

Aiguisatek Customer Spotlight



HOW WALTER MACHINES GIVE AIGUISATEK CUSTOMERS 300% MORE TOOL LIFE

In 1986, just south of Montreal, Mario Dion and Conrad Goulet founded Aiguisatek. As the decades advanced, the company expanded its expertise and its footprint. Today (and thanks in part to a partnership with UNITED GRINDING North America), the company handles solid carbide and PCD tools, maximizing tool life for the woodworking industry like very few others.

Before partnering with UNITED GRINDING North America, they had aspirations of being one of the best sharpening service centers in Canada. With their WALTER equipment and its 2-in-1 grinding/eroding capability, that dream has become a reality.

"Tools that we service on our WALTER tool grinder give our customers in the woodworking industry up to 300% more life on their tool," said Jonathan Riberdy, Vice President of Aiguisatek. "Annually, they're saving anywhere from 30% to 60% on their total invoice, which is massive."



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The pivotal moment in Aiguisatek's history

Before founding Aiguisatek, Conrad Goulet worked for years with a Canadian tool manufacturer. "His philosophy for his whole career was finding ways to give customers the most productivity possible," said Lisa Goulet, Conrad's daughter and President of Aiguisatek.

When Conrad passed suddenly in 2010, Lisa and Jonathan, who is Lisa's son and Conrad's grandson, had a decision to make: continue on their current career paths and sell the company, or pivot to machining careers to keep the business in the family.

They chose the latter, and they've had a goal to grow the company while never losing sight of Conrad's original philosophy. Today, having added square footage, high technology and added capability, their Quebec customers know that few shops do more for tool life than Aiguisatek.

And when the company was introduced to UNITED GRINDING North America and WALTER tool grinding machines, that attribute was strengthened further.

How Aiguisatek discovered UNITED GRINDING North America

In 2017, Aiguisatek was being harmed by the delivery times and quality of their sub-contractors. "One of the big factors that led to our first WALTER machine was simply bringing that work in-house," Riberdy said. "It was our only goal, but once we saw what the WALTER could do, once we understood tool geometry, that's when we realized how much more we could be doing. Now every tool we take in goes back out performing like a new tool."

Before the purchase, Goulet and Riberdy were hesitant due to their lack of experience and the size of the investment. They knew UNITED GRINDING equipment was the best fit, but they took a look at other options as well. But once they went to Germany and GrindTec, they became fully convinced.

"We had a goal to become a large cutting tool service center, and seeing the WALTER up close—and talking to other WALTER customers—showed us that the machine would let us expand and achieve that service center vision," Riberdy said. "We were starting from zero, but the machine would open doors for us. We both knew that we'd fill it up and produce at full capacity within a year or two."



Training with the UNITED GRINDING North America Team

Riberdy learned the ins and outs of WALTER and its software, TOOL STUDIO, in the TOOL STUDIO Basics training course in Virginia. "Day 1, I was like oh man, this is way more complicated than I expected. Day 2 was way better, and by Day 3 it was easy. That software is where we got big improvements on tool life and on the tool itself. For me and the guys using it every day, it's honestly pretty easy. You just need to learn the functionality."

"I remember pulling out a print at the training center in Virginia," Riberdy said. "This is the only tool we need to make, but it's a complicated one. My trainer looked at it and said, 'Okay, that's not easy. But we'll figure it out.'"

Once training for that carbide tool was completed, PCD training came soon after. "That was intentional on UNITED GRINDING's part," Riberdy said. "They knew it would be hard for me to learn both applications at once, so we staggered it. I got accustomed to grinding, then got trained for erosion. At that point, the trainer who handled PCD had left, so they actually flew someone from Germany to train us." Riberdy says that today, Aiguisatek's WALTER machines run 10 to 16 hours per day, with 60% of time spent regrinding and 40% spent eroding.



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The Value of UNITED GRINDING North America

Goulet and Riberdy may have had hesitations before their first tool grinder purchase, but in the end, they found a partner who shares their philosophy for quality.

"Things were uncertain after my dad passed, but the beacon we kept seeing said QUALITY, QUALITY, QUALITY," said Goulet. "We tell our customers, 'Don't look only at the price. Look at the results and you'll see that this is a match.'"

"We have our second WALTER machine now. We're doing repeat business with UNITED GRINDING because that value has proven out. We know how productive the machine allowed us to be."

Riberdy put it nicely: "You think you're saving a lot by buying a less expensive machine, but then it gives you headaches every day. It's always down, you're always on the phone, you're spending five figures to repair it. Turns out you're not saving anything."

"At Aiguisatek, we don't appear to have the best ROI at first. But in the long run, we do. That's the benefit of quality, reliability and accuracy over time. We see UNITED GRINDING the same way: the best ROI in the end."



The Bright Future of Aiguisatek

The company is in the midst of a three-year plan to double the business. "We're looking to expand further west into Canada, and do business in the States as well," Riberdy said. The company will continue to work with partners like UNITED GRINDING North America who allow them to achieve their promise of good-as-new tool service.

So if, like Aiguisatek, you have a need for a partner who understands your vision and has the precision to make it a reality, partner with UNITED GRINDING North America. Our machines and our staff combine to deliver unbeatable value and peace of mind—before, during and after the purchase.

