SUHNER®

# Baywatch

## Online trading caters for global demand



**FLEXIBLE FRIEND** …in the hands of Liam Varela, pictured left. The Rotofera is easy on the operator …the power-to-weight ratio is phenomenal …you only hold the hand piece for which you need to do the job …and the drive motor remains standing next to the workpiece.

IT'S more than two decades since Michael Currell fell in love with plastic.

Twenty-one years after starting with £10,000 and a small shop in Whitley Bay selling perspex and polycarbonate sheets, as well as plastic ductwork to local independent construction firms, he has turned Bay Plastics into a North East success story.

With the company spreading their wings after growing a business that is arguably the Region's biggest plastic stockist and fabricator, they are beating the recession by finding new markets across the globe.

The company, which employs 38 people in 33,000 sq ft premises on Tyne Tunnel Trading Estate, North Shields signed up to the UK Trade & Investment Passport to Export scheme about 18 months ago, receiving support to attend a trade show in Dubai.

Since then their export sales have increased substantially and Bay Plastics' next steps are already mapped out for next February when they head to the international retail industry Euroshop show in Dusseldorf as one of 1,800 exhibitors from 50 countries in search of new business.

With continuing support from UK Trade & Investment, Bay Plastics is also in the process of developing a new interactive website with dollar and euro currencies and translation between English and Spanish – the two most used languages in Europe – that will let customers place orders online.

The company has pumped £50,000 into these plans, despite the tough economic conditions and says Michael: "The Internet is part of our lives now and it has been five years to get to the point where we have a fully integrated online service."

In the current financial climate the online shop is a big investment in the company's future and takes their spend in new equipment to more than £1 million in 10 years.

The equipment is used to fabricate a wide range of products from point of sale display items, machine guards and display cases, through to original and one-off artworks, like the giant champagne glass that held American singer Katy Perry in her show-stopping turn as the host of the recent MTV Europe Music Awards, as well as products ranging from furniture for customers who include well known hotel chains, to trays holding component parts that go into the manufacturing process of the automotive industry.

Time means money, they say, and the SUHNER Rotofera flexible shaft machine has proved its worth quickly for the fabrication side of the business, which is expected to grow and account for 30% of turnover this year.

The variable speed machine that works at speeds between 850 and 12,000 rpm has become a necessary tool in finishing a range of industrial plastics, enabling the skilled polisher who uses buffing mops on intricate shapes, angles and curves to cut the time spent on this part of the fabricating process by more than 50%.

Like many suppliers, Bay Plastics did experience a slowdown in demand last year, but they have won new business and are now selling products ranging from perspex and engineering plastics to finished fabricated goods to South America, South Africa and particularly Scandinavia.

Adds Michael: "Our core business is sign, print and display, construction, sub-contract engineering and DIY enthusiasts and hobbyists who create any shape imaginable in plastic."

Today a client can log onto www.plasticstockist.com to order custom cut plastics so he only pays for what he uses.

"Bay Plastics is growing because of the Internet. If over 4000 online products isn't enough, the peculiar quirks of market structure and price variations in individual countries makes our pricing often cheaper than the local price even after adding on the cost of carriage. That's a great advantage for us when a buyer is comparing prices and specifications for a particular product," says Michael.



## A REAL SMOOTHIE

**Unquestionably, the SUHNER Rotofera is the most widely used heavy-duty, flexi shaft unit.**

**The separation of drive unit and the tool itself provides for complete freedom of operation, without fatigue, during long working periods. Additionally, areas difficult to reach with other tools can be worked effectively with flexible shaft machines.**

**Features:**

- **1 kilowatt (1000W), 3-phase induction motor.**
- **Gear driven machine with seven speeds: 850, 1,600, 2,100, 3,200, 5,700, 8,000 and 12,000 rpm.**
- **Choice of three models.**
- **Motor weight:**
  - **16.6kg with hanging attachment for rail mounting**
  - **16.8 kg with base plate**
  - **37.7 kg mounted on trolley**

**Standard flexi shaft unit includes:**

- **NA10 D10/G22 x 2000mm flexi shaft assembly**
- **FH-10 straight hand piece with 1/4"collet and wrenches**