

furniture & cabinet MAKING

WOODWORKING AT THE CUTTING EDGE



Kevin Ley –
setting up a
workshop

ON TEST

Swedish Moretens machines

PROJECTS

China cabinet from
Robert Ingham

Corner cabinet
in chestnut

FEATURE

■ Shaker maker
Christian Becksvoort

Build a timber- framed workshop



The H410 is the most conventional of the Moretens stable

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GMC/ANTHONY BAILEY

5, 4, 3, 2,1... Mark Cass achieves lift-off as he brings three Moretens machines up to full speed

Moretens are 'go'!

It's very cold. The last few nights have been long and dark, and snow covers the frozen land. A man paces his room, deep in thought. Through the window he sees a solitary light from the city far away and turns back to his desk, a rare smile playing about his usually serious face. The man is Carl Moreten, and he has just made a small but significant breakthrough in the development of another new woodworking machine.

This is what sets Moretens machines apart from the others (particularly the old and established manufacturers) – the continual striving for new developments and a desire to give end-users what they want, driven by one man's vision and innovative thought. If only all machines could be developed and made this way.

FACTS + FIGURES

Model	H410 Planer Thicknesser
Planer width	310mm
Planer max. cut	8mm
Thicknesser width	410mm
Thicknessing height	260mm
Thicknesser max. cut	4mm
Feed speed	5 m/min
Motor power, feeder	0.18 kW
Motor power, planer	3 kW
Standard model price (rrp)	£1,900 inc. VAT

H410 Planer Thicknesser

The Moretens Planer Thicknesser looks unremarkable enough, angular and box-like as you'd expect, but the beds look nicely on the long side. These beds are heavily cast, as is the thicknessing table, and milled with a slight rib on the tops to help the timber slide along more easily. Personally I prefer smooth steel, even if it is slightly less efficient, but hey, you can't please everybody. (Especially you – Ed.)

Instead of sharing one motor's power, the Moreten's thicknesser sensibly employs two, one each for feed-drive and cut. The feeder motor is an adequate 0.18kW, while the planer motor is a very useful 3kW (4hp), and is fitted with an electronic brake as standard. I was particularly impressed with the rising table mechanism on this machine. The table is supported by a screw riser on each corner, connected to the riser control handle by gears and chains – considerably more stable (especially in the long run) than the single threaded column found on many older thicknessers.

Accurately square

I'm sure a lot of you will have had problems with less than accurate fences on a planer; I find the setting can go out of square quite quickly. Not so the Moretens. Nicely cast, in box-section aluminium, the fence itself is rigid and strong, but the best bit is the angle adjustment mechanism. This is simply a bar, attached to the rear of the fence, which rotates and is held in a sturdy clamp-bracket affixed to the tabletop.

Unlike many planer-thicknessers, the top tables do not pivot up out of the way when thicknessing and, while this may mean a bit of a grope in the dark when receiving, all in all it must be a good thing. The operation is made easier and safer and less movement means the planer is more accurate. The planer tables are adjusted using a comfortable lever bar with setting lock.

The scales are all in millimetres, which makes for less confusion for this woodworker.

It swallows timber

This is a nice wide-mouthed machine which can take timber up to 310mm across the planer top and a generous 410mm through the thicknesser. I expect this makes for a more compact and neater machine, but, while I welcomed the wideness of the thicknesser, I couldn't help feeling a bit cheated on the planer. I liked the feed rollers though, Moretens has cleverly made the in-feeds in grooved steel while the feed-outs are in grey rubber

Steady as she goes, solid and accurate



MF30 Multi-moulder

This member of the Moretens family manages to go way beyond the valley of the spindle, for it truly is a multi-moulder, combining the functions of three separate machines – spindle, mortice/tenoner and overhead router.

I must admit that I thought it was a straightforward, if somewhat elaborate, tilting-head spindle when I first saw it, then someone mentioned 270°. Surely not? Yes – with the addition of

good (and therefore safe) understanding of the basics before diving in.

Versatile

The Moretens multi-moulder machine must be one of the most versatile pieces of kit on the market. Even on a fairly brief acquaintance it appears that Moretens has not only considered every need of a busy workshop, but has actually tried to fulfil each and every one of those needs. The vertical



Separate feed motor (normally housed)



If only all fences were this accurate

to minimise any marking of your timber.

Certainly our test timbers came out looking very good indeed; for an even better finish the cutter block has a set of four knives as an optional extra. The guard fence over the planer top is well considered and features an amusing spring action. This allows the user to press the guard fully down to the tabletop during planing, from whence it will spring back up to its preset height. I'm not sure it's exactly necessary, but it does work okay and can be set low down if required.

All in all a very good machine – solid, accurate, easy to operate, and hopefully reliable. I found it a pleasure to use, my only slight reservation being the over-sized side-mounted plastic housing of the drive linkage (necessary, but ugly and possibly prone to damage), but this is a relatively minor complaint.

another spindle (a router-type) this multi-moulder becomes a supremely useful overhead router. Although there is no foot pedal to raise the bed, Moretens have included the next best thing – a sliding table. This is a boon, nay, a necessity for any big machine like this, and makes each of the machine's three functions even more efficient.

Even without the tenoning and routing capacities of this moulder, the Moretens multi-moulder is almost worth the money for the spindle alone. To be fair, this is one machine whose manual needs to be read thoroughly at the outset and kept on hand for constant reference for the first few weeks. It is not a machine you can use instantly by intuition alone; a bit of work is required to learn its basic operating principles. I don't think this is a bad thing as it ensures that the user has a

The MF30 in standard spindle moulder guise, with sliding table

moulder itself has adjustment in three planes, and together with a tilting fence – not to mention the sliding table – can pretty much answer any questions you want to ask of it.

