



## Australian Hardware Journal August, 2002

### news

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#### Gregory Machinery – Top of the Tree

If you want tools for cutting, sawing, planing, sanding or polishing wood, then Gregory Machinery in Queensland is a retail and wholesale distribution company that can definitely see the wood for the trees.

Established as KM & SE Gregory P-L in the early 1950s, the business has evolved greatly since the days when founders Keith and Shirley Gregory sold power tools and woodworking equipment from under their home in St Lucia (QLD).

These days, the company is known as Gregory Machinery and operates under the directorship of Robert and Alan Gregory at a massive retail and warehouse complex in West End, Brisbane. In addition to retailing wood-related joinery, sawing and cutting equipment, etc, the independent company is part of the Woodman Group of buyers who scour the world looking for new and technologically inventive products. On July 1, Gregory machinery purchased Woodworking Warehouse Pty Ltd in Braeside, Melbourne, in a bid to further expand its retailing options in the southern states. The premises will also serve as headquarters for retail ventures into Tasmania.

Having spent decades as a private retailing company, the expansion into wholesaling and distribution is a natural means of broadening the market for the company's well-chosen product lines.

Many of the items stocked by Gregory Machinery are imported by the company into Australia under exclusive licences. This exclusivity is one of the strengths of the business. Not only are its products highly practical, affordable and at the cutting edge of world technology, they are also chosen with a view to making significant impacts on niche industries within the woodworking field.

For instance, Gregory Machinery is the sole importer of American

"jet" machinery and tools. Many hardware store owners across Australia use another of the company's products, the Safety Speed Cut vertical panel saw for cutting timber in-house to suit client specifications. It's the kind of product that appeals to Robert Gregory because it is one of the best designs in its class, and has the potential to make life easier for business owners.

Similarly, the company is the exclusive importer of the Kreg Jig (see *AHJ, June 2002*), a benchtop device made in the USA that serves as a drill guide for pocket-hole joinery. As far as Gregory is concerned, retailers who stock such products are never disappointed.

"We like items that are affordable, safe, high-quality and which also create ongoing sales," he said. "In the case of the Kreg Jig, customers keep coming back for the (self-drilling) Robertson square drive screws that are part and parcel of pocket-hole



The Kreg Jig ProPack is just one of the innovative products available from Gregory Machinery

joinery. The main point is the customers are back in the store again!" Recently, Gregory Machinery scored important coups in its bid to corner key health and safety markets in the woodworking profession. "I suppose one of my main interests is health and safety, so any products that promote a safer workplace are at the top of my list," he said. "Dust extractors, for example, are most essential in woodworking shops, and we have developed unique filters to ensure the availability of clean air."

Certainly, the company's new Wizard bifocal safety glasses fit the safety criteria for inclusion in its range. The inexpensive glasses are designed to offer woodworkers better vision and hence greater tool control. They are sure to be popular amongst users who recognise that even a slight slip or misjudgement can cause severe eye injury.

New Little Wizard and Lumber Wizard metal detectors have also just been adopted into the company's product range for the same reason. When woodworkers – particularly those using recycled timbers – strike old nails or bolts, there is always a danger of tool destruction or physical injury. The latest hand-held, wand-style detectors are priced for home handyman users, and give instant warnings of the presence of metal fragments in timber. The wands function like airport metal detectors, with obvious extra applications amongst those woodworkers who want to check for nails in bulk wood supplies before purchase or machining.

Until recently, Gregory Machinery was best known in Queensland markets, where the company focused its greatest attentions on local distribution through trade shows and State-wide advertising.

Chris Hoey, CEO of the Hardware Association of Queensland (HAQ) is organising a group of people to attend the Hong Kong International Hardware & Home Improvement Fair between the 24-26th, October 2002. Any interested parties should contact the HAQ office on (07) 3249 3300 or email: choey@haq.asn.au

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