



August 24, 2020

Update: Emirates Team New Zealand

Contour Engineering – on “The mission”.

Christchurch company Contour Engineering is one of Emirates Team New Zealand's Official Suppliers, but relatively new to the crew.

“One of our aerospace clients recommended us to Emirates Team New Zealand as a high-tech innovation partner. We started at the end of the last campaign and have been involved ever since. Having the likes of Emirates Team New Zealand on board helps boost our profile as a high-tech precision manufacturer.”

Roland Auret is Contour's founder and Managing Director.

“When people ask me what we do and I say CNC machining, absolutely no one knows what that is, so we're very proud to say we make parts for Emirates Team New Zealand. For us to be a smaller company but part of something bigger, and a part of history, is massive. We feel real pride.”

In 12 years, Contour has gone from one to eight CNC machines and employs 14 staff. They've recently started moving into composite 3-D printing in carbon fibre, Kevlar and fibreglass.

“It's been exciting working with Emirates Team New Zealand because they're so innovative and push boundaries and they're willing to try new things. Obviously weight is really important to them, so they're exploring replacing traditional parts with 3D printed parts which are still strong but significantly lighter.

On the CNC side, we make high-tech components for the race boats. These range from small hand sized parts to larger parts made of titanium, stainless steel, and plastics. Generally they're the most technical, tricky parts to make. I always say send me the ones no one else can make and we'll get it done.”

Auret says trust is vital to the relationship. “They trust us to make their high-tech parts and not disclose them to anyone, and they also trust us to get it right and get it to them on time as well. They wouldn't be working with us otherwise. In their industry with their time frames, they can't be let down.” And yet Auret says the team is refreshingly normal.

“A few of the guys came down for a client and staff event we had here at Contour and that really energised staff and connected them with the mission. It made these guys real. They're actually really down to earth. While they were here I got a chance to show them around the workshop to see how we work. They're the guys using the gear at the end of the day so it was good for them to be able to have a look around and see how their parts are made.”

Auret says working with Emirates Team New Zealand has been good for business.

“We’ve actually had a few calls from other companies around the world who have recognised that we work with Emirates Team New Zealand and are interested. It certainly validates the relationship.”

He believes the America’s Cup is also good for the country, lifting New Zealand’s profile across lots of industry sectors, not just marine or sporting, but also tourism, engineering and manufacturing.

“It’s way beyond just super yachts. There’s a real trickle-down effect and we’re certainly experiencing that in our industry. I also think it breeds innovation. We’re working with another company right now that’s working on real-time automated species recognition for the fishing industry. You have enough of these stories going on and you get a cluster effect and I think that’s what Emirates Team New Zealand brings. It helps showcase New Zealand as credible innovators and competitors on the world stage.”

And Contour is proud to be representing the South Island.

“For Emirates Team New Zealand to spread the work around the country is great. I don’t know if it’s deliberate or not. I’d like to think they just come for the best!”

Although Auret says he’s more of a jet boat man himself, he’ll be there with sails on for the big show in March, along with the Contour team superfans.

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maxon Group is an Official Supplier to Emirates Team New Zealand. We follow the progress of their journey as Defender in the 36th America’s Cup campaign, March 2021.

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