Straight talker

This budget machine offers lots of scope, doesn't take up much room – and comes in at under 1k

It may be feared for good reason, but a spindle moulder is a valuable asset and doesn't take up a lot of room. This one is certainly dinky, and with the inclusion of the sliding carriage offers more scope for end-grain moulding, finger jointing and tenoning applications while still keeping to a compact footprint.

The main table is just 600 x 400mm and with the 1000 x 200mm carriage rail still takes up very little room. But if you need to do shaped work with a ring fence then you may need to reconsider your options as Charnwood don't list one as available for this model. It does limit it to straight work, but for general joinery and furniture work it stands its ground well.

The carriage is mounted on top of the cabinet to provide good solid support, but with no outrigger or squaring frame it is limited to smaller components; however, door rails for standard house size applications are within its capabilities while you should look to support any longer work safely on an auxiliary support. A hold-down is supplied to keep things secured on any end-grain application, which works well on shorter stock. You can also secure the carriage with a spring knob and gain a solid and wide support for long-grain work.

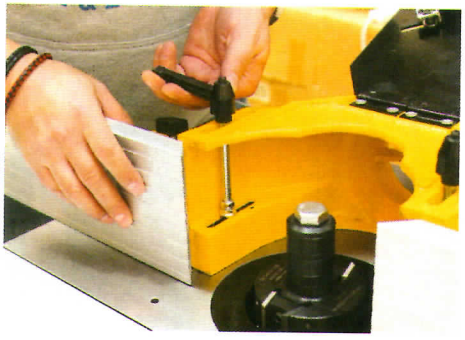
The spindle well isn't the deepest at only 50mm and with the spindle at its lowest point this sits above the table. It does have decent travel of 110mm though, not bad for a smaller machine, and with a well diameter of 160mm it has a decent range of blocks that it can use for general rebating and moulding work.

There are masses of shimming options and a centrally tapped spindle, which should allow a suitable flush-fit block to be used for tenon work. And there's a router collet spindle too which is easily swapped out. This allows ½in-shank cutters to be used, but the top speed of 8500rpm doesn't offer enough oomph to run smaller-diameter bits to get the best from them so is more for wider cutters like panel raisers.

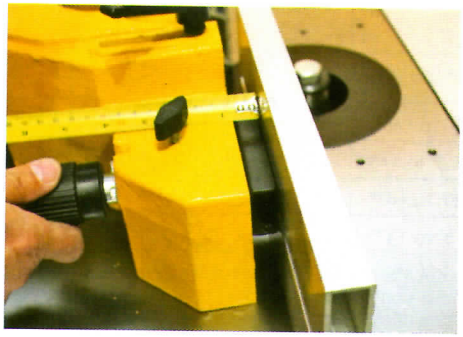
Belt changing

Belt changing is simple enough; there's a micro-switched access panel that gives decent access to the Bristol lever locking handle and tensioning lever to release the belt and move to any of four speed settings, the lowest of which is 1500rpm, allowing it to use another optional accessory in sanding drums to turn it into a basic bobbin sander, but without the oscillation of course.

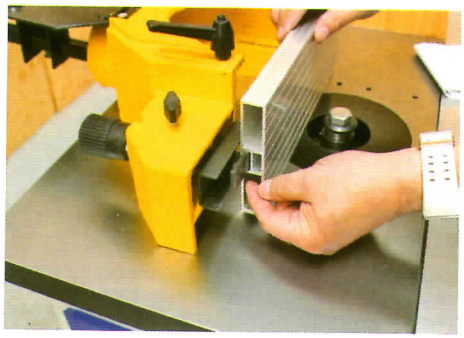
Moving up to the fence and it's a solid enough piece of casting. It does, however, have aluminium extrusions for the fences so sacrificial fences aren't a real option. They do



▲ The hood bolts down to the table with Bristol levers

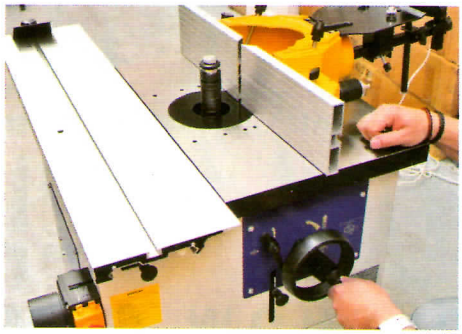


▲ You can offset the fence facings by up to 20mm and both the infeed and outfeed can be adjusted



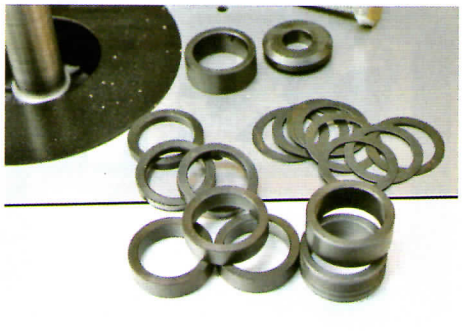
▲ The aluminium fence facings attach with long T nut bars

