



Versatility through simplicity

At Kern, a stonemasonry company based in Ettlingen, the compact MKK-Plus bridge saw from KOLB opens up new possibilities for conservation and restoration work.

The company Kern, headed by Jannis Hofmann, specialises primarily in conservation and restoration work. Its area of operation extends throughout the greater Karlsruhe region.

With a workforce of 16 employees, including two apprentices, the company covers a wide range of activities, from indents and replacement stonework for historic buildings to elaborately profiled balustrades and even monolithic columns.

The entire team is broadly skilled and carries out much of its work using hand tools and pneumatic equipment. As Jannis Hofmann explains: “A large proportion of our work is carried out by hand, but we cannot do without machinery altogether.”

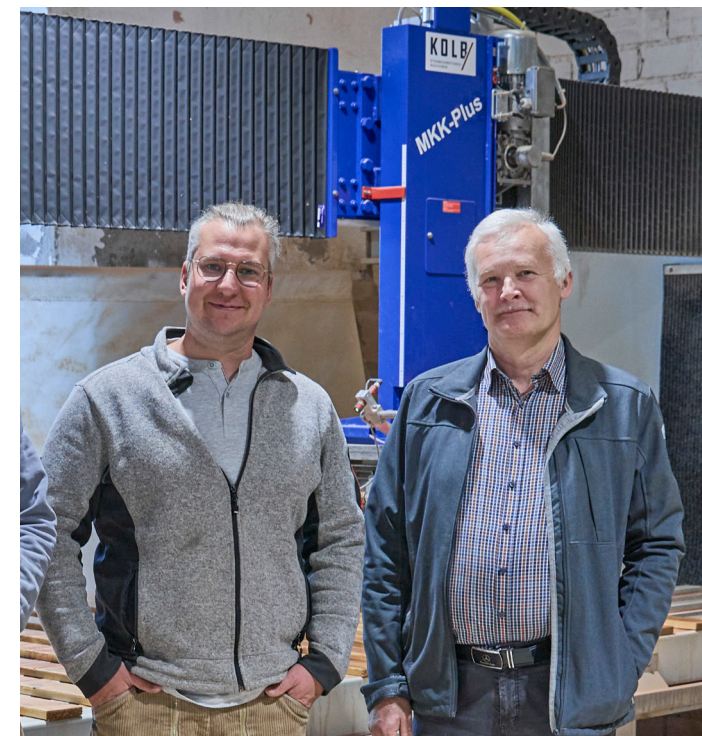
A proven partnership

To relieve his stonemasons of routine cutting tasks, Hofmann commissioned the installation of a compact MKK-Plus bridge saw from KOLB at the beginning of 2026. The

decision was largely influenced by the company’s previous experience with the manufacturer. Since 1996, Kern had relied on a compact KOLB saw for its cutting operations, and Hofmann himself had already



The MKK-Plus is a straightforward, customisable saw designed for craft-based stonemasonry businesses.



Top left: Jannis Hofmann (left) and Jürgen Niederwieser, Operations Manager at KOLB.

Top right: Saw blade diameters of up to 1,400 mm can be supplied on request.

Bottom left: Conservation and restoration projects form the core of the company's business.

Bottom right: The previous KOLB saw operated flawlessly for three decades.

worked on the machine during his apprenticeship.

The previous saw proved so reliable that major service interventions were virtually never required. This dependability was one of the main reasons for choosing KOLB once again. After almost 30 years of operation, the machine remained fully functional, but the company’s requirements had evolved. “The machine always performed well; it simply became too small for certain jobs over time,” says Hofmann.

The investment was therefore not a replacement driven by necessity, but a deliberate move towards greater

flexibility. The company was looking for a machine capable of processing both small workpieces and large-format components economically while meeting the needs of a craft-oriented workshop environment.

Ease of operation as a key purchasing factor

Unlike larger production facilities, no one at Kern operates the saw on a full-time basis. “Ease of operation was important to us, as we wanted

any member of staff to be able to use the machine at short notice without lengthy training,” says Hofmann.

This is one of the major strengths of the MKK-Plus. After only a short introduction, eight employees are able to operate the machine confidently. If someone is absent or a component needs to be cut at short notice, another colleague can step in immediately. Extensive training periods or specialist technical knowledge are not required.

KOLB

STEINBEARBEITUNGS-
MASCHINEN

COMPANY INFORMATION

KOLB is a subsidiary of the Dr. Baumann Group, which also includes the machinery and equipment manufactured by Burkhardt-Löffler. In addition to machines for craft-based stonemasonry businesses, the group offers CNC-controlled standalone machines through to fully automated production lines for kitchen worktop manufacturers. The product portfolio covers all major processing operations, from surface finishing and cutting with diamond saw blades or abrasive waterjet technology to edge polishing and complex 3D machining.

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Richard Watzke is a specialist journalist and industry expert. During his visit to the workshop, he was impressed by how straightforward the MKK-Plus is to operate. Even unplanned cutting jobs can be carried out quickly and easily at any time.



Richard Watzke



Top: The saw head can be manually swivelled through 90 degrees.

Right: By setting zero points, axis movements can be displayed with precision.

For a restoration company, where employees frequently move between the workshop and construction sites, this flexibility provides a clear practical benefit.

Tailored technology

The MKK-Plus is a versatile machine that KOLB engineers configure according to individual customer requirements. Depending on the

specification, the saw can accommodate blade diameters ranging from 400 to 1,400 mm, while automated functions can also be incorporated.

However, as the level of automation increases, so does the machine's complexity, explains KOLB Operations Manager Jürgen Niederwieser. Thorough consultation therefore forms the basis for a truly customised solution.

Working closely with Jannis Hofmann, the machine installed in Ettlingen was specifically adapted to local requirements. It features a cutting length of 2.5 metres, a maximum cutting depth of up to 300 mm and a manually operated cross-travel of 1.6 metres via a handwheel.

All axes can be read digitally at the control panel. In addition, zero points can be set, simplifying operation and enabling repeatable



Top: Integrated water recycling system: process water is collected in settling tanks.

Right: The dried sludge retained in the filter bags can be disposed of in landfill.

Bottom: The foldable angle stop is a practical detail.



accuracy. For cross cuts, the saw head can be manually swivelled through 90 degrees. This allows mitre and cross cuts to be carried out without repositioning the workpiece.

In daily use, the saw handles virtually every cutting task required by the company, from producing indents from stone slabs to cutting steps and a wide variety of components for restoration projects. As such, it covers precisely the range of applications required by a craft-based stonemasonry business.

Quick installation and immediate productivity

The commissioning process also proved highly satisfactory. Delivery

time amounted to only around five months. Installation was completed within a single day, with no need for additional foundation work or special site preparations.

The training provided by KOLB likewise left a positive impression. Sufficient time was allocated for instruction, employees were trained patiently, and the machine was quickly put into productive use.

After the first few months of operation, Hofmann is highly satisfied with the investment: "I can recommend KOLB to anyone who values a customised machine and excellent customer service."



Top: The remote control speeds up the positioning of the saw.

Left: Ready for cutting along the cross axis.