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INTERIOR JOINERY

Australian Jarrah
Tasmanian Oak
American Oak, Ash, Maple
Cherry, Walnut
European Beech
Fijian Kauri, Salusalu
Damanu (Calophyllum)
Kaudamu, African Sapele, Iroko,
Anegre, (English Tawa)
Bubinga, Wenge
Rimu, Matai, Tawa
Massa, Podocarp

EXTERIOR JOINERY

Western Red Cedar
Kiln Dried Clears, Reman Grade
Finger-Jointed Blanks, Shorts
Alaskan Yellow Cedar
Kiln Dried Kwila, Iroko
H3 Kahikatea, H3 Radiata

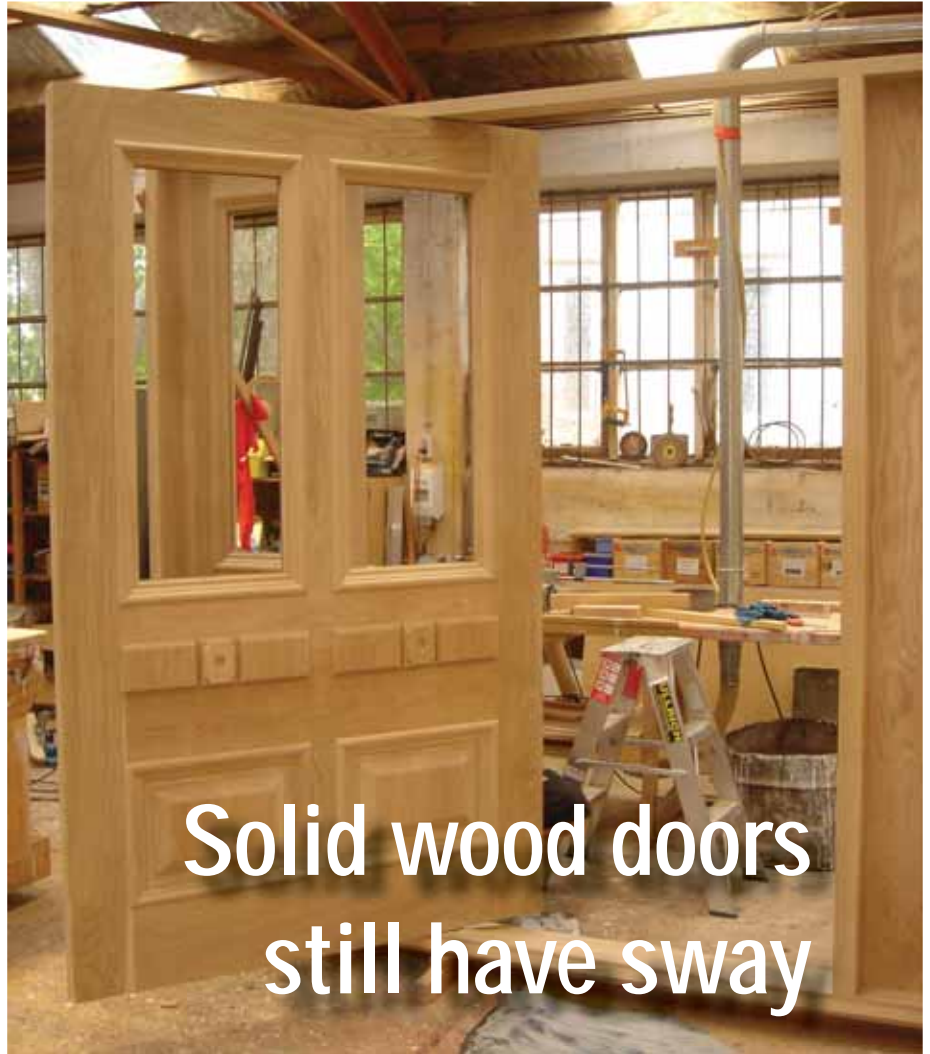
T&G FLOORING

Jarrah, Tasmanian Oak
Kwila, Saligna
Brushbox, Spotted Gum
American Oak, Maple



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Solid wood doors still have sway

Solid wood internal and external doors continue to find favour in the New Zealand market. JOINERS Magazine spoke to several leading solid wood door manufacturers to uncover what the latest developments are in this well established niche industry.

Making solid wood doors has a long history here in New Zealand. The interesting thing about it has been the effect of technology in the manufacturing process. Until more recent times it has been an industry characterised by traditional methods of manufacture using such machinery as thicknessers and 4 siders to produce the necessary componentry for solid wood door production as part of a labour intensive operation. Keeping up with the many door designs available has been handled through keeping stocks of various doors.

Well known Auckland firm MJN McNaughton Ltd with some 35 employees are a good example of a traditional solid door manufacturer. "Our particular product has leant more and more towards custom made mainly for the residential market rather than production doors supplied to merchants such as ITM, Carters and Placemakers" comments Gary McNaughton. "We keep as many as 900 doors in stock to accommodate what our clientele want."

Market orientation has proved significant in terms of the use of technology. Firms like MJN McNaughton and other traditional

manufacturers have been able to compete quite well with the likes of technologically advanced manufacturers such as The Renall Door Company based in Carterton because their customer base is somewhat different.

RDC considered its future under new owners in the early 1990's. It was stuck in the traditional manufacturing model of holding 100's of stock doors (always the wrong ones it seemed) and was totally unsuited to the 'just-in-time' manufacture which was needed to move away from this wasteful practice. Although all products from Renall's are now only made to customer's order, they manufacture more heavily to the merchants as well as joiners and to pre hung door suppliers. This means the volume of doors is higher as well.

