

Cool-headed yet vigilant: Wilhelm Hoetzel on the quest for even greater efficiency

Quietly and peacefully, a small Buddha statue watches on as the machine operator swiftly processes the cutting patterns for the subsequent manufacture of furnishings and shop fittings. It is a familiar scene to the Buddha, who over the years has adorned no less than three HOLZMA saws at the Swabian company Hoetzel — and he is still smiling.

Quiet and peaceful are also adjectives that could be used to describe the owner of the joinery, Wilhelm Hoetzel. He deliberates over our questions, choosing his words carefully. Yet the businessman from Deggingen conceals a restless spirit, constantly scrutinising his company for potential ways in which to optimise and accelerate the company's processes. You have to listen quite closely to pick up these traits — for example, on the tour of the plant, he asked us not to take a photo of one particular area, saying "I'm in the process of reorganising everything at the moment."

Joinery practically runs in Wilhelm Hoetzel's blood: the Swabian business was founded by his grandfather back in 1920, and Hoetzel is now taking it into the third generation. "The company started out manufacturing tables," explains Hoetzel. "Over time, we began furnishing banks, offices and medical practices, and this remains an important mainstay for the company today." Wilhelm Hoetzel's "shopfitting" division is also making great strides — its clients include well-known international companies, most of which are based in the joinery's direct vicinity.

Today, Hoetzel has a production area of 2500 m² and employs 28 people, a number of whom originally came from a joinery in Donzdorf. When the latter closed its doors in 2002, Hoetzel took on its clients, its stock and its staff, including Thomas Recheckemmer, Horst Kugler and Wolfgang Meier. These

skilled joiners advise customers and supervise work preparation. They are very similar to their boss in some regards, being on a constant lookout for improvement potential.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the company owns many large machines, some of which were bought by Hoetzel, Meier and Kugler together and which combine to enable an efficient, time-saving production process. These include a HOMAG edge gluing machine with a LIGMATECH return conveyor, two HOMAG machining centres and a new HOLZMA panel-sizing saw. "We have worked with the HOMAG Group for many years now and are very happy with them," says Hoetzel. "With HOLZMA in particular, we were won over by the company's proximity to us, its good reputation, the excellent advisory service, not to mention the reliability of the first two saws."

Wolfgang Meier has been in close contact with HOLZMA for many years. He acted as a test partner and many of his ideas and suggestions were incorporated into the HOLZMA "CADmatic" machine control system. "They really listened to what 'the little joiner' had to say," he says with an air of surprise.

In autumn, the Buddha took up residence on new a HOLZMA machine, this time the "HPL 380 profiLine" single saw with lift table feeding. It goes without saying that a great deal of thought went into the choice of equipment. As Hoetzel explains, "You need to think about the future when making a purchase. And by that I don't mean that we're reaching for the stars; but it is important to weigh up your current needs and what requirements you might face in the future."

For example, the saw is equipped with the new Soft Touch package, which automatically controls the pressure of the clamps and pressure beam, making it very simple to cut pressure-sensitive materials. To facilitate machine operation, the different pressures required for each individual material can be recorded in a database in the CADmatic machine control system and selected as required. As Horst Kugler explains, "We already process lightweight and foam panels, and this

function is ideal for the job. What's more, we expect the lightweight panels in particular to drop in price in the long term, meaning that they will be used in even greater volumes. If this proves true, the Soft Touch package will stand us in good stead."

The HOLZMA Cut Rite optimisation software ensures optimum utilisation of the material. Hoetzel: "We have always used this software and are very pleased with the new 'just-in-time optimisation', This function is integrated in the CADmatic machine control system and allows us to change our order-based production run, which has already been optimised by Cut Rite, directly at the saw as required. That is to say, we manually intervene in optimised runs in order to combine different orders on a materials basis. One of the many advantages of 'just-in-time optimisation' is that it enables manual integration of offcuts."

The new HPL 380 also features the Power Concept. According to Horst Kugler, "The advantage of this independent clamp is that we can cut two strips into parts of different lengths in one work step." And as Wolfgang Meier adds, "The Power Concept takes the performance of the new saw to another level, and it was already significantly better than the old models."

In the name of even more power, part of the wall between the warehouse and the saw was removed just to accommodate the fully automatic lift table feeding unit with its lateral two-level roller conveyor.

The new HOLZMA saw has enabled Hoetzel to cut down from one and a half to just a single shift and means that the company has capacity in reserve to cope with any future increase in order volumes. "But first we need to adapt the operating cycles to the new saw," says Wolfgang Meier. "We're still at the fine-tuning stage. We're monitoring everything and keeping a close eye on proceedings, providing training where necessary and are constantly thinking about how we can enhance our organisation."

The Hoetzel employees are sure to come up with more ideas in this regard, so that the small, smiling Buddha statue can be certain of a home in Deggingen for a long time to come.

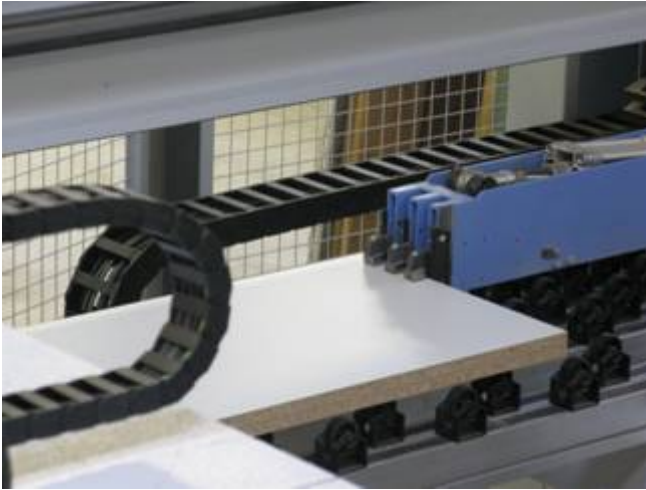
Pictures



Picture 1:
Quiet and peaceful: The figure of the Buddha on the HPL 380 profiLine at Hoetzel, Deggingen



Picture 2:
Left to right: Horst Kugler, Wolfgang Meier, Wilhelm Hoetzel



**Picture 3, number 4574:
Power Concept**



**Picture 4:
Power Concept**



Picture 5:
HPL 380 control panel with the CADmatic 4 PROFESSIONAL machine control system



Picture 6:
Additional two-level roller conveyor leading directly from the warehouse to the saw's lift table



Photo 7:
Automatic feeding to the saw via the lift table.
In the foreground: Turning device for headcuts.

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