

Stuga 2021 to 2023

Windows Active article

Stuga year-end news 2021/2022

After the pandemic turmoil of 2020 we didn't expect what followed in 2021. Stuga and our uPVC window and door fabrication customer's experienced a considerable uptick in orders closely followed by capacity constraints, rising prices and supply chain issues. Here at Stuga we have been seeing price increases in both steel and aluminum of up to 20% closely followed by double digit inflation in electronics and computer components. We have also seen lead times double or even treble on many key products creating a need to increase stock and work in progress considerably. Often lead times move from 3 months to six months between consecutive orders and it is not unusual to have to find new suppliers or adapt designs to accommodate changes of components from companies that can supply more quickly.

Demand for Stuga's sawing & machining centres increased so dramatically during the first half of 2021 that lead times quickly reached 18 months. We were pleasantly surprised that quite lot of Stuga customers were prepared to wait that long for a new machine but of course some weren't and these orders were lost, however most customers that already had Stuga machines chose to live with the long delivery or wait for lead times to reduce. During the first half of 2021 Stuga moved to much larger premises and recruited more engineering staff with a view to increasing output but there is no real source of people with the necessary high skills for machine building and so the new recruits have needed to be trained. The result has been increased capacity but as fast as capacity has increased more orders have come in so although lead times have reduced they are still probably a little too long for comfort. Work is continuing to increase efficiencies and thereby further increase output but supply chain is an ongoing challenge.

Although most of Stuga's output is new machines some fabricators who want a Stuga have a limited budget but don't want to purchase a cheap alternative so the company refurbishes machines taken as trade-ins to a very high standard and sells them with a full 12 months parts and labour warranty (subject to availability). These refurbished machines come with all the latest electronics, control systems and software as well as being updated to the latest health & safety standards. Stuga has established a refurbishment line at its new facility which is already becoming full with orders. Many Stuga customers that purchased new sawing & machining centres from around fifteen to twenty years ago are replacing them with new ones but like the old

machine so much they decide to keep it for back-up, servicing or perhaps for specials and/or doors.

The more machines being supported in the field the more support staff are needed in order to keep up the first class service Stuga is renowned for so new field based service technicians have been recruited and more are being trained for 2022 and beyond. The new factory also came with plenty of space to accommodate back-up staff and the I.T. equipment to facilitate their efficient operation. All Stuga sawing & machining centres installed over the last fifteen years have on-board cameras together with internet access which allows a sophisticated level of on-line interrogation when machines are not running smoothly or are broken down. The cameras can record events for later interrogation and have microphones fitted so that a technically well trained ear can hear issues as well as see them. It is one thing to have these dial-in online systems but at Stuga there are also plenty of people with the facility and training to actually use them in order to reduce downtime and even identify if parts are required. In addition the extensive new stores facility is equipped with nearly £1m of spare parts to look after machines up to twenty years old or even more.