

Just-in-time service and competitive short-run production are the mainstays of New Touch Laser, a custom laser cutting powerhouse with corporate headquarters in Bayswater, Victoria, offering manufacturing solutions for all industries.

Being successful in a highly-competitive industry requires innovative minds and cutting-edge technology – New Touch possesses both and is constantly expanding its business.

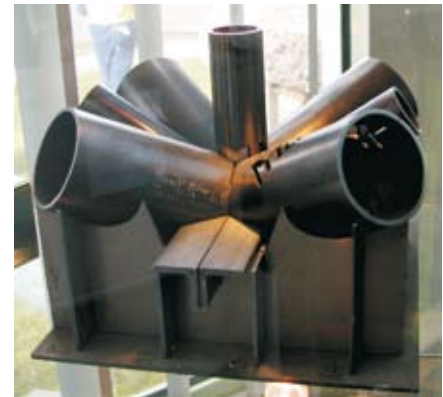


Above: With \$2m investments in 2006/07, Brad Drury, Managing Director Sales (left), and General Manager Ian Syme are primed for further growth.

Right: 3D laser cutting allows increased design flexibility.

Top centre: James Cao, Managing Director Technical, founded New Touch Laser together with Brad Drury in 2001 in Bayswater, Victoria.

Photo: New Touch



On the cutting edge

When New Touch's founders Brad Drury and James Cao wanted to add a second string to their bow last year, they decided to open a second manufacturing site in Clayton, Victoria. "In order to remain competitive we had to expand our capacities," Mr Drury explains. "Over the years we have established long-term rewarding relationships with our customers and should there ever be a situation where their needs are urgent, we want them to know that we are only a phone call away and deliver quality work in the shortest time possible."

Hence, New Touch decided to use the latest technology for their advantage and bought two American-made German machines for Clayton – two Trumpf Trumatic L 2510. "Space-saving integrated automation combined with a diffusion-cooled laser makes the 2D laser cutters an ideal production cell for thin-sheet processing," says Mr Drury. "The two machines were the first of their kind in Australia back in 2006 and so far we are very happy with our investment."

BY BARBARA SCHULZ

The integrated loading and unloading unit manages material handling so that a traditional pallet changer is unnecessary. "Because the integrated automation reduces manual operations, the user can do other tasks or work on another machine," Mr Drury explains. "Even fully automated shifts are possible. Double sheet detection ensures that the process runs smoothly during automated mode."

Together with the two new Trumatics, New Touch now operates seven machines across the two locations with a total staff of 35. But how did it all begin?

From an idea to a success story

Although Brad Drury and James Cao founded New Touch Laser in Bayswater in 2001, the story – which turned out to be a very successful one – already began 12 years ago when Brad and James met, working for a laser company. "After working together for five years at different companies I was working in a sales role, while James was in programming when it got to a point that we thought about starting our own

company," Mr Drury remembers. "Of course we had our doubts but we made a business plan and when we got it through, we bought our first laser processing machine, a Bristow 4000L." The two ambitious men operated the machine themselves working day and night shifts.

By the end of 2001, New Touch had three full-time and two part-time employees and as the business continued to grow, the two founders decided to put a second machine in, a Bristow Elite. "We purchased the machine before it went on display at Austech 2003," Mr Drury says. "At the same time we also purchased a 5kW PRC, it was the most powerful laser around at that time."

The new machine opened up new opportunities for the young company specialising in processing long flat sheet and plate work, jiggling, rotary and rectangular hollow section work for various industries including general manufacturing, agriculture and street furniture. Manufacturers have to find their niche to remain competitive in the industry today and New Touch specialises in cutting thick plates up to 25mm in mild steel and 20mm in stainless with a strong customer focus and the priority of getting the parts to the customer in the shortest delivery times.



Left: New Touch decided to use the latest technology for their advantage and recently installed two Trumpf Trumatic L 2510.



Above: The 3D laser cutter offers a diverse range of complex jobs including counter sinking of holes and slots on plates and pipes, bevel edging of blades, mitring of plates for weld preparation and creating perfect monolithic joint points on RHS and tubing. *Photos: Schulz*

Above: New Touch's quality system involves a minimum of six checks per order.

Left: The Mazak U44 Space Gear laser features 2D and 3D cutting with six simultaneously controlled axes and a compact cutting head with 7.5" focal length lens for a wide range of materials and thicknesses.

"As a rule you could say that our customers would want their finished parts to be at their customers within 14 working days," Ian Syme, New Touch's General Manager says. "As a consequence, our lead times have to be extremely short and are usually between three and four days. Therefore, capacity is a crucial factor. If our customers feel that we can accept all their orders anytime and complete them within the required timeframe, they will come back to us with repeat orders."

Mr Syme joined the company in 2004 as Sales Manager at a time when the company had already grown to a total of 13 staff. By 2006, New Touch had almost doubled in staff as well as in capacity and Mr Syme was promoted to General Manager. That rapid growth, however, was only possible through innovative thinking and an open eye for new markets and niche areas. "By 2003 we needed to gain a competitive edge in the market and diversify," Mr Drury says. So the two owners sat down with the team at John Hart and discussed the possibilities offered from Mazak's range of technology.

The innovation the New Touch team was looking for was soon to be found in the Mazak U44 Space Gear laser which features 2D and 3D cutting with six simultaneously controlled axes and a compact cutting head with 7.5" focal length lens for a wide range of materials and thicknesses. "We felt the time was right for the 3D machine," Mr Drury explains the company's move into the 3D market. "Every-

New Touch Laser at a glance

Founded in 2001, New Touch Laser offers 2D and 3D laser cutting, rotary laser cutting and laser marking services in Bayswater and Clayton, Victoria.

- Sales 2006/2007: \$8 - 10m
- Sales growth 2006/2007 : 30-40%
- Number of employees: 35
- Investments 2006/2007: \$2m
- Main target markets: General sheetmetal, automotive, defence, machinery manufacturers


one can cut 2D and with Melbourne hosting the highest number of laser cutters per capita worldwide it is an extremely competitive industry. We wanted to be proactive - and with an annual growth rate between 30 and 40% we are competitive indeed."

Continued growth through quality and teamwork

The Mazak U44 gives New Touch the ability to offer a diverse range of complex jobs including counter sinking of holes and slots on plates and pipes, bevel edging of blades, mitring of plates for weld preparation and creating perfect monolithic joint points on RHS and tubing. "The 3D laser cutter together with a laser marking machine opened up a whole new market for us."

New Touch constantly folded the money back into the company, expanding its machining capabilities but also investing into

their staff. "We not only invested about \$4m in new machines over the past two years," Mr Syme says. "We also invest a lot in training, procedures and quality control. Our staff is highly qualified and motivated because they know there is a future for them in our company. We have a very good team and a high retention rate. Moreover, our quality system involves a minimum of six checks per order to ensure our customers get the quality they are looking for."

"If we make sure that the quality and our service, including the after-sales service, does not deteriorate, we will definitely continue our growth in the future," Mr Syme concludes. "The customer needs to be number one!" 

New Touch Laser Cutting Pty Ltd
www.newtouchlaser.com.au