

USERS' PERSPECTIVES: LASER WELDERS

Compiled by John Shanahan

If you're looking to add a laser welder to your operation, you'll be glad to know that you're not alone. With the size of equipment and prices both coming down while the range of applications is continuously broadening, the idea of investing in laser technology is being considered by more designers, manufacturers, and manufacturing retailers every day. Like any good investment, however, the purchase of a laser can be made easier by listening to industry peers who've already bought one.

We interviewed users of various laser welders tailor-made for the jewelry industry to find out what influenced their decision to purchase a specific machine, its advantages and drawbacks, and the service they've received from the product suppliers. Their personal experiences with

machine operation, technical support, and service will help you to ask the right questions when considering this all-important equipment buying decision.

ALS-35S

Five years ago, when Sara Grinnell of Studio C Designs in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, was considering buying a laser, she wasn't just looking for the one that would help her do repair and custom design work. "It seemed like all the lasers could perform similar tasks and all cost about the same," she said. When she came to the ALS-35S from B&D Sales, however, she'd found the one thing she was looking for that would convince her to buy: service. "Most parts are covered under warranty," she says of her machine. "If anything needs

to be replaced, B&D's tech support staff fly out to replace it." That and the company's annual on-site maintenance call have made her a happy laser user.

She calls their tech support "awesome—above and beyond any company I've dealt with. They walk me through [any problems] and if they think it's something I need a part for, they send it out next-day." In fact, at one point just before Christmas, a computer board on the machine went bad. B&D got Grinnell a replacement the next day and helped her install it herself while tech support was on the other end of the phone line.

Of the ALS-35S itself, Grinnell has similar words of praise, citing its speed and accuracy. "We do repairs on the spot without having to mask off for soldering," she says. "We do the weld on the spot for the customer, clean it, and hand it back to them."

That's how service begets service.

Sara Grinnell calls B&D's tech support "awesome—above and beyond any company I've dealt with." Service includes a yearly on-site maintenance call and next-day shipping of replacement parts.

