

"Straight as an arrow":

Precision is the name of the game at Amsler & Frey AG

When you visit the premises of Amsler & Frey AG in the Swiss village of Schinznach, the first thing you notice is the impressively large machine park. Founded over 40 years ago, the company deals in high-quality, precision-trimmed plastic products and semi-finished goods, and has already established itself at the forefront of the Swiss machining industry.

"We place great emphasis on quality, precision and delivery reliability," explains chief operating officer (COO) and business manager Thomas Gloor – and with good reason: "We often produce highly complex parts in small batches and are generally faced with rapid turnaround times." Gloor attributes the company's success to its experienced employees and comprehensive advisory service: "We are happy to advise customers on material selection – after all, this is particularly important with regard to tolerances and durability. We are also able to support our clients with the design and construction of their parts." It goes without saying that the customers very much appreciate these services. As a result, Amsler & Frey AG has enjoyed a leading position in the market for decades.

4000 semi-finished products are held in stock and are ready for dispatch within 24 hours. Depending on the type and scope of the customer order, the processed parts leave the company premises after two to three weeks. The company supplies products to various divisions of the machine-building industry, such as materials handling, electrical engineering and electronics, vehicle construction, apparatus engineering and automation. The success of Amsler & Frey AG also extends to the relatively crisis-proof industry of medical technology, for which it manufactures adapter bodies and other products. An exploration of the buildings in Schinznach reveals that the Swiss company is also involved in the lucrative world of motorsport — it's not unusual to see what will later be the underbody of a Formula 1 racer when you walk around the factory.

For its precision-cutting needs, Amsler & Frey AG has long placed its trust in HOLZMA. In March of this year, the new HPP 570 P plastics saw was put into operation, replacing a ten-year-old predecessor. The modern equipment of the new model offers a number of advantages, as Gloor explains: "Our main requirement was the ability to cut 150 mm thick blocks of plastic to size, something which is not a problem thanks to the machine's 170 mm saw blade projection." For this very specific task, the HPP 570 P is equipped with sensor-based monitoring of the saw tracking. During cutting, this function continuously checks the saw blade deformation and makes necessary adjustments by reducing the cutting speed or even cancelling and restarting the operation. And the results speak for themselves: "Straight as an arrow," proclaims a delighted Thomas Gloor.

The COO is impressed by the new technology of the HOLZMA saw: "The enhanced cutting performance is clearly illustrated by the frequency-regulated 30 kW main saw motor. You can also see that only the saw blade is moved up and no longer the entire unit. Overall, the new saw is much faster and we have now found ourselves with time to spare in our eight-hour shift. This never happened with the old model."

Another important requirement was the ability to cut very thin strips. "The narrow-finger clamps are perfect for this task", states Gloor. "This level of flexibility was absolutely essential." With the ability to select further clamp positions to suit its requirements, the company can use the saw to process all panel dimensions with utmost precision. Floating clamps and an additional side aligner in the rear machine table ensure accurate positioning, even with particularly difficult materials such as very thick or corrugated panels. Furthermore, the new "reverse cutting" function ensures virtually tear-free cutting of even the thinnest material. Thomas Gloor is full of praise: "It is fantastic technology."

All production facilities at Amsler & Frey AG are air-conditioned. Constant room

temperatures are an important prerequisite for minimal production tolerances. This is why the saw body of the HPP 570 P is made of SorbTech mineral casting, which has a much lower thermal expansion coefficient than steel and thus guarantees consistent high-precision cutting. Of course, none of this can change the fact that different batches of the same plastic can easily possess different properties. However, the specialist company now has the right tool to tackle this issue. As Gloor explains: "To enable us to process the many different materials, we selected the 'material-dependent parameters' option. This allows us to specify different saw parameters for each material in a comprehensive database. The saw then automatically adjusts itself to the required settings, the material is processed perfectly and waste is reduced to an absolute minimum – all at the touch of a button." And that is not all: "To allow for the property variations within any one type of plastic, we can easily make manual adjustments to the parameters at any time."

The HOLZMA HPP 570 P is operated by semi-skilled workers alongside trained carpenters. "The best people for this job," explains Gloor. However, the COO considers the experience gathered by the employees in their work with plastics to be paramount: "This is why we attribute great importance to sustainable growth and an experienced, motivated workforce."

Photos



Photo 1:

Thomas Gloor, general manager and COO of Amsler & Frey AG, in front of the new HOLZMA HPP 570 P.



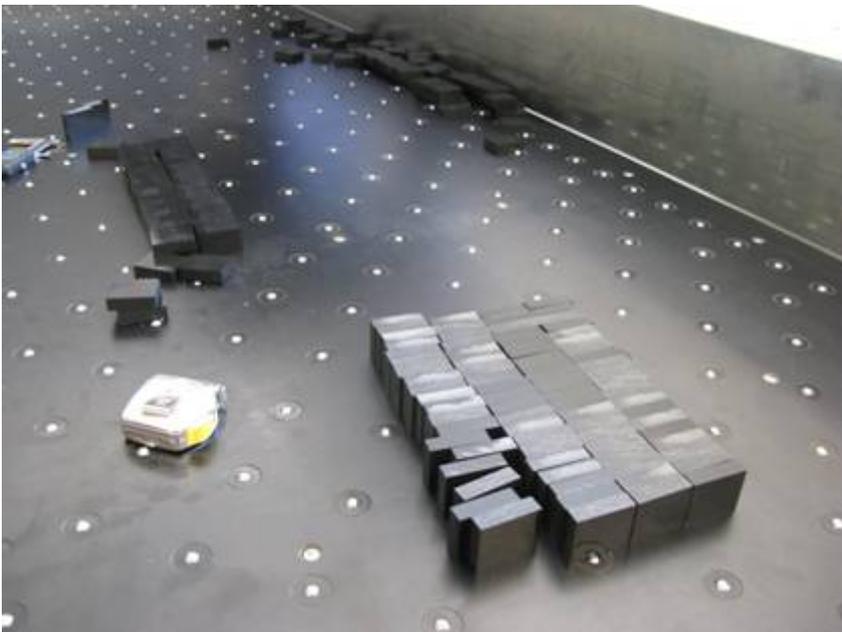
Photo 2:

Thomas Gloor, COO of Amsler & Frey AG, in conversation with Peter Niederer (right), managing director of HOMAG Schweiz.



Photo 3 (above) + 4 (below):

The narrow-finger clamps enable accurate cutting of strips from just 20 mm in width.



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