

Record Power morticer

This bench-mounted machine certainly looks the part so how does it perform? Derek Jones finds out

At first glance you can see this machine has been well thought out. It has many of the features you would expect to find on a much larger machine, like the sliding carriage for example, but not all of them have made the transfer quite so convincingly.

The stops for both lateral and vertical movement are a little bit on the small side if you were intending to use them with any real degree of accuracy over a number of successive operations.

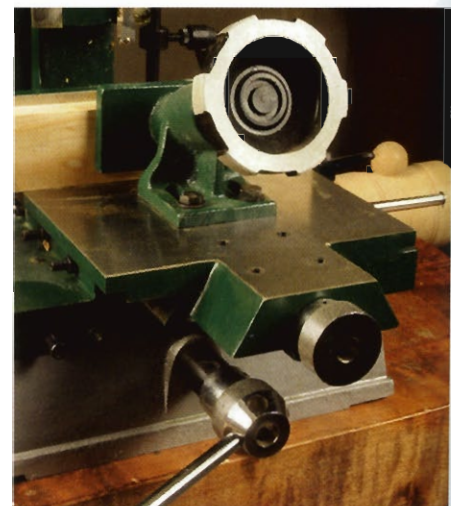
In fact the lateral stops are pretty much in line with the stock material if it is clamped in place without a spacing block positioned either behind or below.

Weight for weight

The machine in general is heavy for its size and certainly feels robust. The sliding bed is rigid and has the capacity to hold stock in place firmly which I liked but you would have to be mindful that it would be easy to over-tighten the bolts securing the clamp assembly to the bed. Again in truth this is a reflection of the machine looking more industrial than it is.

Travel lever

The lever for sideways travel can be positioned in one of four locations – think 12, 3, 6 and 9 on a clock face. This is convenient but the lever can fall out rather too easily when it is in the 6 o'clock position, which is not so convenient.

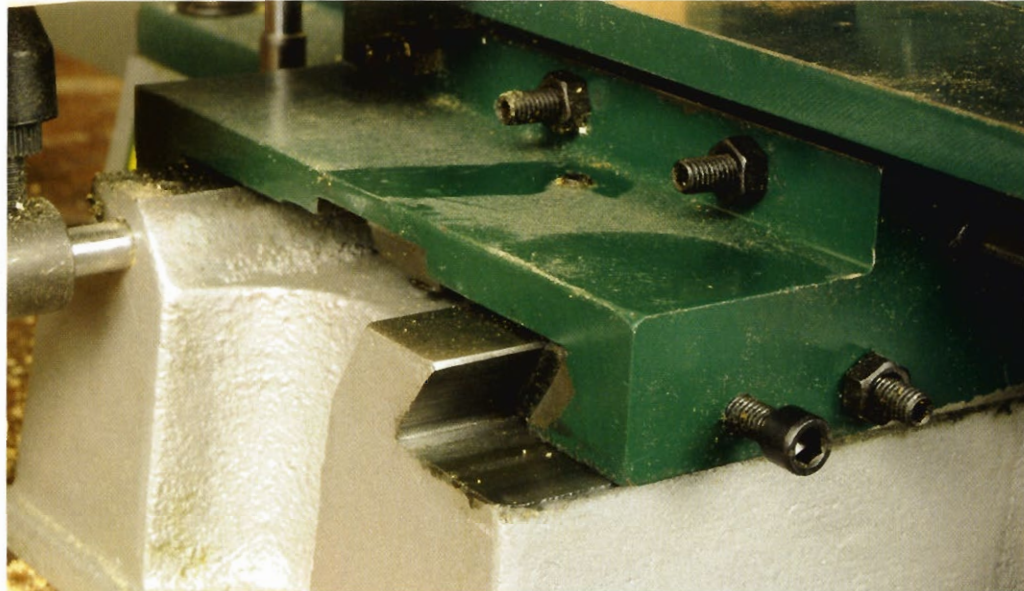


The sliding bed clamp assembly

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY



Vertical stops



The sliding bed in action

Sliding bed

The sliding bed mechanism has plenty of adjustment to maintain smooth and accurate running, with all the components easily accessible. I would prefer a slightly finer, more precise action, but the combination of removable bar for left and right travel work well with the pull-down lever. The combination is quick to get to grips with if you were concerned about not having a conventional steering wheel.

Forward & back

Forward and back adjustment is precise but almost half a turn of the knob was needed to take up the slack in the mechanism before anything happened; this may vary from one machine to another though. All the adjustments on this machine can be carried out using a set of Allen keys and small adjustable wrench.

Chisel performance

The chisels performed very well indeed, clearing waste efficiently from a variety of timbers and never clogging up.

There is 125mm clearance from the bed to the chisel and 125mm between the back fence and the face of the clamp. This machine will take chisels up to 16mm and has a lateral travel of 165mm so in theory you could tackle larger joinery components, but I suspect if that was your intention this would not be your machine of choice.

Main lever

The feature I was most disappointed with, given that this machine has been designed intelligently, was that the main lever only has one fixed position. Bearing in mind it uses a gas strut system to counter the weight of the motor this did make hard work of large mortices and multiple procedures. **F&C**



The chisel works with precision

For more information on how to get the best out of your morticer have a look at Alan Holtham's guide in F&C159 (also online at www.woodworkersinstitute.com) and F&C160.

F&C verdict

This morticer has all the features of a much larger floor-mounted machine. Use it within its capabilities and you won't be disappointed.

The only problem was that the bar holding the vertical stops was not parallel with the vertical movement of the head, resulting in the fixed stop fouling the bar at the lower end of travel. Only the top of the bar can be adjusted. This was put right simply by adding a couple of washers between the chrome boss and the main body.

Pros

- Robust build quality
- Adjustability
- Chisel capacity & performance

Cons

- Travel lever setup
- Single position for main lever

The numbers

Record BM16 morticer

- Table size 180 x 157mm
- Table height 125mm
- Max drill depth 70mm
- Max workpiece height 120mm
- Max workpiece depth 125mm
- Chisel capacity 6-16mm
- Max chisel stroke 130mm
- Chuck capacity 13mm
- Motor 1/2hp

Price £229.99 inc VAT

From Record Power

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