

# Punching Up Production

**What started as a backyard operation led to a nationwide company. Contributing to its success was choosing the right punch presses.**

England's Stove Works Inc. began in Bob and Ron England's Monroe, VA, backyard, making one or two stoves a day, but didn't last long. It soon outgrew its humble origin to become a major player in the wood, gas, pellet, and multifuel-burning stove market.

Now, Englander and Summers Heat stoves are sold through retailers such as Home Depot, Lowe's, True Value, and other "big box" stores. Daily production runs are now more than 300 units per day. The backyard operation has been replaced with a factory and the addition of a 75,000 ft<sup>2</sup> painting, finishing, and shipping facility.

Although it has grown to be a national player, the company credits its success to a simple goal: make a quality product at a great price.

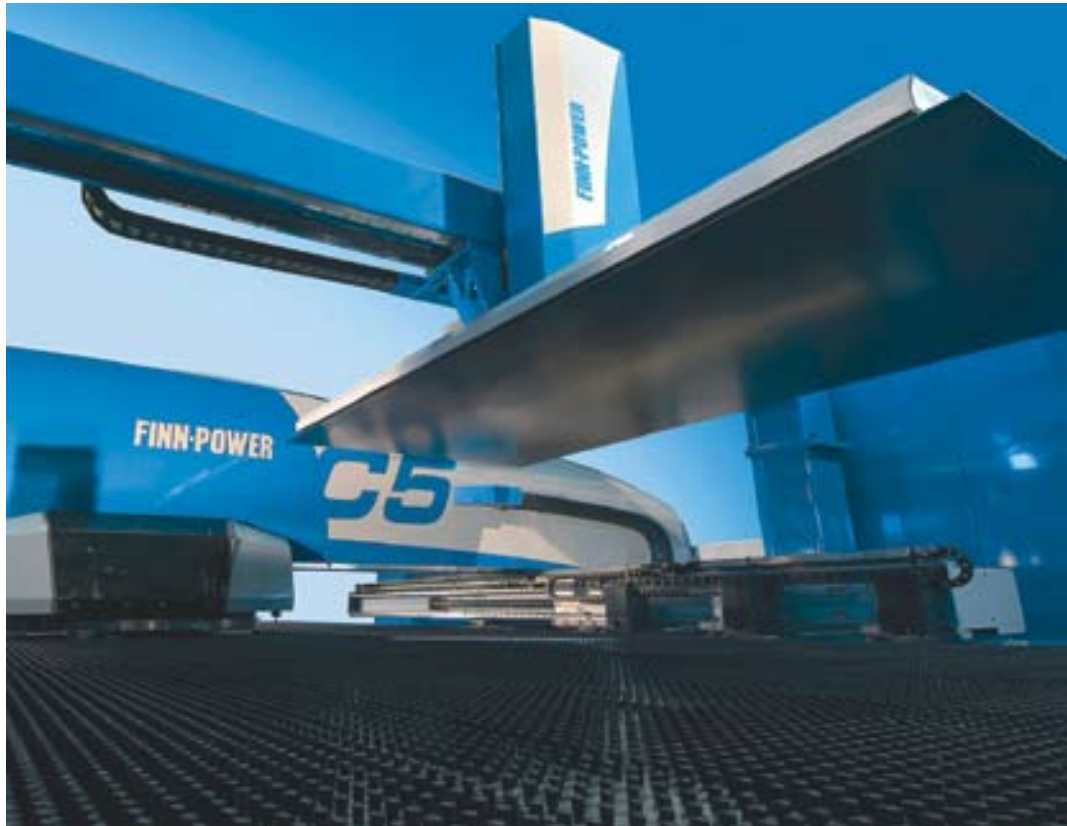
Contributing to England's Stove Works success was choosing the right tools to make the products to meet consumer demand at a competitive cost. In 1998, the company introduced a pellet stove to its line-up, which became a best seller.

## Gearing Up for a New Line

Unlike a conventional wood-burning stove, a pellet stove burns pellets made of wood or other combustibles. The pellets are fed from a hopper into the combustion area and produce a constant source of heat that doesn't need to be fed fuel manually, as in the case of a wood stove. Most pellet stoves are made of cast iron with stainless steel and other components.

To meet demand for the pellet stove, and stay competitive in the industry, England's Stove Works had to invest in fabrication machinery.

"At the time, we were new to punching," Dan Hammond, plant maintenance manager, said. "We had an older



**England's Stove Works has processed millions of seven-gauge sheets of steel on its turret punch presses**

technology single-station press. We needed to upgrade our punching and bending operations."

