



Ramping up production with a saw/waterjet

Within the past year, GCI Surfaces of Clearwater, FL, increased production, downsized its footprint and began to cut intricate stone pieces — all with its new Baca Robo SawJet

by Jason Kamery



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he believed would assist in achieving this goal.

“We needed a faster way to cut our slabs, have a small footprint because the shop space was becoming limited and the ability to do intricate cuts as well as maximize yield we could get

from a slab,” explained Gladstone. “This machine does that. The software is fast and easy to learn and use. The accuracy of the cuts are exact. If calibration is required, it is easy to do. The safety features are second to none.”

The waterjet feature of the Robo



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was to grow the business. Our growth strategy that we envisioned was to gain strength of critical mass, but to carry and sustain the business without losing sight of our original ‘mom and pop’ service philosophy.”

Since its beginning, GCI Surfaces has fabricated granite, marble, onyx, limestone, soapstone, quartz, stainless steel, laminate, solid surface and composite marble. Residential is a primary market for the company, with the average kitchen measuring 55 to 75 feet. Additional markets include commercial, healthcare and federal. Some recent projects GCI Surfaces has supplied stone for are the St. Joseph Children’s Hospital addition, Sarasota Fire Station #16, Lakeland Automall, Cannon Subaru and numerous GTE Financial offices and Suntrust banks.

In addition to the Baca Robo SawJet, the newest investment in the shop is a Marmo Meccanica LCV 711 Magnum edge polisher. The fabrication facility also houses a Northwood Fabcenter, Comandulli Omega 60 polishing line, Farnese Mitre saw and the Aqua Pro water treatment system. GCI uses Vincent Tyrolit tooling as well as ADI tooling from GranQuartz. Additionally, the company’s saws are equipped with Terminator blades; and it buys other tools and accessories from Omni Cubed, Braxton Bragg, Salem Stone and Regent.

Gladstone reiterated how pleased he is with the investment in the Robo SawJet. “Baca Systems continues to make upgrades and they ensure you get them,” he said. “Support is excellent. If we have any issues that we can’t resolve

The fabrication facility houses a variety of other equipment, including a Comandulli Omega 60 polishing line.

SawJet has also been able to speed up the fabrication process on the CNC. “We cut all radial and sinks out with it,” said Gladstone. “This has taken the fingerbit cycle completely out. I put a new fingerbit on the CNC in September 2013, and it has been used maybe four times to date.” The reason for this is because the Robo SawJet is a high-production dual-table SawJet that integrates both a high-pressure abrasive waterjet and 20HP direct-drive saw. It can produce a slab every 20 minutes.

Before making the move to stone fabrication, Gladstone started in the construction business in 1983 and was licensed and working in the state of Virginia. In 2005, he moved to Florida and was enlisted by one of his accounts to make a laminate countertop for a job they had contracted him to do. That was the start of the countertop business for him. “We moved from laminate to solid surface and then to quartz and natural stone,” said Gladstone. “My wife, Debra, joined the business full time in 2002. Our mission



GCI Surfaces has a facility totaling 8,500 square feet. While 1,000 square feet is reserved for show room space, the other 7,500 square feet is for fabrication.



relationships we have built with our customers, vendors and employees. We will always be personally involved in the project — from material selection to design to installation. The countertop choices available today can be overwhelming. We simply believe that we best serve the customer by being straight forward and honest, presenting the facts so you can make informed decisions thus creating a satisfying and enjoyable experience.” □

**GCI Surfaces
Clearwater, FL**

Type of Work: Commercial, residential, healthcare and federal

Machinery: Baca Robo SawJet, from Baca Systems in Stockton, CA; Marmo Meccanica LCV 711Magnum, from Marmo Meccanica of Rochester Hills, MI; Northwood Fabcenter, from Northwood of Louisville, KY; Comandulli Omega 60, from Comandulli in Castelleone, Italy; Farnese Mitre saw, from Farnese in Ingleburn, Australia; and the Aqua Pro Water Treatment system, from Aqua Pro Elite Systems in Lake Elsinore, CA; Laser Products LT-2D3D, from Laser Products of Romeoville, IL

Number of Employees: six
Production Rate: Average kitchen is 55 to 75 square feet

The company’s newest investment is a Marmo Meccanica LCV 711 Magnum edge polisher.

on our own, we make a phone call to them and they log on to your computer and resolve them. We like to show our customer the technology that is used to make their countertops, and when they see that the Robo SawJet is in operation, the ‘wow’ factor is priceless.”

Of the 8,500-square-foot facility, 1,000 square feet is allotted for the showroom. The company runs one shift with six employees, who are all cross-trained to fabricate as well as

install. Templating is done with a Faro Digital Template and a Laser Products LT-2D3D Templator.

In the future, the company looks to continue to expand. “We are currently in negotiations to acquire the second half of our building, which will allow us to move our solid surface division and give me an area for indoor storage for our quartz slabs and remnants,” said Gladstone. “We measure our success from the lasting