SUHNER®

Game on



SMOOTH OPERATOR … Michael Dunne at work with the Rotomax 1.5. Whether it's commercial and domestic interiors, specialised joinery, gaming equipment, musical instruments, automotive dashboards or audio components speed and quality remain vital, he said.

Landlocked LJR looks shipshape

DESPITE operating in landlocked Basildon painting firm LJR has stayed well afloat in the leisure boat industry.

And forget the gloomy economic forecast too …the small Essex company, which employs just five people, has a solid order book supplying high gloss interiors for luxury cruisers that can cost between two and £14 million.

LJR specialises in high gloss polyester finishes which form one of the fastest growing areas of the commercial painting market.

"Our focus is on the higher value end of the scale and niche markets where cheaper Far Eastern imports can't compete," said Managing Director Jerome Conway, whose original career path took him to a polishing shop in London, refurbishing and putting high gloss finishes on Steinway pianos, considered by many to be the best pianos in the world – and eventually to a small boat company looking to upgrade their interiors.

"Up to then boat interior decors were only seen in either leather or vinyl; it was new for the industry to have dining tables and galley areas finished in high gloss or spray lacquer but having my own business was always something that had been in the background for me," added Jerome.

LJR started eight years ago and has proved it is a shining example of manufacturing with clients that include the London Stock Exchange, Paris fashion designer Christian Dior and Sunseeker super cruisers.

And it's clear the company is not resting on its laurels despite sales doubling since 2006.

Many different types of painting finishes are produced, ranging from different metallic effects to ones which simulate granite and metal.

The increased popularity of high gloss polyester finishing is a result of people 'trading up' from matt or satin finishes said Jerome adding: "There is big trend for people to use polyester finishing. It is easier to clean and it is also very durable."

Innovation remains important to the firm which has led to new machinery being introuced like the Suhner Rotomax 1.5 flexible shaft – the most powerful drive for sanding and grinding tasks. The Rotomax 1.5 motor system delivers up to 1,500 Watts and rotates at between 500 and 15,000 rpm. Everything is adjusted and controlled digitally. Soft start, stable speeds and an active brake are the decisive advantages of the unit's electronic control.

There is another benefit – Rotomax 1.5 is portable. "We calculated that a polisher had to walk around a roulette wheel a hundred times or more to complete the work. So we have machinery, like a pottery wheel, which spins the roulette wheel and we used 10 to 12 inch mops, which polished at 2,200 revs per minute.

"With the Rotomax we can put a smaller mop on, spin it faster. Our polishers feel more comfortable about using this system, especially as the mops we did use are extremely heavy and once they are spinning are even heavier and take quite bit of skill manoeuvring in use

"We operate at the top end of our market. Our experience in the field of polyester lacquer is unsurpassed and we provide a service where people can see the benefits of using a local manufacturer – service, lead times, and consistent quality.

"You always, always have to work on the cost of manufacturing. It is a never-ending endeavour reducing the waste, improving the product and being more cost effective – and that's where machinery like the Rotomax comes in. But local manufacturing is what really works. That and always, always knowing what you do well and focusing on that," said Jerome.



Factfile

- 1,500 Watts output power
- Continuously adjustable speed between 500 and 15,000 rpm
- Digital control
- Soft start, stable speed, active brake
- Robust but still portable
- Maximum flexibility with tools and accessories
- Weight 27 kg
- Dimensions 472 x 340 x 352 mm (w x h x d)

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