

Efficient to the core

Caldwells Windows recently installed a Cooltemper toughening plant from Unilam Machinery, in a bid to assert more control over its glass supply. Glass Times editor Nathan Bushell visited the factory in Wigan to see if it has made a difference.

You either source your glass from a specialist glass supplier, or you aim for excellence when producing glass for your own needs – the market appears to be moving away from anything in between the two.

Caldwells Windows chose the second option when its old toughening plant was due to be

Caldwells Windows' owner Barry Caldwell (left) with Unilam Machinery's managing director David Hargrave.



replaced last year.

"We are specialist window company with specialist glass needs," company owner and sales director Barry Caldwell said. "The

niche markets that we operate in have really picked up again following the recession, and we found that our existing supply of specialist toughened glass could not keep up



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with our demands."

Caldwells makes windows for luxury horse boxes and narrow boats, and therefore requires vehicle quality glass. When establishing his glass processing capabilities, Barry had to make sure he could meet the requirements of European Safety Glass Directive R43 – the rigorous testing regime for which covers light transmittance, durability, strength, and optical quality.

When Barry was carrying out his research into toughening plants, he said one name kept cropping up time and again.

"Everyone I spoke to recommended the Cooltemper furnace," Barry said. "And everyone who has worked with Unilam has been very happy with the service. For example, the company has a service department based in the UK and has eight field engineers who are available at a day's notice – sometimes within a day."

Caldwells had a Cooltemper Jetstream Plus installed in October last year, and it can toughen glass from 4mm to 19mm.

Working close to the glass for optimum efficiency and energy

saving, the hot air convection pushes the heat into both surfaces of the glass for faster cycle times and improved product quality load after load with little or no heater recuperation time required between bed loading.

technical service

This has given Barry a machine that exceeded his expectations.

"The efficiency of the new machine is so good that we are putting glass through at a considerable rate," Barry said. "It is a bigger machine than our old one, and the cycle time is much quicker. The result is that we are doing in one day what used to take us three."

Even though Barry has had to increase the man power on the furnace due to its speed, the investment has still worked out to be a lot more cost effective. "And it is much quieter," he laughed.

Full training was provided by Unilam. The company also provides a full telephone technical service and provides ongoing advice on how to use the machine as efficiently as possible.

"Barry opted for a two-year full



"The service has been great from Unilam, but the biggest surprise for me has been the cost savings when compared to my old machine, and the speed of operation."

warranty, which includes all parts and labour, because he wanted full peace of mind and no unseen costs after the first year of operation," David Hargrave, Unilam's managing director, said.

"The service has been great from Unilam," Barry said, "but the biggest surprise for me has been the cost savings when compared to my old machine, and the speed of operation."

This has brought in an extra revenue stream because Caldwell's now supplies toughened glass for a number of other companies who require R43 automotive quality glass.

Furthermore, Barry has also discovered that he can toughen a variety of coated glasses with the new furnace, which has opened up the opportunity of entering new markets.

Barry has efficiency running through to his core. A tour of his glass processing facilities proves that he only buys the best machines, and he keeps all of them maintained and working in full condition. It speaks volumes when a machine bought for its speed and efficiency takes its new owner by surprise.

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