Charnwood W040 spindle moulder

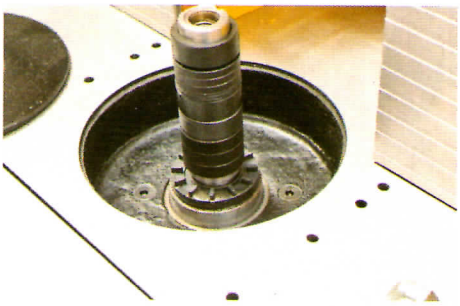


▲ The spindle is adjusted with the front facing wheel

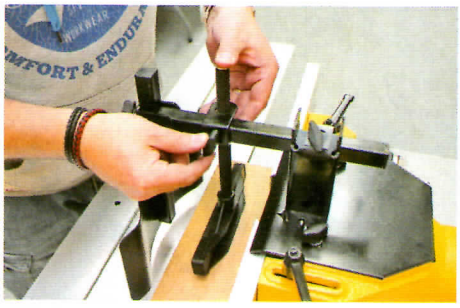
▲ A spindle lock allows the block to be tightened down securely



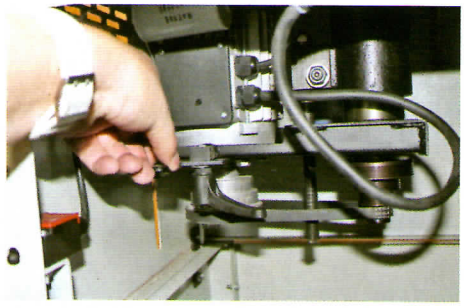
▲ There's no shortage of shimming options on this machine!



▲ The well is only 50mm deep; note the multiple tapped holes for the hood



▲ The Shaw guards are decent enough and work well

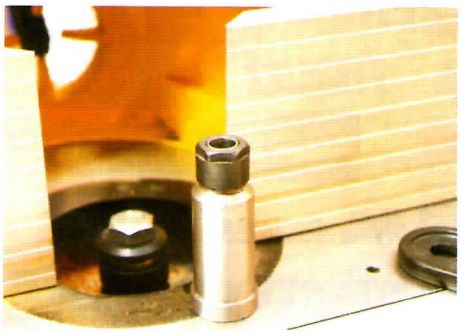


▲ Access to the drive belt for speed adjustment is good

▲ Rebating work is a bread-and-butter spindle task

▲ End-grain work can be achieved easily and safely with the carriage

▲ The spindle had no problem on bigger rebating work



▲ The moulder comes with an additional router cutter spindle

slide onto wide T nuts though so you can make some timber ones to allow the use of sacrificial ones for zero clearance work.

As with many spindle fences, there's often a need to shim them slightly to get them aligned and parallel to each other but it's a normal and quick process, and on the test model there was a need to do so.

There's 20mm of movement on the fences to offset them to each other to support the work as it exits the outfeed, altered with a large threaded knob and locked off with a small wingnut.

The Shaw guards are solid enough and easy to set. They are secured directly to the hinged hood so you have to flip the whole assembly away to gain access to the block. The hinges have a lot of strain placed on them when the hood assembly is pivoted back but they are standard butt hinges so they can be easily swapped if they do fail.

There are multiple tapped positions in the cast table to set the hood backset to its best position to suit the block and the cut being made. The hood is secured with a couple of long Bristol lever-handled bolts through elongated holes to allow plenty of movement for correct setting.

In use

In use the spindle performs well. The switch gear and spindle adjustment are mounted at the front for easy access, and with the machine running off a standard 13amp power supply you don't need any electrical upgrades.

I put oak through as my test timber as well as hogging out some decent-sized rebates in sapele, and it kept up to speed even under a fast feed rate, and with the sliding carriage it was easy to make a controlled end-grain mould on both timbers.

Conclusion

As a budget spindle it hits the spot pretty well and would work for a one-man-band operator at light trade level, or indeed a dedicated hobbyist, offering great value for money.

The Woodworking Verdict

Good

+ Compact; sliding carriage; can take router bits and sanding drums
– Shallow tool well; hood lid hinges

Rating ★★★★☆

Typical price: £749.00
Motor: 1500W
Table size: 600 x 400mm
Sliding carriage stroke: 620mm
Speeds: 1500, 4500, 6500 & 8500rpm
Table well diameter: 160mm
Table well depth: 50mm
Spindle travel 110mm
Weight: 103kg
Web: www.charnwood.net