

Creating a customer experience

Rivers' Edge Countertops, a seven-year-old fabrication shop, maintains a fully digital shop with advanced stoneworking machinery to meet the needs of its clients

by Sara Garafalo



Rivers' Edge Countertops of Newcastle, OK, recently invested in a lineup of machinery from Park Industries of St. Cloud, MN. Among the equipment is a Park Fusion 4045 saw/waterjet.

Rivers' Edge Countertops of Newcastle, OK, prides itself on producing an experience for its clients that are seeking brand new countertops. "We do this by guiding them through a process of discovering what the best product is

for them," said Jeremiah Rivers, CEO of the company. "I started the business in 2008 out of wanting to bring a new class and service to our market for the countertop industry."

Within the last 14 months, the company invested in a lineup of machinery

from Park Industries of St. Cloud, MN. "I chose Park machinery since it was made in the U.S., and I heard great things about their parts and services," explained Rivers. "Plus, I had a great sales representative who walked me through the whole process."



Catering to builders, designers, retailers and commercial work in Oklahoma, the company produces approximately 300 square feet a day in one shift, although, they are in the process of adding a second shift to try and double those numbers.



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The company has two Park Titan 2800 CNC routers, one Park Fusion 4045 saw/waterjet, a HydroClear water recycling system, a Park Fastback edge polisher and a Park Pathfinder image capturing system. Using Slabsmith software, the Pathfinder captures precise fully calibrated images in high resolution. These images are stored in the slab inventory and are also used for slab layout, enabling customers to see their countertop in 3D, before any stone processing has begun.

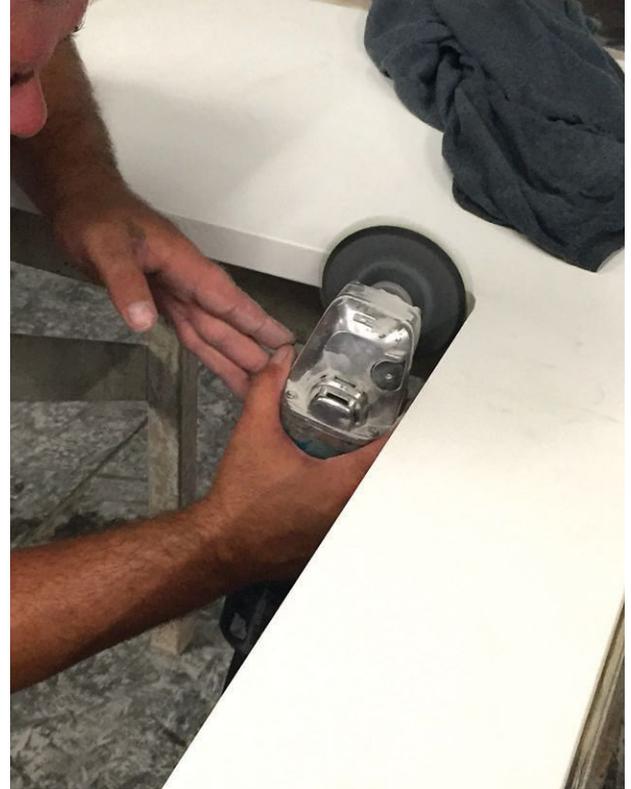
Additional equipment in the shop includes a Manzelli vacuum lifter purchased from GranQuartz, based in Tucker, GA, and a Makita hand grinder supplied by Braxton-Bragg of Knoxville, TN. For tooling, Rivers' Edge Countertops uses the Zensis II blade to cut and Tyrolit tooling for the Titan CNC routers.

For templating, Rivers' prefers digital equipment. "We make digital templates using the LT-55 2D/3D [Templator from Laser Products Industries]," he said. "This is by far the most accurate and efficient way to template. My template person drives a take home car, and he can template anywhere from 300 to 600 square feet in one day. Then he can email the files back to the office and never set foot at our facility. Going digital is by far the biggest recent advance in fabrication. It gives us the ability to grow and capture more business without having to hire a ton more people."

The company, which currently has 21 employees, works very hard to cross-train all of its production workers. "The nice thing about being fully digital is that makes this process a lot



Manzelli vacuum lifters from GranQuartz are used to handle stone slabs in the shop.



Hand work is done with a Makita hand grinder — purchased from Braxton-Bragg of Knoxville, TN.



A Park Fastback edge polisher is also utilized in the production process. “I chose Park machinery since it was made in the U.S. and I heard great things about their parts and services,” said Jeremiah Rivers, CEO of Rivers’ Edge Countertops.

simpler,” said Rivers. At the moment, the team is producing approximately 300 square feet a day in one shift, although, they are in process of adding a second shift to try and double those numbers. The existing client base consists of mostly builders, designers, retail and commercial projects, with very few kitchen and bath stores mixed in. Currently, the fabrication shop services the entire state of Oklahoma, but it is looking at plans to expand into the surrounding states.

As a fabricator in the current market, the team at Rivers’ Edge Countertops faces a number of hurdles. “One of the biggest challenges we are seeing today is the deterioration of pricing in the industries,” said Rivers. “It is

causing problems all the way around. Your employees want to make more money each year for doing good work, but every year we are seeing prices go

down in our market. It is hard to keep good employees and make a profit to reinvest in the company when pricing keeps going down each year.” □

Rivers’ Edge Countertops Newcastle, OK

Type of Work: builders, designers, retail and commercial

Machinery: two Park Titan 2800 CNC routers, one Park Fusion 4045 saw/waterjet, a HydroClear water recycling system, a Park Fastback edge polisher and a Park Pathfinder image capturing system using Slabsmith software – all from Park Industries in St. Cloud, MN; a Manzelli vacuum lifter purchased from GranQuartz, based in Tucker, GA; a Makita hand grinder purchased from Braxton-Bragg of Knoxville, TN; a Zensis II blade and Tyrolit tooling

Number of Employees: 21

Production Rate: about 300 square feet per day