

I'm an enthusiastic fan of spindle moulders. Despite their undeserved reputation for being dangerous, I think that in many cases they're actually safer than a router. However, there has been little choice in the 'professional consumer' price category... until now, as Record Power tries to redress the balance with this new model

Record SM100 spindle moulder



The essential requirement for a spindle moulder is sheer mass to damp down any vibration during the cut, and this model doesn't disappoint. Although the weight isn't quoted anywhere the whole machine is very heavily built, with a finely ground cast iron table top.

Good guarding

The fence and guarding arrangement on lower-end spindle motors is always something of an Achilles' heel, but the SM100 has this well covered. A deep aluminium fence is fitted to a large cast spindle hood, and the fence itself extends well beyond the extremities of the table, giving you plenty of support for long workpieces.

The SUVA type guard has rollers for the overhead part, which is always an excellent arrangement. I first used this type of hold-down on a Scheppach HF30 spindle moulder, and from then on I wondered why something so simple and effective should not be standard on every other machine. The rollers provide very positive downward pressure on the table, yet allow the work to feed through with ease.

My only slight disappointment in this department is that the guard cannot be hinged up out of the way. It has to be physically removed by slackening off a couple of bolts if you need to make any adjustments to the cutter block, but this is only a minor concern.

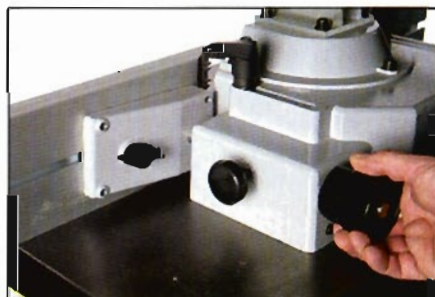
Clever fencing

The two components of the fence are also independently adjustable – an essential requirement if you're making full-face cuts. Surprisingly it is often lacking, even on some of the more expensive machines, and you then have to start packing out the fence with shims.

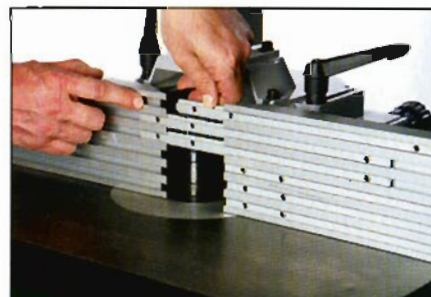
The fence faces are grooved in a regular pattern, which puzzled me for a while until I discovered that you can buy a set of fingers to fit into the slots, allowing you to close up any gaps around the cutter block and provide even more support for the workpiece. What a good idea! I've never seen this feature before and was genuinely impressed by it, as it also helps to realign the two halves of the fence if you're not doing stepped cuts. It also helps the dust extraction efficiency, which is already good, as there are extraction points both above and below the table.



The guard has rollers for the overhead part – always an excellent arrangement



The two components of the fence are independently adjustable



These slot-in fingers link the fence halves and close up any gaps around the cutter block

TESTED BY ALAN HOLTHAM



Power and speed

The motor is a surprisingly beefy 3.5hp – more than enough for anything this machine will do, although it does have to run off a 16-amp power supply. Power transmission is via a four-step poly V pulley, the motor being fitted on a hinged mount for easy speed change. The selected speed is then indicated on the panel on the front of the machine. The speed range is excellent, going from 9000rpm down to 1800rpm, so you can safely use large panel-raising cutters and also drop down to the lowest speed if you want to fit a sanding bobbin.

Surprisingly there is also a reverse facility, though this can't be used safely for normal hand-held operations. However, if at any stage you fit a power feed, the ability to reverse the cutter rotation often helps produce a better quality cut on timber with difficult grain formations. The table is already drilled if you do decide to add a power feed.

Fine tuning

The large rise-and-fall handle allows for fine and smooth adjustments to the cutter block height. The SM100 has a total spindle travel of 100mm. The lock on this handle is disappointingly flimsy, but nevertheless appears to be effective enough. There is a surprisingly accurate spindle height readout scale – again a feature normally reserved for much more expensive machines. Once you've set the cutter block height, the handle on the rise and fall wheel can be slowed away to prevent you accidentally knocking into it and altering the setting.

The maximum table opening is 200mm, but this can be stepped down with a series of inserts. A very good selection of spacer collars is also provided for the spindle itself, to allow coarse adjustment of the cutter block height.

Moulding heaven

In use, the abundance of power from the motor allows even the heaviest of cuts to be made in one pass. The sheer mass of the machine means that with these large cuts it just hums without a trace of vibration, making it very pleasant to use. Dust extraction is equally efficient. The one feature that's seriously lacking at the moment is a sliding table which would increase the machine's versatility enormously, but this has been promised for delivery later in the year.



The speed selected is displayed on the panel on the front of the machine



The large rise-and-fall handle allows easy adjustments to the cutter block height

SPECIFICATION



MOTOR	3.5hp
MOTOR SPEED	2800rpm
TABLE SIZE	690 x 480mm
TABLE HEIGHT	900mm
TABLE OPENING	200mm
SPINDLE DIAMETER	30mm
SPINDLE TRAVEL	100mm
SPINDLE SPEEDS	1800, 3000, 6000 & 9000rpm
WEIGHT	160kg

VERDICT

In spindle moulder terms this is very much a budget machine, but it still turns in a totally professional performance. It's one of the most user-friendly machines I've tested, and provides an excellent introduction to the world of spindle moulding.

- PROS**
- Weak spindle height lock
 - Minimal vibration
 - Excellent fence and guarding

- CONS**
- Lack of hinge facility on overhead guard

VALUE FOR MONEY 
PERFORMANCE 

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Record Power
- 01246 561520
- www.recordpower.co.uk



The motor is cleverly hinge-mounted to facilitate easy speed changes



A series of inserts allows you to step down the 200mm table opening



The motor's power allows even the heaviest of cuts to be made in one pass