

Veneer Saw Keeps Ravenhill Pressing Forward

From the beginning, Robert Ravenhill Leiper knew he'd become successful if he followed his instincts and creative passion to manufacture a product that was "a step above the ordinary."

From its inception in 1983, in a small 680-square-foot shop in San Diego, Ravenhill USA has grown into a very profitable, high-end furniture manufacturer employing 21 people in a 12,000-square-foot shop. 2006 revenues for the company are expected to reach \$2 million.

According to Leiper, Ravenhill's president and CEO, the hot real estate market has spurred the company's sales in high-end residential work as clients clamor for luxury kitchens, home offices and the like.

Robert Ravenhill Leiper says the Langzauner veneer saw is the ideal machine for smaller, low-volume, high-quality operations such as his.



"Usually the jobs we do are in the hundreds of thousands of dollar range, typically costing from \$200,000 to \$500,000," Leiper said.

Leiper added that Ravenhill's reputation for quality and service has "allowed us to position ourselves as the 'contractor of choice' for customers as well as 'employer of choice' for our employees."

"Our company has built a reputation for specialty veneer work and extremely high quality finishes. Our attention to detail in the planning stage, as well as our in-house manufacturing capabilities and management approach embracing total quality, are reasons we believe we are poised for even greater success. We are constantly in a growth and learning mode, so everything is very dynamic."

Because its work with veneers is critical to the company's success, Ravenhill purchased a Joos Junior veneer press some six years ago. "Before getting the Joos Junior, we used



Ravenhill USA specializes in high-end, residential projects such as luxury kitchens and home offices, which are manufactured using veneer.

vacuum bags — obviously very time consuming compared to the press," Leiper said.

"We have outsourced a few times, but we find we are most successful when we have control of the log and veneer in-house. Veneer work is exacting. Nature makes the beauty, but the artwork is in the patterning. That is something that's very difficult to outsource."

In order to meet its capacity growth goals, Ravenhill recently revamped the veneer operation, adding a Langzauner veneer saw purchased from Joos USA.

"We needed to switch to a more efficient way of processing our veneer. In the past, our veneer slicing was accomplished using a specially designed custom apparatus attached to our sliding table saw. We were very successful in achieving very high quality results by this method, however it was time consuming and we could not process parts on the sliding table saw when slicing veneer.

"The addition of the Langzauner veneer saw has increased the processing time and accuracy of our veneering operation. What was essentially

a 'hand operation' is now quickly and efficiently accomplished automatically with extreme accuracy," Leiper said.

"I am not sure how we functioned without this addition. I believe the Langzauner veneer saw is the ideal machine for smaller, low-volume, high-quality operations such as ours," he added.

"Veneer can transform a simple piece of furniture into an elegant piece of art. It's impossible to find the delicate swirls and rays in solid wood that you find in veneer. In cabinetry, a box is a box. You can get more complicated with a box but at the end of the day it's a box that anyone can do. Veneer work is more of an art, particularly when you pattern match the log or veneer, not only around a room, but as we often do around the entire house."



The purchase of the Langzauner veneer saw has helped Ravenhill significantly improve its quality and production rates.

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