After an extensive search, the company purchased a Finn-Power F5 Express.

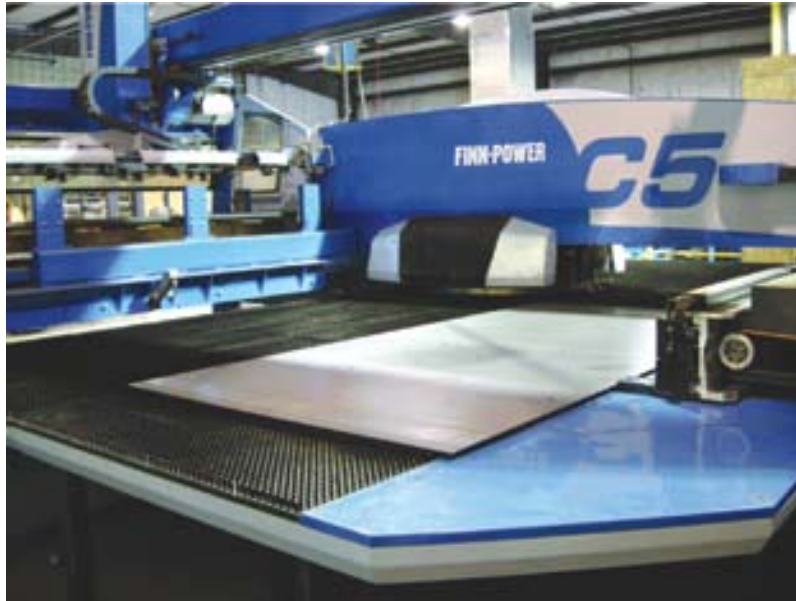
## Heavy-Gauge Performance

"We use the F5 for heavy gauge steel," Hammond said. "We run a truckload of seven-gauge steel a day on the F5. We are impressed with the longevity of the F5 – we processed millions of sheets through it."

Success begets success. In 2005, England's Stove Works found it needed to add a turret punch press. Again it chose Finn-Power, this time a C5 Compact Express.

"Finn-Power earned our trust and business," Hammond said. "We had faith in the equipment and service from past experience."

The C5 Express added unmanned operation to the C5 turret punch press through compact load and unload automation. The unit's loading and unloading solution uses the space above and below the machine – requiring only slightly more space than a turret punch press. It has simultaneous loading and unloading during processing. It is accurate, and it does not limit easy manual operation.



The C5 Compact Express features a 20-station, 33-ton hydraulic turret punch press and compact load and unload automation

The 20-station, 33-ton, C5 hydraulic turret punch press has a maximum sheet capacity of 50"×100" and is available with either Siemens or Fanuc controls.

Tooling flexibility is also important to England's Stove Works. Up to 10 auto-index and Multi-Tool holders may be installed in a turret.

England's Stove Works' C5 has six auto-index stations and a 10-station Multi-Tool. The turret punch press has full tonnage indexable upforming, which allows complex forming operations using a single forming tool. An index mechanism is used to turn the forming tool to the NC programmed angle.

### Brushing Up on Production

The unit's brush table is another feature the stove producer appreciates.



From a backyard fabricator making one or two stoves a day, England's Stove Works has grown to a nationwide company

"We put a small micro-tab in the heavy material and the brush table keeps the part in place through unloading," Hammond said. "Other benefits of the brush table are noise reduction and no scratching when we run aluminum or stainless steel parts."

The unit's upforming provides a precise process for knock-outs, louvers, and other forming. Finn-Power resolved the conventional problem of the die height impeding free sheet movement. The design allows

forming heights up to 0.62" with the forms made by the die moving upwards and then retracting, allowing free sheet movement, eliminating scratched or jammed sheets.

During England's busy season – April through December – both the F5 Express and the C5 Compact Express operate 24/7.

"The turrets are the heartbeat of our company," Hammond said. "These machines have allowed us to compete in the world of large retailers. We've grown dramatically since we've installed the turrets. We can't – and don't – ship late. Our customers score us on our deliveries. If we ship late, not only do we pay a fine, we may not be there next year."

England's Stove Works still outsources nearly 50 percent of its punch and bend fabrication.

"Our plan is to do all fabrication in-house eventually," Hammond said. "We're looking at additional automation with either the Finn-Power Laser Punch or Shear Genius to help us reach the next level." *Finn-Power*

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