



Fred Davis, Director, Instrument
Design and Development

Editorial

Breadth of capability is an award winner.

Our recent success at the Australian Design Awards has demonstrated that good design, product development skills and manufacturing know-how go hand in hand.

I think this breadth of capability from "idea to market" has earned us these awards and I am very proud of the staff at Invetech who have developed this integrated capability that is now internationally sought after.

In the last newsletter, we focussed on our world-class capability in the development of biomedical products in the automated pathology instrument and point-of-care sectors.

The awards for the Optim wool fibre processing machine demonstrate that we operate effectively in diverse markets and have a core capability in understanding, development and delivery of state of the art manufacturing processes. Design and product development services alone cannot ensure product success stories. It is the integration with manufacturing expertise in these two areas that contributes to the delivery of success stories for our clients.

Paul Wright
Chief Executive Officer

Invetech scoops design awards

Invetech has won the prestigious 2002 Australian Design Award of the Year for the revolutionary slide loader, the SL50, which enables round-the-clock operation of cancer screening systems.

It also took away the Engineering Design and The Powerhouse Museum Award for a state-of-the-art wool fibre processing technology.

The Australian Design Award for the SL50 follows on from the Engineering Excellence Award it collected in Melbourne late last year.

"We're extremely pleased with the result from the recent Australian Design Awards, because it demonstrates our world-class engineering and design capability in such different areas of operation," said Paul Wright, Invetech's CEO.

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Product of the Year: SL50 slide loader

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from left: Paul Gleadle, Software Manager, Alan Morris, Industrial Design Manager, and Ian Reilly, Project Manager, receiving the Product of the Year Award for the SL50.

from page 1

The SL50 is used in conjunction with specialist image analysis cancer screening systems to detect rare secondary cancer cells that may be present in the patient's bone marrow. These cells have been associated with later development of cancers in other parts of the body, and their detection is critical to the planning and implementation of treatment strategies for the patient.

Currently, pathologists must manually record the identity of each slide prior to loading and load slides one at a time for automated scanning by image analysis systems. The SL50, however, enables pathologists to load 50 slides for automated scanning, allowing the instrument to run overnight, reducing the time patients have to wait for their biopsy results.

"The SL50 represents a major breakthrough," Mr Wright said. "While there are other automated slide loaders, this is the first one that can be integrated easily into so many different microscopes as well as perform other functions like read barcodes on the slides to identify the patient or sample, provide efficient performance and no slide breakage. It is receiving great interest from businesses in the US and UK."

The SL50 was developed in conjunction with Invetech's sister company, Vision BioSystems, as a collaborative project with Applied Imaging Corporation, a Silicon Valley-based software company.

According to Mr Brandon Gien, National Manager of the Australian Design Awards, "The concurrent design approach followed has allowed integration of a fail-safe system for picking-up, positioning and retrieving the slides. The slide-loader, which is operated by a pick-and-place robot, can be used with a wide variety of microscopes and integrated with a PC for analysis and data logging.

"The use of bar codes on the slides for identification of patients, coupled with imaging software and the highly accurate positioning of the slides, make this product an example of applied engineering with applications that far exceed those already on the Australian market," he said.

Invetech's other winning entry is the Optim wool fibre processing machine which can produce two different supreme luxury fibres – each with a series of properties and characteristics that uniquely identify them from other natural fibres.

"The Optim process represents a breakthrough technology in fibre processing that results in totally new and high value fibre properties," Mr Wright said. "This is an innovation in a core Australian industry."

The process was developed by The Woolmark Company and CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology. The machine itself is 17 metres long and comprises a series of distinct process chambers. It uses steam and heated chemical baths to process wool.

Previous winners in the Australian Design Awards include Aussie icons such as the Cochlear ear implant, the "Solar Sailor", and Ben Lexcen's "winged keel".

The Optim™ wool fibre processing machine



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