full capabilities. We have already moved all our hinge prep to the Busellato and other assembly-type machining for the doors and jambs. All we have to do now in assembly is apply the units into the jambs and attach the hinges."

The company's current production begins in a new 9,500-sq.-ft. warehouse, where lumber is received. The company's three main product lines – molding, doors and windows – all start on a SCMI ripsaw where parts are ripped and then sent to the moulder department equipped with two Weing Unimat 23E moulders. The moulder knives are set up for axial constant so the company doesn't have to spend time making minute adjustments on the moulder. Parts for the company's molding line are sent

straight to packaging and shipping, while parts for the door and window lines are sent to the Busellato for further processing.

At the Busellato, an operator programs the machine using Genesis programming and operating software to machine the complicated radius work as well as any hinge assembly preparation required. The Busellato also is used to machine large batches of standard doors, but the company opts to manufacture small quantity custom orders with conventional machinery and tools for the time being.

“Once we become more efficient in programming, we’ll machine everything on the CNC,” says Presnell. “After we build up a catalog of different styles and profiles in the CNC machine, we’ll switch to programming the machine from software in the front office rather than



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After machining on the Busellato, parts are sent to assembly before they are run through a SCM Sandya 20 two-head sander that uses a 100-120 grit sequence. The remaining machinery on the shop floor includes 10 shapers, each with unique cutter profiles that are set up all the time. The company recently

acquired a Stegherr cross-joint milling machine for easier machining of parts for lighted doors and windows, a process previously machined using the shapers. **MW**

*For more information circle Reader Service numbers: Delmac Machinery 474, Weinig Group 475, SCMI 476, SCM Group 477, Stegherr 478*