JJ Smith Celebrate 200th Stromab Saw Installation

JJ Smith and their Italian manufacturing partner Stromab are celebrating the sale and installation of the 200th programmable cross cut saw supplied in the UK. The customer who has purchased the machine is JDP Furniture Group Ltd based in Nottingham, who are one of the leading independent UK furniture manufacturers. JDP produce around 1500 frames per week the majority of which they supply to group companies such as Celebrity, Cintique, Parker & Farr and Wade Upholstery.

Crosscutting in general forms an important part of the JJ Smith new machine product portfolio with particular emphasis on the Stromab range of saws which can be supplied in various different configurations and sizes to suit customer’s individual production requirements. The extensive range includes large capacity manual saws, straight and angled programmable crosscuts through to machines which incorporate in line notching or drilling for specialist applications.

The machine supplied to JDP is a TR500 with a Matrix 3 control unit with optimisation and cutting list downloading. Prior to placing the order Eddie O’Dwyer, Steve Warner and Mick Parris from JDP visited the W12 exhibition at the NEC in October where they looked at several machines. This was then followed up with visits to see machines working on site. Mick Parris the Mill Supervisor comments “We made sure we had a good look around to see which machines would meet our requirements. We wanted something that was simple to use, robustly built, accurate and had a good track record for reliability. After comparing various machines we decided that the Stromab Matrix gave us everything that we wanted and addition was within budget.”

The most popular model from the Stromab range is the Matrix series which can be supplied with a simple sequence cutting control unit for pack cutting. On the Matrix 3 and 4 models you have the facility of full optimisation and defecting. The machine at JDP was delivered on schedule and was up and running in less than two days. JDP Frames Manager Mark Warton added “The installation and training went very smoothly and the machine is now in full production. The Ethernet link back to the office is a real benefit as it has helped us prepare cutting lists remotely and download them to the saw whilst the machine is production, thus eliminating any time spent programming the machine on the workshop floor. In addition we have increased accuracy, safety and productivity as 90% of the crosscutting is now done on the Stromab Matrix which enabled us to reduce the manpower required for this work from two to one. We estimate that the pay back for the machine should be between 16 to 18 months from installation.”

JJ Smith Managing Director Martin Smith seen here presenting a celebratory bottle of fine Italian wine to Mark Warton commented "We are delighted to have reached the milestone of the 200th successful installation of a Stromab programmable saw and I was very pleased to hear the installation went smoothly and the machine is performing as expected. This installation cements our position as the leading supplier of automatic crosscuts in the UK, with the widest range of crosscutting solutions available to deal with the most simple through to the most demanding of requirements."
Crosscutting Investment By Staircraft Limited

Leading UK staircase manufacturer Staircraft Limited have recently made a significant investment in two new Stromab programmable cross cut saws that have helped boost production and solve their previous crosscutting bottleneck. The company which was set up over 25 years ago now operate from a modern purpose built 40,000 sq/ft facility in Nuneaton and employ approximately 70 staff. Specialising in the design and manufacture of staircases primarily for new build housing developments, they produce up to 350 flights of stairs per week.

Although Staircraft already use some of the latest state of the art manufacturing equipment, crosscutting had become something of a labour intensive operation with the majority of cutting being carried out on 5 manual pull over saws. In addition certain products such as handrails and base rails were first being manually cut oversize and then transfered on to one of the CNC routers to be exactly sized in terms of length and also the required raked angle cut. However although this ensured a high level of accuracy and quality of cut it involved double handling of the components while at the same time tying up the CNC’s for long periods. To solve this problem and help increase output production director Dean Lucas recognised the need to invest in dedicated equipment for this operation. With this in mind he contacted JJ Smith who are recognised as leading specialists in crosscutting solutions and systems. After some initial discussions with Martin Smith a visit was set up to see two different models of machine in operation at Smith’s Liverpool showroom. The first was a Stromab CT600 fully programmable push feed saw for straight or angled cutting and the second was a Stromab Matrix 1 straight cutting saw. The machines were successfully tested for accuracy and quality of cut on a range of Staircraft products and once the final specification had been agreed an order was confirmed.

The CT600 angle saw was specified with a 6m in feed capacity and 2m out feed table. As standard the machine is equipped with a 600mm dia. saw blade that can automatically rotate to the required angle via the pre programmed cutting list and is capable of cutting angles up to +/- 70 degrees. Programming is quick and simple thanks to the colour graphic touch screen controller and resident optimisation software. Additional options included were the Stromab ‘downloader’ software package which enables cutting lists to be created in the office and transferred directly to the machine via USB pen or ethernet cable link. In addition a label printer was supplied for the easy identification of the cut parts. The Matrix 1 model also has a 6m infeed capacity and is fitted with the standard base programming control unit, enabling cutting lists to be manually entered. This machine is now used for general straight cross cutting. Both the CT600 and Matrix 1 were specified with left to right feeding configurations to suit Staircraft’s production flow and factory layout.

