

Development driven by Soukup Crafter

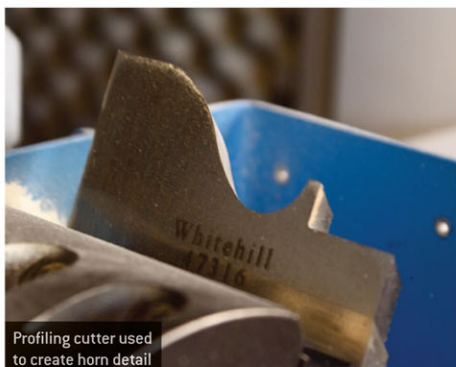
Two years ago, the East Sussex workshop for bespoke joinery company, Wood & Wisdom, was a very different place. Investment after investment, by MD Adam Smith means that his workshop now features its own spray booth and a room set aside for tool storage and maintenance. These changes were driven, in part, by the introduction of a new Soukup Crafter window system, provided by International Woodworking Machines (IWM).



Adam Smith with the Crafter



The horn detail on a window frame produced by the Crafter



Profiling cutter used to create horn detail

Wood & Wisdom initially invested in the Crafter for making sashes, but the adaptable nature of the machine means that the company has simply purchased new tooling as and when needed.

Wood & Wisdom mainly produces sash windows and carries out renovations on period buildings. In Adam's own words the Crafter has "turned the business around" and the evidence can be seen in the workshop.

Due to the high efficiency of the Crafter, Adam has been able to upgrade machines throughout the company's manufacturing process. With its high output rate of up to 50 windows per shift with only one operator, the crafter was producing windows at a rate that Wood & Wisdom's traditional process could not cope with.

The Crafter has a footprint of only 2 x 2m making it the smallest window centre available from Soukup and therefore an ideal way for small- to medium-sized businesses to invest in CNC machining for windows.

The UK series of machines is specially designed for manufacturing British windows. It is the only machine on the market optimised, not only for casements, but also for sliding sashes. The horizontal milling unit can easily provide the typical horns on sashes or trench slots for pulley stiles.

It comprises CNC-controlled tenoning and profiling shafts and requires one operator to stay in front of the

machine to control the machining process. The machine is controlled by an industrial PC Beckhoff with 12in touch-screen in a Windows CE environment, designed for industrial applications. The machine has been successfully linked to the professional joinery software Klaes and Joinery Soft.

Yet its high output and small space usage isn't the only reason Adam is pleased with the machine. He describes the accuracy of machine as "faultless" and explains that with the variety of tools available the machine affords him a flexibility that is vital to a bespoke joinery firm.

He describes how he won a particularly large contract in Weston-Super-Mare and how the Crafter gave him the confidence to accept it, knowing that no matter how much pressure the company was put under it would be able to deliver on target.

One of the main things Adam likes about dealing with Soukup is that, with the machine's integrated software and tooling, the company offers the full package: "A lot of companies make machines but leave the tooling up to the customer. Soukup provides the tooling as well so you have less people to deal with and you know you are getting the right tools that will work with the machine."

When asked about Soukup after-sales care, with regards to repairs and maintenance, Adam says: "It's probably very

good, but to be honest I've not needed to use it – nothing has gone wrong in two years."

Despite working in a joinery firm, Adam is a talented metalworker, having produced some of his own woodworking machinery as well as the ceiling-mounted drying rack for the workshop's new spray booth. When asked to cast a metalworker's eye over the machine to suggest what parts might be the first to wear out, his response is quick: "Nothing is going to wear out on that – it's rock solid. Most of the pieces are cast and even the parts that aren't – you can tell they are going to last."

It is easy to see how, in a small- to medium-sized business, one machine can change the landscape and working ethos of a company. The Crafter not only created the need to update Wood & Wisdom's workshop by creating pinch-points in the process and highlighting where investment was needed, but it also helped provide the necessary

funding by increasing confidence and allowing the company to take on more work.

Adam says: "We built this company on service. Customers are increasingly keen for companies to be a one-stop-shop, that's why we built the spray booth – so we could offer our customers a completed product. The Crafter has helped us do that."

IWM, who supplied the machine, is the exclusive distributor for Soukup products in the UK. Ian Brown, MD of IWM, summarises why he believes the Crafter has experienced such impressive success in the UK: "It fits the customers' needs exactly, it is as simple as that. Its size and productivity are just what the small- to medium-sized businesses need to progress, and the Crafter is designed specifically for the UK market."

