



Gavin Player in front of the new Format-4 H08 - a new level of technology and efficiency.

To be accurate on the saw takes care, whereas with the H08 you load it and the machine does the rest.

Easy accuracy nails it

With years of experience in the Central Otago region, Gavin Player and his team have built a thriving business in Cromwell. Having built a reputation for versatility and quality, and with the region's building boom showing no signs of slowing down, in 2021 Gavin found himself facing a wall of work.

"Business had been steady for a few years," says Gavin, "and then COVID came along and turned everything upside down. Like everyone else we had to play catch up after lockdown, and then everything went nuts." With a regular supply of work coming via established relationships with local builders, Gavin was looking at nearly a year's solid work ahead of him. "It's not often you get to make decisions with so much certainty about what work's coming," he says. "I knew we had to do something, and that was look closely at investing in a CNC."

Having worked with CNC in a couple of previous workshops, Gavin had a pretty good idea of what moving to CNC would mean for production, and the difference

it would make. "A CNC was a big investment for us, but the time felt right. We felt ready to move away from making up templates, drilling holes manually, and all the work that goes with cutting up panel with a saw and step up to a new level of technology, and efficiency."

Gavin looked around at what was on offer and settled on a Format-4 H08 Pro from the Felder Group, supplied and installed by Jacks. "I've worked with European machinery all my career. I've already got Felder machinery and I like the quality the brand represents."

Made in Austria, the Format-4 H08 features a 10kW spindle, 8-station changer, 8 vertical drilling spindles (6 in x, 2 in y) and HSK F63 toolholders. A centralised dust extraction system, monitored pneumatic pop-up stops and light barrier safety zone system contribute to a clean and safe working environment – which fits well with the tidy and professional nature of Gavin's existing workshop.

It's still early days for Gavin and the team having only had the H08 installed this year, but they're

already getting the benefits of CNC production. "The accuracy is a big improvement for us," he says. "To be accurate on the H08 you load it and the machine does the rest. Every time. It's also nice not having to run every panel across the buzzer before edgebanding."

The learning curve associated with moving to CNC production hasn't been too steep either. "I'd been using Sketch Up for years to draw up our kitchens, so I already knew the concepts required. And I've taken the time to learn to use the software." Gavin uses Mozaic for design, preferring the simplicity of a monthly software rental cost rather than buying a complete package outright.

Gavin is already looking at where else his H08 will add value to the business. "Sign-writing is an obvious area," he explains. "We've already had a few local enquiries about converting a few designs into reality. We're working through what software and tooling might be required for that, and as we get more confident with the machine I can see all sorts of possibilities."

But right now, Gavin has his hands full with a different type of work. A customer recently had a tree on their property milled, and Gavin is busy making use of the resulting timber. "We just put some wet 350x350mm sections through our Format-4 thicknesser and it just ate them. It took four of us just to lift them! Those will become bench seats, but from the same tree we've got internal and external doors to make, as well as a sectional garage door, and maybe gates."

Between the kitchens and wardrobes that are required as the region continues to grow, and the wide variety of solid-timber work that an area such as Central Otago generates, there's plenty to keep Gavin and his team busy. Fortunately, Gavin Player Furniture and Joinery have got the skills and the machinery to keep up with the workload. And with customers coming back and introducing their friends, they're clearly doing an excellent job.



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