

BASFORD BRANDS IS POISED FOR EXPANSION AFTER MOVING INTO A NEW PURPOSE-BUILT FACILITY IN GEELONG IN VICTORIA.

**DAWN
ADAMS
REPORTS.**



BASF

"A MASSIVE OPERATION" is the way Basford Brands' managing director Wayne Leslie describes the company's move into new and significantly larger premises last year. The scale of the task is clear when he points out that the firm had been operating from its previous facility for 20 years. With the move completed in August 2010, it now looks like they've never operated from anywhere else, he comments.

"Looking around, you would have thought we were here for years; it is our home," he says. "The new site is

approximately double the size of the last; it allows room for all our current plans and significant growth into the future. With this capacity in Geelong and our 20,000 square feet warehouse in Auckland, it allows us much flexibility over the coming years." Made-to-order curtains continue to be produced from a small additional site in Geelong.

Leslie recounts that the firm had extended the previous premises four times during the past two decades, steps that inevitably were 'bandaid' measures. "The site, at about 50,000

square feet, just wasn't big enough," he says. "So we found a purpose-built warehouse about 10 minutes from the original site. This was very important; Geelong is our home and we have about 70 employees located locally. Many of them have been with us for a long time and it was important we kept disruption to a minimum."

He gives an example to demonstrate the vast size of this new facility: "Previously, we had sufficient space for three container bays; now, we have space for 10," he says.



THE TOTAL PACKAGE

E O R D



LESLIE IS KEENLY aware that many people in the window furnishings sector might be most aware of Basford Brands from its origins as a vertical textile mill. "People know us from our roots," he says. "It was a vertical operation that warped, knitted and had a dyeing and finishing plant."

He points out that the manufacturing environment in Australia five years ago accelerated the firm's decision to move its plant offshore. This period marked a significant time of change during which the business in Australia was largely redefined and positioned for growth in expanding market sectors. "These days, the plant has been relocated offshore in a joint venture in Southeast Asia," he says.

Based on the success of the original knitting plant, the Basford Brands has been developing another woven vertical textile plant in China for its blind fabrics.

Leslie regards the development of that textile mill in China as another significant initiative taken by the firm. "We have been slowly improving and increasing the capacity of this textile mill to world's best practice," Leslie says. He confirms that the company has invested an enormous amount of time and monies into this initiative under the stewardship of Lessel Davis, well known in the industry as the founder and former owner of Twentieth Century Blinds and Grenadier Coating. "We are making blind fabrics to the world's best standard," he says.

Leslie says the mill has the best yarn on European warpers and operates European jacquard looms and European water jet plain and dobby looms. European dye stuffs and finishing equipment are also in use at the facility, as well as a 3.2-metre coating line and a six hopper electrostatic flocking unit and Austrian coating head.

"From this facility, we are even supplying some of our competition," he says. "A textile plant involves a considerable amount of investment in plant and equipment, and it's important to keep that busy. We currently have three or four customers, and we're happy to find other people to commission weave for."

THE NEW SITE IS APPROXIMATELY DOUBLE THE SIZE OF THE LAST; IT ALLOWS ROOM FOR ALL OUR CURRENT PLANS AND SIGNIFICANT GROWTH INTO THE FUTURE.

WAYNE LESLIE
BASFORD BRANDS MANAGING DIRECTOR

TEXTILE MILL

G N S

PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS Filigree Textiles, the company was started in the 1980s by Austin Baxter, at a carefully selected site in Geelong where a purpose-built factory was constructed. At that time, Baxter purchased the latest textile equipment from Europe at a cost of several million dollars. The firm was originally known as makers and distributors of quality lace and sheer designs aimed at the Australian, New Zealand, South Pacific and Southeast Asian markets. It became 100 per cent Australian owned in 1995 with a buyout from the British owners. The acquisition of Maurice Kain in 2006 led to this range's relaunch in New Zealand and ensured

that awareness about this brand grew in Australia where it had not enjoyed a strong presence for some years. Leslie observes that the Maurice Kain brand enjoys a stellar success in cut length decorative fabrics. "It has had enormous growth in both markets in the last two years," he says. "We would like to see Maurice Kain return to its former glory," he says, referring to research which demonstrated that Maurice Kain previously had the highest consumer recall of a homewares brand in New Zealand with an annual \$97 million turnover.

With Maurice Kain's acquisition and also the purchase of Sekers, Leslie

suggests it was time to adopt a new umbrella name for all of the brands. "Filigree, a name synonymous with quality lace, sheers and ready-mades, was distributing Maurice Kain and Sekers in Australia," he says. "In New Zealand, Maurice Kain distributed Filigree and Sekers; it just didn't make sense."

Since that period, Basford Brands has evolved into a powerhouse of well-known labels. Its brand portfolio includes Filigree Textiles, Maurice Kain, Sekers, Filigree Blinds, Claremont soft furnishings and made-to-order express curtains.



A WIDE RANGE OF TEXTILES, FINISHED BLINDS AND MADE-TO-MEASURE CURTAINS ARE AMONG THE PRODUCTS OFFERED IN A PORTFOLIO OF LABELS MARKETED UNDER THE BASFORD BRANDS UMBRELLA.

FILIGREE TEXTILES

was established in 1990 as a wholesale distributor of soft furnishings including laces, sheers and fashionable and decorative fabrics. Since it began operating, Filigree has been manufacturing laces, and it distributes a large variety of pre-packaged soft furnishings including cushions, ready-to-hang curtains, curtain hardware, ready-made laces and sheers. Its fabric and products are sourced from across the globe.

MAURICE KAIN

was acquired by Basford Brands in 2006 and is promoted as a leader in plain and decorative cut-to-length fabrics. This brand was started more than 55 years ago as a specialist in drapery and upholstery fabric.

SEKERS

was established in 1938, producing haute-couture fabrics for fashion houses like Christian Dior, Givenchy and Pierre Cardin. It eventually moved away from delicate brocades and into heavier weight homeware and

upholstery fabrics in the early 1950s. After receiving a royal warrant in 1967, Sekers was an early pioneer of textile engineering and claims to have been the first to introduce flame retardant fabrics to the UK in 1971.

CLAREMONT

specialises in low cost, entry-level-priced home furnishings designed to offer a value-for-money option through volume purchasing. The range varies weekly as new products at bargain prices become available. Product categories include decorative

ready-made solid and lace curtains, table cloths, plain dyed sheets and complementary homeware lines.

FILIGREE BLINDS,

established in 2007, is the newest member of the group and one of the firm's fastest growing brands. It is a specialist in mid-market cut-length and ready-made products with a focus on contemporary colour and design, along with speed to market. It distributes DIY blinds and blind fabrics for outdoor and indoor applications.