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After two Supermaster HC lamination planers, the Derix Group recently ordered a pre-planing machine of the same type from Rex © Günther Jauk

REX HOLZBEARBEITUNGSMASCHINEN

The wood-saving planer

Full-surface, material-saving planing

Article by **Günther Jauk** (translated by **Eva Guzely**) | 21.04.2022 - 12:23

When you save 1 to 2 mm of wood per CLT lamination while planing its entire surface, a lot of wood can be saved in the course of a year. This is possible thanks to Rex's Supermaster HC. Derix Managing Director Markus Derix is happy about the "excellent amortization times". CLT newcomer van Roje is also convinced by the performance of this newly developed machine.

If Markus Derix had to say something negative about his Rex Supermaster HC planing machines, it would concern the name. In his opinion, the simple addition HC, which stands for Heavy Construction, does not do justice to the innovative technology and performance of this machine. Four years ago, the managing director of the Derix

Group invested in the first Supermaster HC and is now waiting for the third machine of this type to be delivered. After two Supermaster HC lamination planers for CLT and glulam, this time it will be a pre-planing machine of the same type.



Markus Derix, Managing Director of the Derix Group © Derix-Gruppe

” Thanks to the remarkable wood-saving properties, the amortization time of the Supermaster HC planing machines is excellent. “

Markus Derix, Managing Director of the Derix Group

Full-surface planing

“You don’t get rich by what you earn. You get rich by what you don’t spend,” Rex Managing Director Joachim Schwarzbeck says, quoting Henry Ford and explaining the idea behind the HC machines. “They reduce the amount of money that our customers have to spend on raw timber. The HC planers allow customers to buy less when they work with the HC version instead of a normal machine.”

It was particularly important to Rex to develop a machine which not only removes the excess wood, but also planes the entire surface of the laminations. This plays a crucial role especially when the Supermaster HC is used as a pre-planing machine and in the subsequent scanner assessment. "When all surfaces are completely smooth, we can adjust our scanner systems with much higher precision and achieve a significantly better sorting quality," Derix confirms.

Four years ago, Derix was initially looking for a standard calibration planer for the new CLT plant, but the promised potential savings of that machine did not strike him as very convincing. "It only guarantees that nothing more will be planed off whenever the dimensions of the piece are too small already," Derix recalls. Soon afterwards, the company found out about Rex and their newly developed HC machine by coincidence.

Although the two companies had never worked together before and there were hardly any references for the HC version of the Supermaster, Derix was quickly convinced by the advantages of this planing machine. It can plane curved laminations with minimal chip removal, using a heavy pneumatic pressure system in front of and above or below the working shafts. The pressure can be adjusted according to the curvature of the wood and the raw wood is pushed down as far as possible. As a result, only a minimal chip removal is necessary for the nearly full-surface planing of the wood.

Initial concerns that the laminations could tear due to the high pressure were not confirmed according to Derix. "We even expected them to tear and it wouldn't have been a problem with the middle layers of CLT. Ultimately, however, the impact on the wood is nearly the same when it's processed with an HC planer or with a through-feed press, and the latter has never been a problem for the laminations."

Price of wood creates awareness

Schwarzbeck puts the material savings at 1 to 2 mm, depending on the application. Derix confirms this: "In the test, we had a chip removal of 0.75 mm but in practice, it's 1 mm. This way, we are on the safe side and still save a lot of material."

Derix expects that rising wood prices will soon lead to increased awareness and understanding of this technology in the timber industry. "Of course, these machines are not cheap, but the wood saving potential clearly outweighs the cost. Also, the amortization times were excellent even before wood prices were so high. Saving resources has top priority in our sustainability policy. Precisely because we work with a renewable raw material, we want the idea of sustainability to be at the core of all aspects of raw wood procurement, processing and the entire organization. Our investment in this resource-efficient planing technology is a good example of this, and what makes it even better is that these investments in sustainability also pay off financially."

Increase in profitability



For van Roje Managing Directors Oliver Mühmel (left) and Gerhard Hauschulte, Rex's material-saving HC planing machine fits very well into the overall company policy © Günther Jauk

Holzwerke van Roje is currently starting up its first CLT production site in Oberhonnefeld-Gieren/DE. Numerous measures, such as a recycling plant for wood waste, are implemented to reduce the environmental impact as much as possible. The German Federal Ministry for the Environment is funding the project with €6 million as part of its environmental innovation program.



With Rex's Supermaster HC lamination planer, van Roje wants to save 1.5 mm of wood per lamination © Günther Jauk

The company also uses a Rex Supermaster HC to plane the laminations. "Material-saving planing fits very well into our overall policy and the fact that we can save 1.5 mm of wood per lamination also has an extremely positive effect on overall profitability," Gerhard Hauschulte says about the decision to invest in the machine. Van Roje's Managing Director also mentions the positive experiences of other market participants: "On account of the positive feedback from other manufacturers, we are happy to rely on the experience and expertise of Rex in our CLT plant as well." Just a few months ago, van Roje also started to work with a Rex planer at its planing mill.

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