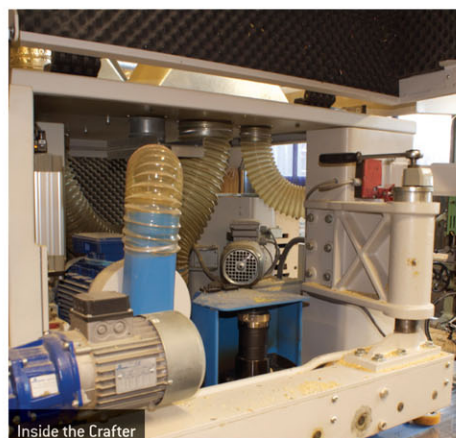
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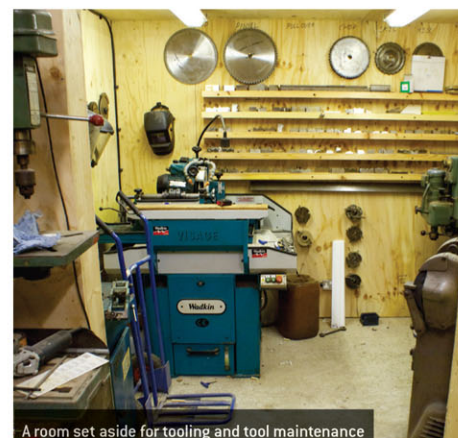
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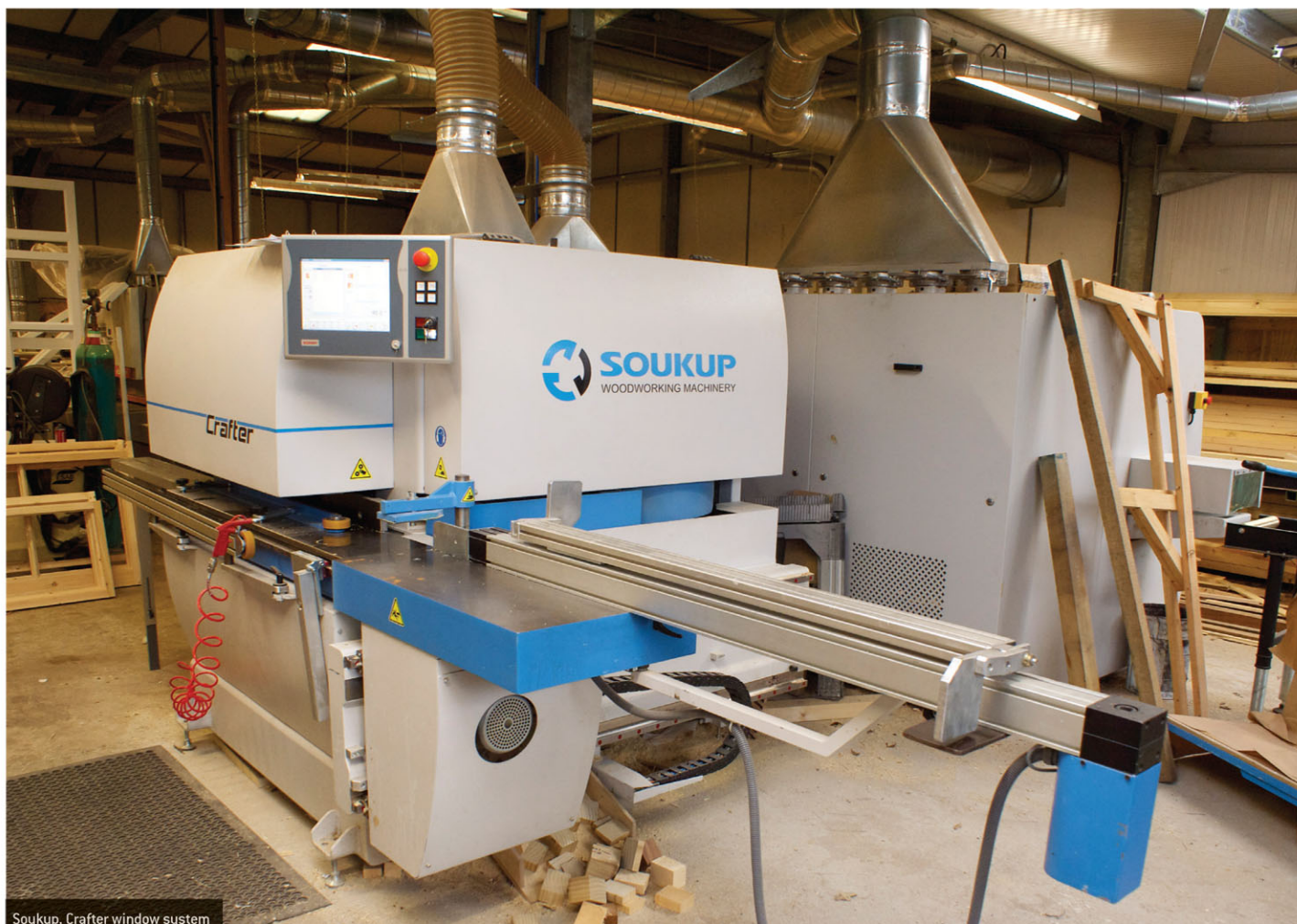
Wood & Wisdom's custom-built spray booth



Inside the Crafter



A room set aside for tooling and tool maintenance



Soukup, Crafter window system