

AWISA

trade show success

AWISA 2006, the tenth biennial trade show organised by the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association, attracted 8375 woodworking industry professionals to the Sydney Exhibition Centre when it took place from 5-8 July this year.

Four halls of the venue were sold out and featured large displays of woodworking machinery, hardware, fittings, components, materials and computer software. While earlier AWISA exhibitions targeted only industries that process solid wood and panel products, the 2006 exhibition also displayed a wide range of machinery of interest to the aluminium, stone and plastics industries. The exhibition has become well established as an essential event to visit for furniture manufacturers, kitchen manufacturers, cabinet makers, joinery manufacturers, shop and office fitters, as well as architects and designers.

AWISA Chairman, Mr Rick Lee, said, "Suppliers appreciate the effort that the industry makes to visit the exhibition. 3234 Australian visitors attended from outside NSW making AWISA one of the best attended Australian trade shows by visitors from outside the state in which it is taking place. This number of interstate visitors means that our three shuttle buses from the airport were extremely well patronised, and on any one day our luggage room stored hundreds of items. New Zealanders continue to make up a significant number of our attendees with 441 crossing the Tasman this year."

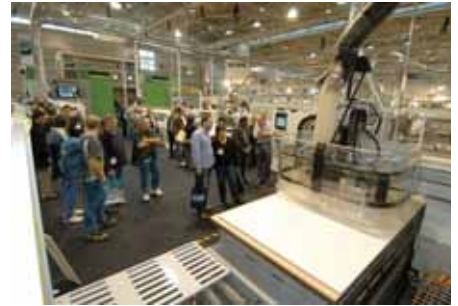
"While our visitor numbers, at 8375, are impressive, our visitations, at 11,499, give us some interesting information. Visitations count the number of visitors in the halls each day, including those who visited in previous days. In 2000 visitations were 25% higher than visitors, in 2002 29% higher, in 2004 32% higher, and this year 37% higher. In other words more people are staying overnight and spending more time at the exhibition. This surely tells a story about the importance visitors place on the exhibition."

"The next AWISA will take place in Sydney from 3-6 July 2008. All of us involved in the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association look forward to welcoming our customers back to Sydney in 2008", he said.



an industry showcase

The Darling Harbour Exhibition Centre once again resounded to the sights and sounds of wood and panel machinery as suppliers and end users in the woodworking and furniture industries converged to see the largest exhibition of its kind, held every two years, in the Southern Hemisphere. JOINERS Magazine was there in a supporting role with its own stand. Bob Nordgren along with editor Michael Goddard, attended to see the latest and greatest from all the suppliers involved and files this report.



This was the sixth successive show I have attended since 1996 and it appeared to be as vibrant as it always has been. The numbers were down slightly overall compared to 2004 but those who attended appeared to spend a little more time there than in past shows. (See the official report from the show organisers on facing page.) The general feel of the show was positive and upbeat with attendees taking a keen interest in a variety of technologies on display.

Of note was the interest shown in the machinery software packages on offer be they for optimisation, design or production management. There was a definite feeling that the trend that seemed to emerge with the 2004 show where prospective machinery buyers were becoming more attuned to the need to have the right software with the right machine for their particular end use, was now even more prevalent. Whenever you went past a software supplier's stand it was always busy. The weight given to software as part of the overall 'package' appears to now better equate with the machinery.

Another technology gaining a lot of interest was edgebanding machinery. Edgebanding constitutes an essential part of nested based manufacturing, a reinforced concept at AWISA this time, and despite advances in processes such as powdercoating MDF, edgebanding is still the best method to protect MDF edges. In recent years CNC has increasingly been

involved in this process so it was interesting to see non CNC edgebanders on display. A good example was the smaller Italian made Orbitor edgebander being demonstrated on the Gabbett Machinery stand. At every demonstration there were quite a number of onlookers. Another eye catcher was the Adamik Manual Plus hand held edgebander from Biesse. The Orbitor and the Adamik appear to indicate a growing trend amongst the machinery manufacturers to recognise changes in industry by creating specialist machines for more and more specialised end uses. Another example was Brandt, the specialist edgebanding brand from Homag who had on display a new system that removed resetting problems on edgebander top and bottom trimmers that used a combination of a high precision servo-motor driven repositioning and a revolutionary new 'combi' knife design.

The show was not just about the small end of the market. There were several far larger machines in demonstration mode as well. Woodtech Australia had the eye-catching million dollar Planet Machining Centre from Italian manufacturers Morbidelli in action. This CNC machine centre had onboard edgebanding working in tandem. Quite impressive. The Gabbett machinery stand went for the versatility of its range of SCM CNC machines to process both solid wood and MDF based products. Materials handling was also a big ticket item this year for Gabbetts as indeed it was for other leading manufacturers. With the integration of

CNC with a whole range of machinery now very much an established, mature concept where production is even faster and more efficient, the need to have auxiliary processes such as material handling and production management up to speed is being recognised by all the leading manufacturers. A good example is the new Twin Pusher developed by Italian manufacturer Biesse which effectively allows for two independent cutting stations on the same beam saw. This means with two independent but complementary pushers working on the same cutting line one can perform more cuts at the same time. The secret lies in the fact that the two pushers are automatically controlled according to the cutting patterns, opening or closing the grippers in the needed working areas. With the Twin Pusher the operator can cut two different patterns simultaneously.

