

Advertisement

New technology enables long strides ahead for Christchurch business

A leading-edge sheet metal folding machine is enabling a local Christchurch business to take big steps forward in the manufacture of flashings and other metal products for the building industry.

G&A Harris, a sheet metal engineering firm which has been in business for more than 60 years, imported the machine – the first of its kind in New Zealand – from Switzerland in June.

G&A Harris' customers are now benefiting from the ability to fold longer and thicker sheets of metal, as well as previously-impossible folding profiles that can be used to create decorative architectural features.

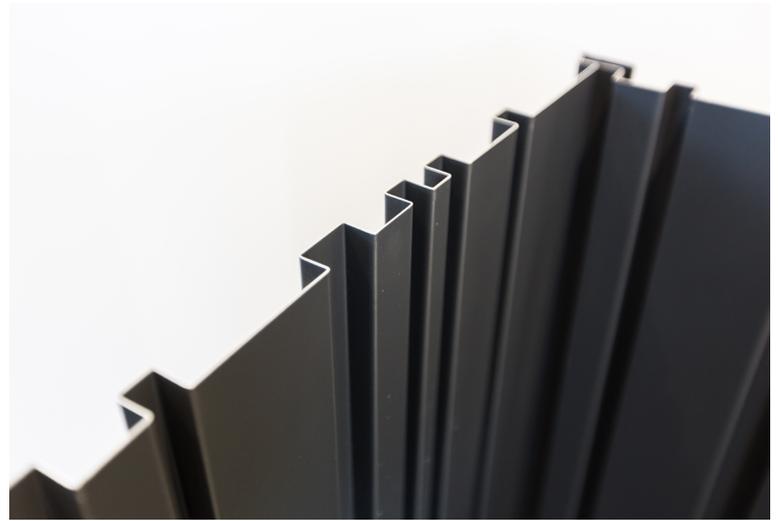
Phil Botting, who has owned and operated G&A Harris with his wife Karen since 2016, says the impressive new machine – a Thalmann TD200 CNC double folder – is already providing better efficiency and output speed.

"We're thrilled with the new machine and what it's enabling us to provide our customers," he says. "One of the key benefits so far is speed – we're getting through the work much more quickly.



Above: Phil Botting.

Below: The new Thalmann TD200 CNC double folder is enabling better efficiency and output speed.



A decorative sheet metal folding profile.

"Everything is computerised, so the specifications can be entered into the machine via a touch screen, rather than setting the angle of each fold manually, as is required on the older machines," he says.

Producing longer flashings on the new machine also means fewer flashing pieces and fewer joins, which results in quicker installation time on site.

The machine can also store customers' files on its own server, so parts can be reproduced exactly to the same specifications if required.

Perhaps the most exciting of the machine's many capabilities is the ability to produce decorative fold profiles which no other manufacturers in the industry in New Zealand can achieve.

"The machine allows us to offer an almost infinite range of custom architectural cladding options. We can do some really tight folds which can be used for impressive visual effects, as well as curved radius folds which other machines can't do," he says.

Karen and Phil purchased the business three years ago along with its partner business, Trotter Powder Coating.

In recent years, the company has provided flashings and architectural profiles for a variety of large, high-profile commercial developments in Christchurch, including the hospital, the Town Hall, the Crowne Plaza Hotel and The Crossing retail centre, as well as a number of architectural homes.

Early 2020 will see both the G&A Harris and Trotter Powder Coating businesses moving into a larger, renovated building. This will include a significantly bigger powder coating plant, capable of coating the larger items coming off the new machine.

"We're very proud of our team and the high-quality products we're able to supply. With the new machine now fully bedded in and the new factory coming up, we're looking forward to a really exciting future," Karen says.

