

High rise

Steel worker buys the company he worked for and looks to local growth

"I liked it so much, I bought the company," was what made Victor Kiam and Remington shavers famous in 1979 ... Dave Stephens, who bought the company he liked two years ago, is at the centre of Newquay's multi million pound regeneration.

Despite the credit crunch, land in this Cornish resort can exchange hands for £10 million an acre as it rebuilds itself with new luxury flats, restaurants and shops. It means that the town that was long seen as a haven for beach bums and a destination for stag and hen parties finds itself with some of the most valuable real estate in the UK.

And what is good for Newquay is also good for Ace Engineering, the small fabricating firm Dave started his career at as a sheet metal work apprentice – and 27 years later bought out.

The company name is already likely to be familiar to many in Cornwall and south Devon, having been associated with projects for universities, hospitals, schools, restaurants, hotels, fast food outlets, public houses and nightclubs.

"We have a track record and a reputation for quality within the commercial sector but a change of direction was pivotal for the company," says Dave.

Some 70% of its work is in stainless steel and its reputation has been buoyed by several contracts to fabricate and install stainless steel and glazed balustrades in a number of upmarket holiday apartments, which are being built to replace the old-fashioned hotels that once lined the main streets.

"There's a lot of work involved, between 50 and 60 balconies on each project worth between £250,000 and £300,000. It's very positive when you think of all the redevelopment we keep reading about," said Dave who expects the future will be one of continued growth, both in turnover and



through development of new business opportunities.

The firm is looking to almost double the size of its premises by relocating into a new purpose built factory on the outskirts of town, which will enable it to expand further.

Added Dave: "At the moment we are restricted with 5,400 sq ft. We may be a small company but it's strong financially and has a very good client base.

"If you build in stainless you must be able to handle each polishing stage of your manufacturing process in-house. We are not in the business of mass production. We focus on supplying high quality. It is the finish the client demands and our competitive advantage has come from our ability to offer finishing, which as a quality is better than our competitors."

Ace Engineering draws on Suhner's Rotofera flexible shaft

ROTOFERA IS A REAL SMOOTHIE

Unquestionably, the Suhner Rotofera is the most widely used heavy-duty, flexi shaft unit.

The separation of drive unit and the tool itself provides for complete freedom of operation, without fatigue, during long working periods. Additionally, areas difficult to reach with other tools can be worked effectively with flexible shaft machines.

Suhner's range embraces single, multi and infinitely variable speed machines. Operating speeds based on long practical experience ensure optimal cutting speeds, which guarantee maximum stock removal and economic tool life.

Features a one kilowatt, virtually maintenance-free, dust sealed, air-cooled induction motor. Built to last with a rugged design. Suhner have units in service for over 30 years. Metal fabricators, tank and boilermakers, mould and die shops, foundries, boat and shipbuilding, aircraft and aerospace industries, motor and construction machinery industries all find uses for this versatile tool. A vast selection of hand pieces is available for the Rotofera.

Used for grinding, sanding, cutting, de-burring, de-rusting, drilling, milling, routing, finishing, buffing, and polishing. Flexible shaft units are easy on the operator. The power-to-weight ratio is phenomenal. You only hold the hand piece for which you need to do the job. The drive motor remains standing next to the work place.

Features:

- ▶ 1 kilowatt (1000W), 3-phase induction motor.
- ▶ Gear driven machine with seven speeds: 850, 1,600, 2,100, 3,200, 5,700, 8,000 and 12,000 rpm.
- ▶ Choice of three models.
- ▶ Motor weight:
 - ▶ 16.6kg with hanging attachment for rail mounting
 - ▶ 16.8 kg with base plate
 - ▶ 37.7 kg mounted on trolley

Standard flexi shaft unit includes:

- ▶ NA10 D10/G22 x 2000mm flexi shaft assembly
- ▶ FH-10 straight hand piece with 1/4" collet and wrenches

machine, which, says Dave, is the key to an ocean-like finish.

He said: "We get lots of customers asking how we go about metal polishing. Rotofera is simply the right tool for the job. Once we get onto mops all the hard work of the metal polishing job starts to pay off. And the zirconium flap discs we use instantly bring out the beautiful shine and mirror finish removing any fine scratches.

Unquestionably the most widely used flexi shaft unit

"Rotofera is at the heart of our operations and there's no questioning its reliability – we've used the same machine for 15 years without it missing a beat."

Single speed flexible shaft machines are used virtually every-

where. While 2,800 rpm was relevant in those days when depressed centre wheels were not popular, high speeds have become necessary of late. Especially, in finishing stainless steel, the roughing operations using abrasive flap wheels require speeds of between 3,000 and 6,000 rpm, whereas, deburring with carbide cutters are done at around 12,000 rpm.

But buffing or brushing operations need speed below 3,000 rpm – and the Rotofera is the one machine that can meet all the requirement of the stainless steel fabricator because it has speeds ranging from 850 to 12,000 rpm in steps. Speed adjustment is simple through the use of a selector knob engaging different sets of gears. Combined with a Suhner flexible shaft and a variety of tool holders including the BSK brush that makes satin finish easy.