



Small saw, great expectations

For a small workshop on a low budget this German-built contractor's saw has a lot to recommend it, finds John Bullar

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN BULLAR



The tku4000 consists of an open steel frame with a steel tabletop and tilting motor unit slung beneath



Built at Scheppach's factory in southern Germany, the main components are folded from laser-cut steel sheet which is powder coated

At first sight you might not expect a contractor's saw like the Scheppach tku4000 to have much to offer to the furniture maker. After all, this is a lightweight machine with an open steel frame and steel table. It looks very different from the cast-iron giants usually associated with our kind of work, but the sturdy construction persuaded me to give it a try. My main concern was the galvanised steel tabletop. I was worried it might buckle in use.

The top is moderately flat with the saw stood on a level floor. Obviously it is not as dead and vibration free as iron would be, but the steel is thick and double folded at the edges to stiffen it.

There is also a folded steel sub-frame beneath the middle of the table from which the motor assembly hangs.

Overall this makes the tabletop quite rigid, and I could feel no movement in it. If you need the benefit of a large saw that is light enough to move easily, this type of table construction fits the bill.

German framework

The main components are folded from laser-cut steel sheet which is powder coated before being oven baked to a resin finish.

At 60kg this machine is light enough for anyone to wheel around a workshop floor with the help of a pair of handles folding up in front of the frame. Half the weight is then carried by a pair of wheels slightly raised



The 60kg saw is light enough to wheel around a workshop floor with ease

behind the back feet. I couldn't find any way of fine-adjusting the legs for floor flatness so you might need to use packers beneath the feet if your floor is not completely level.

The splay of the legs provides stiffness to the frame and an increased base for stability.

Blade control

The blade is enclosed in a hinged steel box which acts as a safety guard and for dust collection. Blade guard box and motor are all tilted by a hand-wheel beneath the right-hand side of the table up to 45° to the right. There is also a small reverse travel of up to -2° which may help if the preset vertical adjustment drifts.

Once set the angle is locked by a



A hand-wheel beneath the right side of the table tilts the blade between -2° to the left and +45° to the right



A clamp to the quadrant on each side locks the pivoting motor and blade guard box assembly at the chosen angle

pair of screw clamps on two quadrant plates, one at the front and one at the rear. This arrangement braces the blade assembly beneath the table.

The height control hand-wheel at the front of the blade guard box raises and lowers the arbor on a pair of parallel rails, giving a blade height up to 102mm.

Dust collection

Dust collection via a 100mm hose from the box with a 50mm branch to the upper crown guard is effective ▶

TESTS & EQUIPMENT

Scheppach tku4000 sawbench



The blade guard box hinges down giving access to clear any sawdust blockage or change the blade



Height adjustment beneath the front of the machine moves the blade arbor up and down a pair of parallel rails

- ▶ with dry hardwood, although there seem to be numerous nooks and crannies that might clog up with moist or resinous woods.

However, access for blade changing, cleaning or maintenance is easy via a drop-down door.

Power & speed

There is an indirect drive between motor and blade arbor via a belt and pulleys. These are sized to spin the blade at 4000rpm, giving it a cutting speed of 66m per second.

The standard 2.2kW 230V single-phase induction motor with electronic braking provides an output power of 1.6hp. A 110V version is also available to order.

Start and stop buttons are on a no-volt release switch immediately beneath the table front.

Crosscutting

The sliding crosscut carriage is an option, but it is one I would expect most users to opt for as it greatly improves the machine's functionality.

The dual steel rails for the optional sliding table carriage are like those

fitted on Scheppach's bigger and installed machines.

The width in front of the sawblade is 315mm. Crosscutting 50mm beech was quick and clean with the blade running at a fixed speed of 4000rpm. The maximum depth of cut is 102mm vertically or 70mm at 45°. There should be plenty of power for cutting this thickness; however, you would need to be careful not to put too much weight on the carriage.

Ripping

The tku coped well with ripping boards up to 580mm wide on the standard table or up to 1050mm wide with an optional extension table on the right-hand side.

The rip fence is basic but functional, clamped in place against a folded steel rail in front of the table. The rip fence can be dropped in height to clear the blade when it is lowered to 45°.

An optional panel-cutting attachment with adjustable legs supports a larger and sturdier fence on an outrigger for rip-cutting boards up to 950mm wide. *nc*

F&C verdict

The tku4000 exceeded my expectations. While it obviously cannot be compared to a big, slick, sophisticated panel saw, it has a good capacity and a power equal to the tablesaw in many a furniture-maker's small workshop. And it costs a lot less money.

I would like to have seen adjustable-height footpads for levelling. If I was setting out to equip a small workshop on a low budget, I would much prefer to use this robust unpretentious businesslike machine than any DIY-quality sawbench with all the bells and whistles.

Alternatively, the tku4000 could be used as a second saw in a larger workshop to reduce the workload on a more expensive unit, freeing the other one up for precision work and also extending its life. In either case the tku's easy portability will be a boon, and its heavy-gauge folded steel reinforcing and bracing clamps make the steel tabletop surprisingly sturdy.

Pros

*Good capacity and power
Value for money
Portability
Strong design*

Cons

Lack of adjustable-height footpads

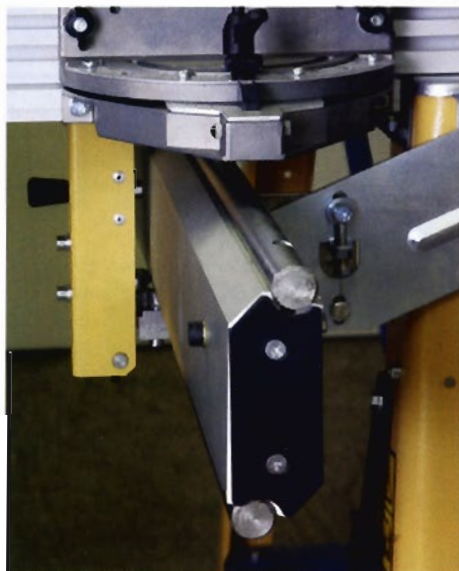
The numbers

*Model tku4000 sawbench
Motor single-phase 2.2kW induction
Table width 595mm
Table length 795mm
Sawblade diameter max. 315mm
Sawblade tilt -2° to +45°
Sawblade speed 4000rpm
Crosscut fence angle 0° to 45°*

Prices inc VAT

*240V basic saw including wheel kit and rear table extension, £457.08
Sliding carriage £206.80
Panel cutting attachment, £210.33*

*From NMA Agencies
Web www.nmauk.com*



Dual steel rails for the optional sliding table carriage resemble those for Scheppach's bigger fixed machines



Crosscutting hardwoods is quick and clean on the 315mm blade running at 4000rpm