Should a specific task not be achievable with the machine in basic spindle mode, you can make a few adjustments and behold – the overhead router. I thought at first that the non-appearance of the fairly common bed-raising foot pedal on this machine could be cause for potential problems. No, Moretens has considered this as well and instead offers (as an accessory) an additional table with up/down movement to provide this very useful function.

All this flexibility requires solid foundation and power. The MF30 is built around a cast iron

chassis with a beefy cast iron table atop; steel box-section and plate complete the unit. The powerful motor (shared by other Moretens machines, the still-useful 3kW), can produce speeds from 3000 to 14000rpm depending on the gears and poly-belt setup. There's an inner flange at the machine's base which provides scope for bolting-down; despite its considerable weight of over 320kg, I would still recommend this course of action – then you know for sure it's not going anywhere.

Classy pedigree

All the adjustment points are held securely by locking-levers or screws and micro-adjusters have been thoughtfully provided just where they are most needed. Unlike some machines, which look like they have been designed by teenage florists or surly schoolboys, machines in the Moretens stable have an instantly recognisable air of pedigree – they inspire the confidence that they will be completely suited to the job. The 'World's First' claim made

FACTS + FIGURES

Model	MF30 Multi-moulder
Spindle diameter	30mm (6-20mm optional)
Max. cutter diameter	200mm
Max. cutter height	130mm
Spindle speeds	3, 6, 9000 rpm
Router spindle speeds	3, 6, 9, 14000 rpm
Motor Power	3 kW
Price (rrp)	£2,577 inc. VAT

There are many useful accessories available for this machine.



Left: Below decks – speed adjustment



Far left: Moulding in standard set-up

Left: Behind the scenes – everything is adjustable



by Moretens with regards to this moulder is not perfidious.

The only faults I could eventually find with the multi-moulder were the ribbed tabletop (you know my preferences), and the mounting of the control panel. This was the only part of the unit that didn't feel solid. Possibly, because of its function, it wasn't deemed worthy of extra-solid status, and consequently it does shake about if you hit the buttons any harder than normal.

Left: Tilting head on its way to maximum tilt

Visit the website

There really are too many features to list on this page. I can only suggest you seek out further details online at www.moretens.com or better still, arrange to go and see Moretens machines in captivity at your local dealer.

PH260 4-cutter

Awesome – this is truly awesome. This may seem a bit over-the-top, but really, watching it being put through its paces, I had nothing but admiration for the designers and makers of this compact profiler. Believe it or not, this machine is portable, designed for setting up on site or in the woods profiling fresh timber. To these ends Moretens has built this four-way moulder in stainless steel with nylon feed-slides, and this, with other innovative features, has

robust enough to carry on with parts missing, and simple and accessible enough to permit a swift bit of jury-rigging (with whatever is close to hand) and still keep turning out the mouldings.

A Thunderbird moment

After your final round of safety checks (a few more than usual), turn to the control panel. Any fan of Gerry Anderson will enjoy the start-up sequence. This features, along with the usual red 'stop'

turn out all manner of skirtings and beaded panelling.

But wait, that's not all. This truly capable machine can, with a minimum of setting up, be persuaded to profile curved work (such as chair legs and the like) which it turns out with insolent ease. Timber is passed through the cutter area by each of the powered feed rollers, the last (no. 5) being of the grey rubber variety to help avoid any damage to the freshly profiled workpiece. The main table is cast iron with four threaded supports/adjusters,

Below: The PH 260 4-cutter set up and ready to go

Below left: Custom blocks – adjustment is simple and accurate too



FACTS + FIGURES

Model	PH260 4-cutter
Total power	10 kW
Connection	3-phase only, 16 A, 400V
Length x width	1100 x 900mm
Height	970mm
Weight	370kg
Price	£5,133 inc. VAT

All four sides machined – it's all so easy

created a machine that will cope with just about anything you care to offer it.

The thought of setting up a precision moulder like this without any previous experience is daunting but, like many things, breaking it down into a series of tasks soon has the job done. After inspecting the machine and talking to the engineer, Graham, I soon realised that even when things do go wrong – and yes, they do, I saw the pieces – it's not a complete disaster. Due to careful planning, this machine is

button, a bank of five indicator lights above corresponding buttons. There's one to control each of the motors, plus buttons for the cutters, and the drive. With this machine 'starting up' is guaranteed to bring further excitement to an already exhilarating operation as the motor noise slowly builds up, with each successive button-press, towards a pleasurable crescendo.

With a custom-sized (72mm) cutter-block on each side, and a choice of planer set-ups top and bottom, pretty much any moulding you want is achievable. If a simple tongue and groove is required, the horizontal faces will be planed with two blades – four if an extra special finish is needed. For something more detailed than a flat plane, the horizontal cutter can be set up with two moulding blades along with two planing blades, and thus

and the vertical adjustment is as fine as you could want it.

Again, like the other Moretens machines, there are plenty of accessories available to further improve your model. I, for one, would have preferred the lead-in and take-off tables to be included in the price. These also can be quickly and readily removed for transportation. If you're in a hurry then this is the machine for you, processing boards at a useful feed-speed of 5 metres per minute. It is estimated that, together with the setting-up time, a sizeable job can be completed in a tenth of the normal time. Don't just take my word for it. ■

For more information, contact the importers, Woodfactors Ltd, 121 Tarring Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 4HE. Tel: 01903 216113