

ICONIC ELEMENTS

Mitsubishi laser establishes their niche in custom fabricating

If there was ever a Cinderella story in fabricating, this had to be it. It started with two imaginative entrepreneurs setting out to create their own niche in their respective markets.

Jason Hardy established JWH Fabricating in Woodstock in 2004 with all manual machines – ironworker, hand-held plasma cutter and welder. Since trucking was in his family background, Hardy started fabricating accessories for the trucking industry – like toolboxes, underbody boxes and storage boxes. Later than year he purchased a homemade press brake and shear. At the time, Hardy was only making products from aluminum, but he eventually began making products from steel, for which he invested in his first plasma table.

Jamie Podovinnikoff, a former sales and marketing manager for two major corporations, started his own company, Garagescapes in 2007, designing and manufacturing premium quality custom metal cabinets for car enthusiasts and custom shops. Podovinnikoff contacted Hardy in 2009 to fabricate some of his cabinet designs. After about 18 months of working together, they realized a partnership was the key to their success. They formed Iconic Elements in August of 2010, and in December 2010, moved to their current facility in Cambridge, Ontario.

Today, Iconic still manufactures truck cabinets, service body cabinets, and does custom work from prototype parts to runs of up to 1,000 parts. “Many of our customers”, comments Hardy, “will send drawings for custom fabrication work and we also do contract laser cutting. Iconic also creates custom designed parts for customers, determining how we can manufacture parts more efficiently with our new laser and forming technology. Our clients benefit more from our services than just laser cutting – with the laser, we can also do etching, tabbing parts for welding, and cutting cubes to manufacture a better part and more efficiently. We try to balance the type of projects based on the range of metals they work with – namely 40% steel, 40% aluminum and 20% stainless. Most of their products are made from aluminum diamond plate, polished or powder coated aluminum and stainless.



Jason stands beside the Mitsubishi 3015



Iconic's Toyokoki press brake

When asked if they have been affected by the economic downturn, Hardy responds, “Our diversity has helped us maintain reasonable levels of production, which is how we’ve managed to continue growing and investing in this company. This year, Iconic made its two largest investments in machine tools – a Mitsubishi 3015 LV Plus 35 CF-R laser, with a 5’ x 10’ table, pallet changer, capable of cutting up to ¾” mild steel and an HYB 8520 Toyokoki 85-ton press brake.

“As our project needs became more sophisticated”, comments Hardy, “we knew it was time to invest in a CO2 laser. There were two obvious hurdles we had to conquer – which was the best laser for us and how do we manage financing?” Iconic conducted a thorough evaluation of the top five laser manufacturers’ products and finally came to one conclusion – Mitsubishi. “Productivity of all lasers were very close”, said Hardy, “but one feature on the Mitsubishi machines made an exceptional impression on us – the resonator. The new X-Flow resonators have the lowest cost of operation and ownership. They have two to five times less maintenance required and the liquid-cooled power supply offers high efficiency and yet less maintenance. “So how can we beat that combination”, said Hardy. “We didn’t take Mitsubishi’s word for it – we contacted a number of Mitsubishi laser users with machines from 10 to 15 years or more and we got the same consistent praise on the resonator.”

Financing was another major hurdle for the young company but the Mitsubishi distributor, Fabricating Machinery Solutions, put Iconic in touch with Mitsubishi, which financed the laser through their MAC funding program.

Today, Iconic Custom Fabrication plays an integral role as a manufacturing partner for many of their long-time customers. Their expertise in engineering design and their ongoing investment in advanced technology will help Iconic maintain their competitiveness in custom fabricating.

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