In the panel saw scene, German manufacturers Altendorf who specialise in this field introduced their new F45S panel saw which featured a computerised rip cut fence aimed to provide more ease in operation and even greater precision. An interesting development is the inclusion of a new USB interface offering online data and program transfer – unique to Altendorf at this point in time. The F45S as a technology is indicative of the woodworking machinery industrys' continued drive to produce quicker, more precise machinery with the added dimension of 'intelligence' in operational features.

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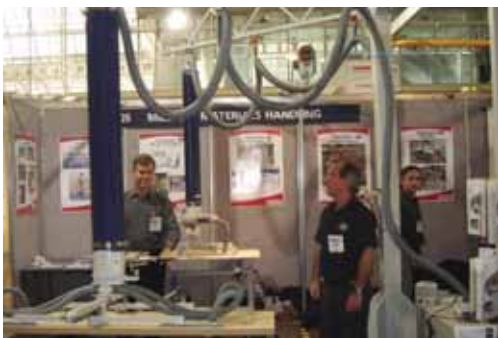
An Industry Success

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These are just a few of the many machines that were on display. The Exhibition was not of course just about machinery for processing wood and panel. Accessories for the joinery and cabinetmaking industries were also strongly represented by the leading hardware manufacturers. The soft closing mechanisms that have emerged over the last few years have now moved from free standing to being incorporated in such things as drawer runners, hinges and flap stays. Each of the leading players at the Show such as Hettich, Blum, Salice and Grass had on display their new generations of such systems. Like the machinery sector in many ways, these products represent a further move to more efficient, effective systems, in this case to open and close virtually any storage space. Other fittings such as handles in all shapes and sizes, saw the latest fashion on display.

The Exhibition was held over four fine days and the general consensus from all those I spoke to was it was worth the effort to come and see. One interesting aspect was the exclusion of the supply of alcohol on site for the first time. This evoked some interesting observations, some said it probably meant more emphasis on the Exhibition and what was on display rather than any perceived 'fringe benefits' such as a drink or two at the end of each day, while others thought it tempted people to go outside the Exhibition halls to enjoy the many bars and cafes around Darling Harbour for lunch for example and maybe, just maybe, not come back! In response, many of the suppliers took the opportunity to have evenings hosting guests at local bars after hours. It will be interesting to see how this particular issue is addressed for the next AWISA Exhibition in 2008.

Bob Nordgren



John Champion (centre) from FDS in Auckland on Millsom Materials stand, a range he has the NZ agency for.



The Vollmer Akemat U60 as shown at AWISA 2006 on the Camco Stand. Sims Saw Doctors in Auckland have recently purchased a similar machine.



Microvellum found the climate for software to be good at AWISA with several sales during the show - from left, Conrad Mincher - NZ North Island representative, Taylor Grimes - American Vice President, Trevor Moxon - Australasian distributor and Wayne Melrose - NZ South Island representative.



Altendorf Atlink

Altendorf Australia were elated with the success of AWISA 2006. This German company chose to hold the exclusive launch of their new market-leading panel saw range; the F45 and Elmo, at this year's event. It was also the first time the new look Holz-Her 1300 edgebanding series (released late last year) was on show. Visitors were clearly impressed with the new functions and sleek design of the new machines, which they embraced with great enthusiasm.

In addition to the launch of their new machinery, Altendorf were also celebrating their 100 year anniversary. The occasion was marked with various Altendorf memorabilia promoting the Altendorf 'Legend' and its 100 years in operation.

Following the success of the 2004 event, Altendorf Australia welcomed members to the Altlink Lounge once again. Offering a place to rest their feet, members were able to get a quick cup of freshly brewed coffee or dine on the tasty sandwiches and hot foods.

Altendorf Australia were pleased with the positive mood of the industry at the show.

Seen at AWISA



Carl Arnold from Biesse NZ with Bryan Frank from Pace Office Furniture in New Plymouth.



Peter Thomson from TES, Auckland with Aidan Jury boss of Hettich Australia.



Lam Harn Lian from Harn, Malaysia with NZ agent Steve Grainger from Hardware2000.



Duncan Such & Patrick Connery from Robertson & Sinclair in Auckland.



Craig Hutchinson from Keenedge in Auckland, who showed their products on the Dimar stand.



NZ's Paul McGregor (left) Mark Stichbury Cooper (pointing) from Airtight Solutions and a couple of Aussie visitors.