

Altendorf saw for Glass & Mirror

Glass & Mirror Ltd, of Leatherhead, Surrey, produces considerably more than just glazing products. The company is recognised as a leading trade supplier to the fine art and framing industry, providing an extensive range of materials such as float glasses, backing boards, mount boards and bevel edge mirrors, plus the largest range of conservation, museum and invisible glass and plastics products and services in the UK.

FOUNDED in 1986 by John Palmer and John Watkins, individuals with over 50 years' combined experience in the glass trade, Glass & Mirror rapidly became a prominent supplier to the picture-framing trade throughout the South of England, the Midlands, East Anglia and the West Country, offering a full service with glass, mirror and backing boards in either stock sheets or cut-to-size and delivered by its own vans.

From an initial complement of six staff and two delivery vans servicing over 200 accounts, the company expanded throughout the UK and opened up a northern operation, in Oldham, in 2003, to service the North Midlands, North of England and Scotland.

Today, Glass & Mirror looks after almost 3000 accounts, employs 45 staff and operates its own fleet of 11 trucks and vans which deliver between 30 and 40 tons of finished materials to the framing industry on a daily basis.

During the past 20 years, most of the company's cutting operations were successfully carried out on an Altendorf F45 sliding table saw. Although this saw was still working relatively well, during 2007 Glass & Mirror requested Altendorf UK to make some adjustments to the cutting procedures.

John Burnett, the area sales and service agent for Altendorf, duly arrived at the Leatherhead works to assess the situation. He looked at the work being undertaken and suggested

that personnel from Glass & Mirror visit another of his customers in Wembley which was successfully operating the latest Altendorf F45 Elmo IV sliding table saw.

Following a full consultation, a specification was put together for Glass & Mirror and within two weeks a custom-built F45 Elmo IV full-specification machine was delivered from Germany and installed at Leatherhead.

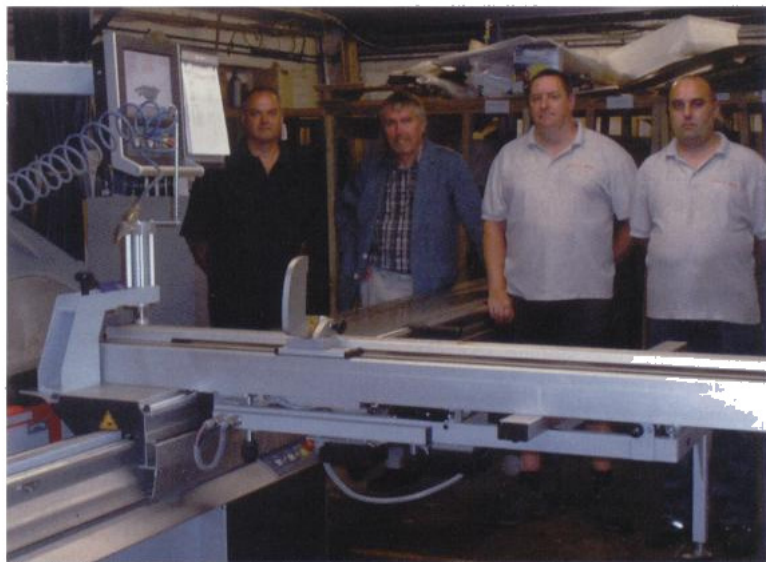
Senior machine operator Mark Greener-Simon has been with Glass & Mirror for around eight years. He said: "We bought our new Altendorf saw to give us improved accuracy, particularly when cutting polycarbonate plastic glass for the framing industry."

Commenting on the principal advantages of the new Elmo IV machine, Mark Greener-Simon said: "If I'm making individual cuts, single one-off pieces, it's a lot quicker for the simple reason that I no longer have to walk around the saw to set the fence. It's simply a matter of using the touch-pad. I reckon that we must be saving approximately 50% downtime."

"From my point of view, the variable speed unit – the Vario Drive – is one of the Elmo IV's greatest assets."

The Vario Drive is particularly useful for obtaining the optimal cutting speed setting for the material being worked. The infinitely-variable speed control is operated via the keypad, with the settings clearly displayed on the LCD screen.

The operator can select any speed between 2000 and 6000 rpm. With the use of the Vario Drive there is no need



Left to right: John Burnett, Altendorf area agent, John Palmer, co-founder of Glass & Mirror, Mark Greener-Simon, senior machine operator, and Tony Waters, assistant machine operator.

to move the V-belt to change the speed, and the sawblades no longer require such frequent sharpening.

Glass & Mirror runs the Elmo IV saw six to seven hours a day, five days a week. "It has proved to work even better than we expected," said Mark Greener-Simon. "We are really pleased with the excellent results we are getting."

"Previously, the hardest areas of our work when cutting plastics were the edges of the material. But with the new saw we can vary the speed of the sawblade and the depth of the cut and achieve a clean, desirable cut, all without hassle."

"Also, the numerous built-in safety aspects of the Elmo IV make this an

ideal machine for us. I wouldn't swap it for any other saw."

David Palmer, brother of the co-founder John Palmer, is the financial director of Glass & Mirror. He has been with the company since 1995. He said: "We consider the purchase of the Altendorf Elmo IV to be money well spent. It will provide good service for at least 15 years."

Glass & Mirror offers a level of service which is more comprehensive than most other firms. They cut glass, sometimes to the value of £7000 per sheet, and deliver it personally to its final destination. Specialised plastics products produced on the Altendorf saw are cut absolutely accurately without damage or chipping. The variable speeds enable each cut to be optimised for thickness.

"The saw is perfect for our needs," said David Palmer. "It is much easier for the operators to work with, it is much quicker in operation and it's a lot more efficient in every way. We can get good results, without problems, even when the saw is being run by a less-skilled operator. This makes our entire operation a lot more flexible. Also, you can put through bulk jobs and know that you are going to get an accurate result."

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Mark Greener-Simon puts the Elmo IV through its paces.



The saw is operated for six to seven hours per day.