

FLACHGLAS stays up to speed with GLASTON upgrades

COMMITTED TO UPGRADES

Headquartered in Wernberg-Koeblitz in Bavaria, Germany, the Flachglas Group has been serving quality-conscious architectural and transportation companies throughout Europe since 1938. Today the company's three plants, spread across Germany, all have Glaston tempering furnaces that produce a comprehensive range of glass split evenly between the two sectors. References include windows and safe-

ty glass for high-speed ICE trains and yachts, alongside glass for London's world-renowned 'The Shard', the Microsoft office in Munich, the prominent Axel Springer building in Berlin and many more. Key to the company's success has been its commitment to ongoing improvements in the performance and energy efficiency of its equipment. "We feel upgrades are the best way to keep running strong," says Martin Werner, who joined the company in 2017 and now heads the technical department.

"Our machines are older, but they're all still efficient and running strong because of continual upgrades and care."

UPGRADE LIST KEEPS GROWING

Some of the key upgrades include the 2015 modernization of a 2004 Glaston ProE machine with the latest Glaston iControlL automation system and bottom Roller Heat Control (RHC). "By changing the bottom heaters and replacing the bottom convection, ProE could better

handle the new coatings. Also, switching to Glaston iControlL gave our operators a much better user experience," Martin says. "For our HTF Combi Convection furnace, we had issues with the availability of spare parts. So, we completely upgraded the electronic parts with the iControlL, and now we're very happy indeed."

LATEST BLOWER INVERTER MODERNIZATIONS

At the time, the only parts that hadn't been upgraded on those two furnaces were the blower inverters. "In Germany, energy prices have been very high," Martin explains. "I was in touch with Glaston to make calculations about the payback of upgrading the blower inverters. We also found out we could get financial support from the German government for improving the energy efficiency of the inverters." Martin



Foto: Leidorf

Headquartered in Bavaria, Germany, FLACHGLAS has served both architectural and transportation companies Europewide since 1938. Upgrades to its coveted GLASTON equipment have accompanied both environmental and financial benefits, seeing the group earn ISO 50001 certification - all with improved energy efficiency and sustained success.

and his team decided in the spring of 2022 to upgrade both the ProE and the HTF by modifying the blower drive with Glaston's Variable-Speed Blower Control System (S™) and the Integrated Blower Vibration Monitoring System (BMON). "We chose the Variable-Speed Blower Control to reduce energy consumption. We no longer need to wait for the blowers before stopping to reset the blower mode when changing from 4-mm to 8-mm glass. This enables our production to be more flexible, cost effective and fast," Martin says. The reason for the Vibration Monitoring system is to improve blower reliability and to

avoid any crash of the blower wheels. For the work the furnaces were shut down in February 2023 for a total of five days. "We experienced a few small issues, like the chiller profiles being more precise, so we needed to change the programmes. This was unexpected both for us and Glaston. Still, it was a very good project overall," Martin says. "In the end, we lowered the total annual amount of kilowatts we use in production with these projects - and now we're saving." Flachglas already has its next upgrade project planned for January 2024 when they'll modernize an existing lamination line with a Glas-



ton ProL-zone.

IMPROVING OVERALL ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Says Martin: "These upgrades have helped us maintain -and even expand- our strong market position in Europe - despite the pandemic and intensifying competition." With upgrades being such a good opportunity to improve energy consumption, he's proud to point out that Flachglas has also earned the ISO 50001 certificate for its commitment to efficient energy management. "By just changing the furnace or adding new components, we have gained better process quality," he concludes. "We can also do something good for the

environment by running our machines longer. And, most importantly, upgrades help us to drive savings."

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