



Dieter Hohendorf with his sons Bernie (L) and Peter (R).



Built for the Long Haul

Dieter's Metal Fabricating makes a big impact with big-rigs

Peter Hohendorf and his brother Bernie were practically raised in a sheet metal shop. Their father, Dieter Hohendorf, had been trained as a metal fabricator in his native Germany. On a quest for employment and adventure, he left Germany and joined his brother Achim in Canada. He found employment at Nelco Sheet Metal, and adventure quickly followed after Dieter used his skills to create some stainless parts for the transport truck Achim owned. Soon Dieter was building sleeper cabs and various other truck parts for local owner/operators on a part-time basis. His home garage, known as Dieter's Truck Shop, became so popular that it became a full time job.

His sons Bernie and Peter grew up working alongside their father. "My brother and I were always involved – from the home garage in the country, to the facility in Waterloo, to the 60,000 square foot building that we occupy in Cambridge today," says Peter Hohendorf, who earned a degree as an aircraft technician before joining the family business full time. Peter now serves as vice president of the company while

his brother Bernie works in product design.

Today Dieter's Metal Fabricating Ltd. is one of the most respected names in the industry. "Our core business is manufacturing transport truck parts and accessories," Peter explains. "We use # 8 finish stainless most often, since the mirrored finish is ideal for decorative parts such as exhaust shields, sun visors, light bars as well as many other accessories." The bulk of the business is with four of the largest heavy truck manufacturers: Daimler Trucks North America, PACCAR, AB Volvo/Mack Trucks North America and Navistar-International. Parts are either destined for North American OE truck assembly plants, or to aftermarket divisions scattered through North America.

BUILT TOUGH Dieter Hohendorf's reputation formed the foundation for this success. The owner of a local Western Star dealership was an early customer, and he provided the first essential contact, enabling the company to earn its place as the main supplier for Western Star's aftermarket accessory

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Dieter's Metal Fabricating Ltd

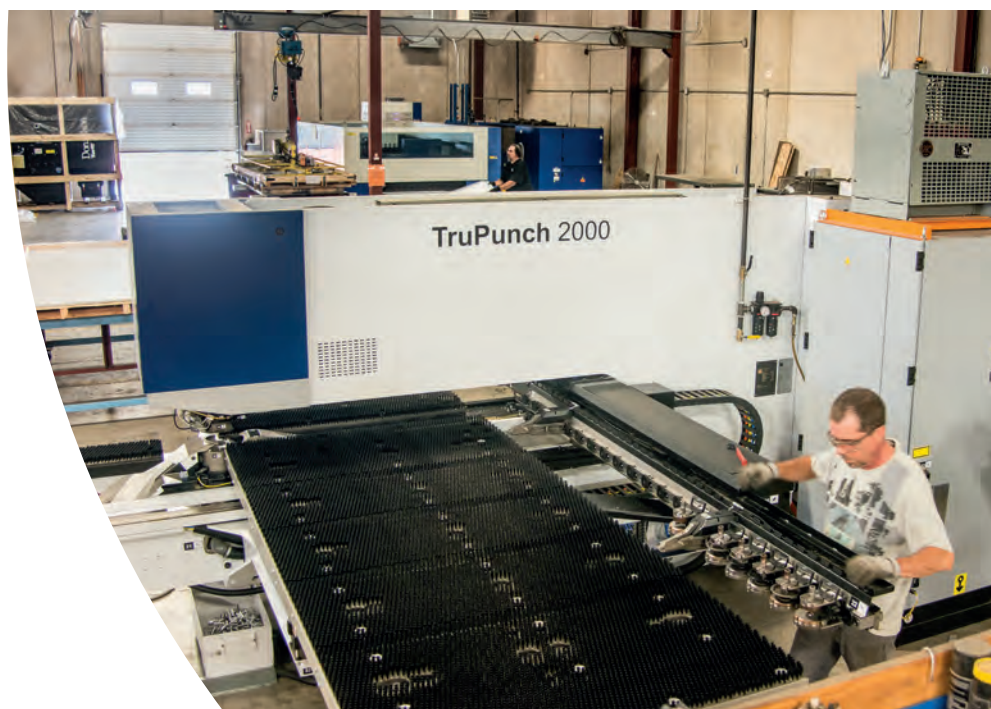
program. By the early 1990s, the company had added Western Star's factory installed parts and accessories to its mix. This is when the "factory business", as Peter describes it, began to grow.

In those days, an older punching machine drove the business, but by 2006, they needed a machine that was faster and more robust. "The TRUMPF equipment was a natural fit for us. We purchased a TruPunch 2020 and it has proven to be a very good machine, still working hard for us every day." That machine also impacted business. "The design and alignment of the TRUMPF punching head enables us to perform jobs that a turret cannot do at the same quality." Referencing a customer part, Peter explains, "The part requires a series of twenty to thirty thousand closely punched holes which form a screen that is eventually rolled into a cone. We are only able to achieve this configuration with the required accuracy because of the machine's precision." He adds, "The accuracy of our TRUMPF punching machines has

helped us gain a competitive edge over our competition."

CARRYING NEW CARGO For a time, the company also ran a TruPunch 5000. "It was somewhat larger than we required and we believe in upgrading our equipment, so we recently replaced it with a new TruPunch 2000." The new machine provides Dieter's with the same punching speeds and capabilities it requires, but with a much smaller footprint and the increased reliability of a new machine.

Since Dieter's product portfolio contains mostly highly visible parts, the company also takes advantage of some of the more unique features the TruPunch affords. "The roller tools and forming capabilities allow us to manufacture more aesthetically pleasing features and parts," Peter comments. In addition, "TRUMPF machines support the small volume work we typically produce which requires us to change and retool equipment frequently."



THE TERRAIN AHEAD While its punching machines play a significant role in its manufacturing capabilities, Dieter's also has a wide range of fabricating technologies which helped generate success. "We have such a great relationship with the heavy truck manufacturers, and the precision fabricating equipment in our facility certainly helps with that," Peter asserts. But like any business, Dieter's is always trying to grow. When asked what might be necessary for its market and new products in the future, Peter responds, "A punch laser combo machine or a robotic bending cell are technologies that we have begun to consider." One thing is certain: Dieter Hohendorf and his sons have certainly found employment and adventure in Ontario, Canada. □



BIG PERFORMERS

- WHO: Dieter's Metal Fabricating Ltd.,
Cambridge ON, Canada, Founded in
1981. www.dietersaccessories.com
- WHAT: Manufacturer of high quality stainless
steel truck parts and accessories for
factory installation and aftermarket
- HOW: TruPunch 2000, TruPunch 2020R, TLC
3050 (TruLaser 5030)

PUNCHGUIDE APP

The new PunchGuide app is a resource for production supervisors, engineers, operators and other users of punching and combination punch laser machines. It offers support for a variety of calculations including punching force, cutting clearance, pre-punching diameters, maximum edge length, stripper selection, and calculations for sheet metal thickness conversion and sheet weight. Users have the option of metric or inch units of measure, and can also store data for their own machines.

This free app, created by TRUMPF, was designed for use with smartphones or tablet PCs and is available in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Czech and Chinese. A Web-based version is also available.

➤ PLEASE VISIT:
www.trumpf.com/apps/punchguide

