

Industry-standard in your workshop

Terry Porter looks at some very versatile vacuum cleaners come dust extractors from Camvac

Dust, shavings and chippings are always a hazard in the workshop, each for their own particular reasons. Fine dust can cause long-term bronchial, skin and nasal problems whereas mountains of shavings and chippings are not only a fire hazard but can easily be tripped over, and cause domestic disquiet when tramped through the house.

I looked at three of the smaller green cleaning machines from Camvac's range, and have to say I was pretty impressed by their effectiveness and ease of use.

Although described as industrial vacuum cleaners, these machines are equally at home located next to woodworking machines as dust/chip extractors.

All of Camvac's range come with either 2½ or 4in (64 or 102mm) – Camvac gives all its hose dimensions in imperial – inlets for the hoses, and all feature 3-stage 0.5-micron filtration to take out the finest and most hazardous dust.

Two basic systems

Dust/chip extractors run on either a high volume/low pressure (HVLP), or high pressure/low volume (HPLV) principle. The HVLP systems will remove a lot of shavings quickly, but do not offer very good filtration as they do not have enough air



The 36 litre Camvac GV286 with single motor and 4in inlet

pressure to operate with fine filters. The windsock type, featuring a cloth collecting bag that also acts as a filter, are of this type, and they ▶



The GV286 – note handles and switch position



The three-part filter system



The 55l GV336 with 2½in outlet and twin motors



The GV336 with the Possible Hose in position



The GV336 showing the individual switching for each motor



The 150l GV286W with 4in hose attached

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The GV286W with collection bag in place



The simple bungee-type clamp on the 286W



The standard toolkit, which includes 2in hose

◀ can pump fine dust back into the workshop.

The HPLV systems operate on much greater air pressure, thus enabling them to use much better filtration, and do not leak dust back into the workshop. The Camvac machines are all of this type.

I tried three machines. The GV286 has a 36-litre capacity. The GV286W is similar to the GV286, but is a wall-mounted machine offering a much greater collection capacity of 150 litres into a bag. The third machine is the GV336, which is not dissimilar to the GV286, but taller with a capacity of 55 litres.

The machines are all powered by 1000W motors.

GV286

The GV286 is the smallest of the range, and available with either a 4in or 2½in inlet and a choice of single or twin motors. It is just 430mm (17in) high and 380mm (15in) wide.

The suction and filtration were very effective. As with all the machines, the filtration comprises a core motor filter, a bag-type paper filter around that, and then a cloth drum filter.

The machine worked excellently attached to my table saw, and was also very effective plumbed into the rainwater hopper that I use on the lathe to catch dust and shavings.

For turners who produce a lot of shavings off big workpieces the GV286 is probably too small in capacity, and a larger model would be better.

As a workshop vacuum cleaner it was excellent, but then you would

need to buy the optional tool kit, with a castor set for movement.

This model would be fine for small workshops and turners who do small stuff.

GV286W

The GV286W is designed for fixing to a wall with the dust collection bag hanging beneath it. For my test I used a stand lent by the manufacturers, but the machine does come with a wall-mounting bracket. Again there is a choice of 4in or 2½in inlets, with a single motor. With the dust collection bag fully distended the machine is about 1220mm (47in) high and 380mm (15in) wide.

Obviously, this model is designed for dust collection from a static machine such as a planer, table saw or lathe.

I linked it up with the hopper and found that although it didn't catch all the chips – they never do – it did suck away all the dangerous dust very effectively, and that was my key requirement.

For sanding I tried the poseable hose. This is a bendy hose made up of separate nodes that stays put in any position it is bent to, and fits to a 2½in inlet.

Although at 160mm (6¼in) wide, the integral hopper end won't catch a lot of chips, I found it excellent when sanding as it just sucked the dust away. I can see the poseable hose being very handy for turners who specialise in small work such as bobbins. One thing I liked was that the dust collection bag is held in place with an easily removable/replaceable bungee-type clamp, which is a lot more user-

friendly than those flat steel bands with finger-nipping spring clips that are found on some dust extractors.

