

PRESS RELEASE

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New Equipment A Sign Of Confidence at Interiors Firm

A Devon interior fit out company has recently installed three major new, state-of-the-art pieces of equipment in its workshops, representing a total investment of £200,000. Despite the current uncertainty surrounding the construction and property industries, the Newton Abbot-based Benbow Group maintains that this major investment – the biggest single spend of its kind in the company’s history – signals a confidence in its ability to build on recent successes and continue to attract valuable major contracts.

The Benbow Group, who were recently presented with an award by the National Association of Shopfitters for their work on the new Watches of Switzerland store in London, have completed bespoke interior fit outs for a range of high profile clients , including Warner Bros, Paramount Pictures and Sainsbury’s. Their recent acquisitions include a new metalwork lathe and a highly sensitive digital sanding machine, as well as the largest and most costly of the three new installations – a 5 Axis CNC Router.

The router, as its name suggests, works on five axes, which means timber can be machined from all angles. Its integrated digital technology allows technicians to fine-tune the design on computer before feeding this directly to the machine, which then translates the computer image into highly accurate machining by the router and its 16 diamond-tipped cutters. The result is an incredibly high degree of consistency across individual pieces of the same design and a greatly increased capacity. Safety features built into the machine means that many operations are carried out in an even safer manner than previously – a factor that has always ranked very highly in the company’s priorities

The complexity of the new router means its operators must still be highly skilled and as such, the Benbow Group has also invested in extensive staff training. Nigel Roberts, Managing Director, views this investment as a means of strengthening their reputation for

high levels of craftsmanship: “We’ve always been proud to demonstrate the highly skilled craftsmanship of our workforce, and although the new equipment incorporates the latest in digital technology, we view this as 21st century craftsmanship. Its operation is an incredibly skilled job and we’ve trained a number of our existing staff in this area, as well as two new apprentices.”

The new apprentices are Luke McIntyre, 18, and Ian Wallis, 20, who are both engaged on the company’s three year joinery apprenticeship scheme. With current Mill Foreman Geoff Gay due to have completed 50 years’ service with the company when he reaches retirement in 2009, Benbow are currently drawing on his extensive experience while also investing in the digital skills needed for craftsmen of the future.

“Against the somewhat nervous backdrop of the economy as a whole, we’re pleased to be able to look to Benbow’s future in a positive way,” adds Nigel Roberts. “We have worked with a wide range of clients from the V&A Museum and the Bank of England to Heathrow’s Terminal 5 and we have a number of equally exciting contracts in the pipeline. We’re confident that the major investments we’re making now in our equipment and our staff will enable us to continue to attract high profile clients and substantial contracts during what are undoubtedly challenging times ahead for us all.”

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