The Renall Door Company have invested heavily in the wooden door market operating from a 2500 square metre building in Carterton. "High accuracy, down to 0.1mm, and high flexibility allow us to meet the market demand for producing an excellent product on time." says Cameron Shaw. The company has technology from German machinery



Contemporary in red cedar and kwila with copper panels from Arborline Doors.



Traditional in macrocarpa with leadlight inserts from Classical Doors.



Modern in recessed tongue & groove from Arborline Doors.

manufacturer Michael Weinig AG to do all their edge profiling, rebating and grooving work. Using a Unicontrol 10 and a Unimat 23E as the backbone of the operation, both with automatic tool positioning.

“These two machines, combined with a complete set of Leitz constant diameter tooling give us the accuracy and finish required as well as cutting on labour costs” continues Mr

Shaw, “The Unicontrol 10, made to our specs is thought to be the only one of its kind outside of continental Europe. It enables us to machine componentry to the highest world standards.”

The key to the success of this machinery is the software. Based on Microsoft Excel, their library of over 250 door options provide them with all the flexibility and accuracy they need. “The complexity of the software and its link to

the machinery is a huge competitive advantage for us as well as a hurdle to others wanting to achieve the level of success we have had.” comments Mr Shaw.

A company that sits somewhere in the middle is Arborline Products based in Hamilton. They market mainly to the top end of the market with custom made doors to joiners and those in the

continued overleaf

Arborline Doors



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Interior Doors in Fijian Kauri (left), NZ Rimu (center), and Sapelle (right) from Classical Doors in Tauranga.

aluminium/timber combo scene and merchants although on a lesser scale. A traditional door manufacturer, Arborline do also use CNC technology with three SCM routers in operation to produce the componentry for a wide range of designs. "These machines have given us the ability to produce what we do through the Alpha Cam and Alpha Door software provided with the machinery. As no doubt with others, the library of door designs and componentry we have created is vital." comments Andrew Jaques. The company is currently undergoing an extension to their factory to meet demand.

Classical Doors based in Tauranga find their business centers on the new residential and renovation markets. Colin Harris who took over this firm some thirteen years ago has made a real success of the business using traditional machinery to produce a range of solid wood doors for both individual clients and to merchants in the Bay of Plenty. Colin points out "The solid wood door market has always been a steady one particularly at the top end of the market. It remains a labour intensive operation for us with the use of traditional machinery. The key for us has been having the right personnel with experience in this industry." It's a sentiment echoed by Andrew Jaques "Even with new technology it has been an issue finding quality tradespeople to work in this field. In our case we always seem to have a couple of apprentices on the go to help ourselves and the industry."

What about the timbers being used? The most common is Western Red Cedar for exterior doors although Kwila is quite popular as well. For internal doors Pinus Radiata is still widely used. "We find there are a number of other timbers used from time to time for entrance doors most commonly where the door entrance is sheltered." says Gary McNaughton. "A recent example we did was in American White Oak for a 2400 by 1400 entrance door with raised panels with bolection mouldings." McNaughton's also export to Hawaii mainly in Sapelle. "The Americans have quite high specs which is a challenge but has been good business for us over the last five years." Other timbers often used from local sources are Kauri and Macrocarpa.

Another door manufacturer of interest is Parkwood Products based in Wanganui. Dealing mainly with merchants such as Carters, Placemakers and Bunnings as well as joiners. Parkwood produce a range of standard and architectural doors using traditional machinery as well as CNC machinery. They also import doors from Malaysia and China when cheaper doors are requested.

"The standard of imported doors is not as good as locally produced doors but they meet the needs of some of our clients" points out Production Manager Peter Ramsden. Parkwood produce a wide range of doors including their locally made Signature range. They too see technology as vital to their ongoing success. Peter explains "We are a company that specialises in doors, louvres and shutters so devising manufacturing processes that suit these products is our aim. Currently we are introducing a one piece flow lean manufacturing system for just that reason."

Parkwood see the finishing of the product as important. They employ a three coat system using Sikkens finishes for their Signature range of doors which they see as a point of difference in the market place. Others



Big spaces, big doors - this award winning internal door designed by Stevens Lawson Architects was manufactured in European Ash by Arborline Doors.

such as The Renall Door Company produce their doors raw but with clear advice on what a client should do to protect the product. "In this way should anything untoward in delivery occur we are able to repair the product very easily. The client can then choose their own finish," explains Cameron Shaw. All the manufacturers we spoke to produce their solid wood doors to paint quality standard and offer warranties of up to five years on their products.

The solid wood door market appears to be in good health with plenty of demand so what of the future? "Its all about competition and producing a product to suit your market" says Cameron Shaw, "Imported doors from places such as South East Asia which currently have their place particularly at the lower end of the market, are a growing concern for local manufacturers. To compete you need to concentrate on the quality of the product and delivery on time wherever you are based as well as offering as wider a range as possible in terms of design."

It's a view supported by all the other players we spoke to. Interestingly, Andrew Jaques comments "Timber doors tend to get a bad rap because there is a perception that the finish is not good enough. Attention to finishing will make alternatives less attractive." Gary McNaughton points out "Over the last decade we have found the degree of difficulty in door manufacture has increased especially with more and more being architecturally designed requiring special heights, sizes and panel work. Getting it right means having the processes in place to deal with every detail is vital."

Flexibility in dealing with different market segments may also be a factor in the future. Peter Ramsden comments "Its about meeting demand where you find it. Most manufacturers will produce doors for virtually anyone who wants one. Quality always costs more so having doors that are priced to suit all segments of the market will I believe be just as important in the future."





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