The plus side of the GV286W is its wall mounting off the floor and its relatively high collection capacity. The downside is that to double up as a workshop vacuum cleaner it is not mobile, so you are restricted to an area that can be reached by the hose on the machine.

GV336

The GV336 offers good capacity at 55 litres and can be supplied with 4 or 2½in inlets and single or twin motors. In some ways this is probably the most versatile of the three machines I tried. It has enough capacity for work at the lathe, and when fitted with castors and using the vacuum tool kit, it can easily be used for cleaning up, or moved between different woodworking machines. As with the GV286 models, it offers very effective dust removal with high air filtration.

Shared attributes

All the models tested have two handles on their lids for easy lifting and for lid removal. It is possible to use the machines as blowers by attaching a 2½in hose to the air outlet on the top of them. As workshop Hoovers they disposed of shavings and chippings in no time and, by using the brush accessory, workshop surface dust was rapidly eliminated. In fact my workshop hasn't had such a good clean up for years.

I tried both single and twin motor versions of the machines, and although the twin motor versions clearly had more suction, the single motor models were more than



The full toolkit, which includes 2 1/2in hose



Sanding with the poseable hose fitted to the 286W makes for very effective dust clearance



The 4in hose fitted to the floor-sweep tool

adequate for most woodworking situations. As with all HPLV extractors they are a bit noisy, giving out 73.6 decibels from one motor and 82.4 from two motors. However, by fitting a hose to the exhaust outlet and ducting it out of the workshop, the noise can be reduced to 68.3 and 75 respectively.

Accessories

The accessories include vacuum cleaner-type tools, 2 1/2in and 4in hoses, a poseable hose, castor sets, reducers from 4in to 2 1/2in hose and many other hose accessories.

In conclusion

Potential buyers should bear in mind that the base unit price is just that; you buy the base unit and then must choose from the range of optional accessories including the hoses and castors, to be paid for on top of the base unit price – but of

course you may well already have some 4 or 2 1/2in fittings that will fit these machines. For those who might want larger-capacity machines, Camvac also supplies 90- and 200-litre models. All in all, I liked the Camvac machines. They are solid and well made, versatile and powerful. The high level of filtration is excellent. The accessories all worked well, and are just the job for the woodturner's workshop. They are quality industrial-standard machines at a fair price, and the choice of which one to buy would depend on the user's typical requirements. ■

Contact

For further information contact:
Camvac, Millers Close, Fakenham Industrial Estate, Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 8NW.
Tel: 01328 851407
Fax: 01328 855701
Email: sales@camvac.co.uk
Website: www.camvac.co.uk

Prices, all inc VAT

GV286

2 1/2in inlet, single motor:

£148.68

2 1/2in inlet, twin motor:

£223.29

4in inlet, single motor:

£178.17

4in inlet, twin motor

£252.75

GV286W

2 1/2in inlet, single motor:

£170.30

4in inlet, single motor:

£200.10

GV336

2 1/2in inlet, single motor:

£170.38

2 1/2in inlet, twin motor:

£255.29

4in inlet, single motor:

£233.97

4in inlet, twin motor

£296.48

Accessories

Castor set

£27.97

2 1/2in standard tool kit inc. hose

£44.83

2 1/2in full tool kit inc hose

£66.02

Standard 4in hose of 2.5m (8ft) with end fittings

£40.91

Spare paper filter bags, pack of 6

£2.46

Poseable hose, 670mm (26 1/2in) long

£41.41

Poseable hose, 300mm (11 1/2in) extensions

£14.79



Likes

- Excellent filtering
- Very effective
- Strongly-made to industrial standard
- Good range of models and accessories
- Easy to empty



Dislikes

- Noise – but that's inevitable with HPLV systems like this