The saws have now been installed for over 4 months and Dean Lucas comments “They are working very well and meeting all our expectations in terms of performance, accuracy and quality of cut. We particularly like that the they are very robustly built meaning they can easily cope with heavy sections or packs of timber. Also the programming and operation is very simple”. He adds “The CT600 has helped us increase production two fold with the same labour. We have also reduced the amount of handling while at the same time freeing up our CNC routers for other work. Another benefit is that we can now cut our infill pieces in packs and much more quickly and safely than we could do on the manual pull over saws”. With regards to the Matrix Saw Dean says this alone has helped increase production of general straight cut parts by over 50%. JJ Smith crosscutting product manager Kevin McGlone adds “It has been a pleasure to work with Staircraft on this project and it is very satisfying to see the machines we have supplied proving to be such a successful investment for them. Crosscutting equipment from manual stand alone pull over saws right through to fully automatic high speed crosscutting lines with handling options are now a major part out our new product portfolio, and as such JJ Smith are well placed to offer and assist customers with a full range of solutions to suit their individual production requirements”. 
Seventh Stromab Saw For Rowlinson

Rowlinson Packaging based in Wardle, Cheshire was founded in 1966 and is part of the long established Rowlinson group which also includes Rowlinson Timber and Rowlinson garden products. They specialise in the manufacture of standard and bespoke packing cases for both the UK and export markets and have a number of major international companies on their client list. Rowlinsons attach a high level of importance on quality and customer service, and were proud to be the first packaging company to achieve the Quality award ISO 9001 in 1989 and then in 2002 were awarded with the attainment of Environment Standard ISO 14001.

When it comes to selecting key items of manufacturing equipment Rowlinsons will only consider machinery that will give them a high level of production reliability and also work with suppliers who can offer on going technical and maintenance support. The company invested in their first Stromab Matrix programmable saw back in 2005 and this proved a huge success replacing 2 manual saws. Not only did it increase production, but also improved operator safety and gave a much higher level of repeat cutting accuracy. As a result a further 3 Matrix saws were added between 2007 and 2009.

More recently with production continuing to grow at Rowlinson’s Wardle and Thetford branch’s, managing director John Williams again had to consider the best way to increase his cross cutting capacity and as always carefully researched the market to ensure he selected the most suitable item of equipment. After reviewing a number of options and consulting with his shop floor supervisor Mark Gregory, they decided to place an order with JJ Smith for a further 3 Stromab Matrix ‘Plus’ programmable push fed cross cut saws. Mr. Williams comments “We had thought about through feed saws because of speed, but after careful consideration we decided that the Stromab saws would give us a higher level of versatility coupled with the cutting accuracy we need. Another factor was the new Matrix ‘Plus’ version has an increased operating speed meaning our production requirements could also be met. Obviously it also helped that our existing Stromab saws had served us well and that JJ Smith had always offered us a good back up service”.

The three machines ordered were the Matrix 1 model each with 6m in feed capacity, precision rack and pinion movement to the pusher, pneumatic lifting pusher, pneumatic side pressure, heavy duty all steel tables, saw unit with 500mm blade dia and 10hp motor and a 4m out feed table. The delivery and installation of the machines was staggered over a 3 month period with the last one just recently commissioned at Rowlinsons new factory extension in Thetford. Mark Gregory adds “Everything has been installed on time, on schedule and with no disruption or fuss. I particularly like the saws because they are robustly built and are so able to handle on a continual basis the packs of timber we cut all day every day. In addition they are really simple to program, very safe to use and require little or no day to day maintenance”. Kevin McGlone sales manager at JJ Smith comments “We regard it as a real feather in our cap that Rowlinson Packaging have once again selected JJ Smith and Stromab for this significant investment. We feel this highlights our ability to supply the latest cross cutting technology at competitive prices while at the same time offering customers the after sales service they expect”.

Cross cutting is an area JJ Smith have specialised in for many years and are able to supply anything from a basic stand alone manual saw with a simple mechanical or programmable stop right through to a fully automatic systems for straight or angled cutting with optimising, defecting and label printing options coupled with in feed and out feed handling systems. In addition saws can also be linked to dedicated office based design software enabling cutting lists to be down loaded direct to the machine.
Peter Ramsey Timber make it 5 Stromab Matrix Saws!

Peter Ramsey Timber, who are regarded as the leading Divan and Bed Slat component manufacturers in the UK, have recently invested in two additional Stromab Matrix Automatic Crosscut Saws – bringing their total of these machines to five. Whilst the original three were stand alone machines, the two new ones - supplied by JJ Smith Woodworking Machinery Ltd, have been integrated into lines with moulders and double end tenoners.

Michael Ramsey the MD of Peter Ramsey Timber commented 'We gave the problem of the integration of the saws to JJ Smith and were pleased that they were able to tailor the machinery to suit our requirements. Space was very tight in the line and they were able to modify the equipment to suit our specific needs. They were also able to adapt existing conveying equipment and integrate it into the new controls.'

Martin Smith, MD of JJ Smith who was responsible for the project confirmed the equipment supplied was from Stromab - a world leading manufacturer of crosscutting equipment. Based near Bologna, Italy, JJ Smith are the exclusive agent for their range of automatic saws. He said ‘Stromab have proved a very good partner for us for many years - their equipment is very reliable and they provide a whole range of saws, from very basic push fed saws to full optimising and defecting saws for cutting both straight and angled components. In the last few years we have sold around 150 of their automatic saws and time and again we have customers coming back to us for another machine as they have been so pleased with the first one they purchased. The installation for Ramsey Timber is particularly pleasing as they recognised the merit of investing in new machinery to ensure that they can continue to provide service to their customers.'

The overall project was co-ordinated by Lawrence Marklew, Ramsey’s Maintenance / Project manager who added 'Building a relationship with a supplier is important to us as a company. If we get good service from one company they we like to try and work with them again. The Stromab saws we already had have proved very reliable and we had the confidence in both the equipment from Stromab and the back up from JJ Smith to commit to further investment with them. Space was extremely tight and I was pleased that they were able to adapt the equipment to suit our specific requirements.'