

A cut above, for that extra layer of precision

Alta Zapateria recently invested in **Zünd**'s innovative high-tech G3 leather-cutting system. The Mallorcan shoe manufacturer's founder and CEO, Antonio Albadalejo, speaks to *Leather International* about the unprecedented levels of precision and efficiency the new Swiss-made machine has brought to its production system.

Mallorca is not just a popular holiday destination. For more than 150 years, this Balearic Island has also been home to exclusive shoe manufacturer Alta Zapateria. Initially, a small but high-quality operation, the company's breakthrough came with its high-end Goodyear welted shoes sold under the Carmina brand name. Today, Alta Zapateria figures among Spain's leading shoe manufacturers and has retail stores in cities from New York to Paris and Hong Kong to Sidney.

Now in its third generation and famously rich in tradition, the company is being carefully managed and continually developed by owner Antonio Albadalejo; Carmina claims that even the Spanish king is among its customers.

Balancing tradition and high technology

Each Carmina shoe is handmade in a manufacturing process that may involve as many as 300 production steps. Using the so-called Goodyear welt technique, a strip of leather – the welt

– is first stitched to the upper. The resulting gap is then filled with a natural cork compound and the sole stitched to the welt from the bottom.

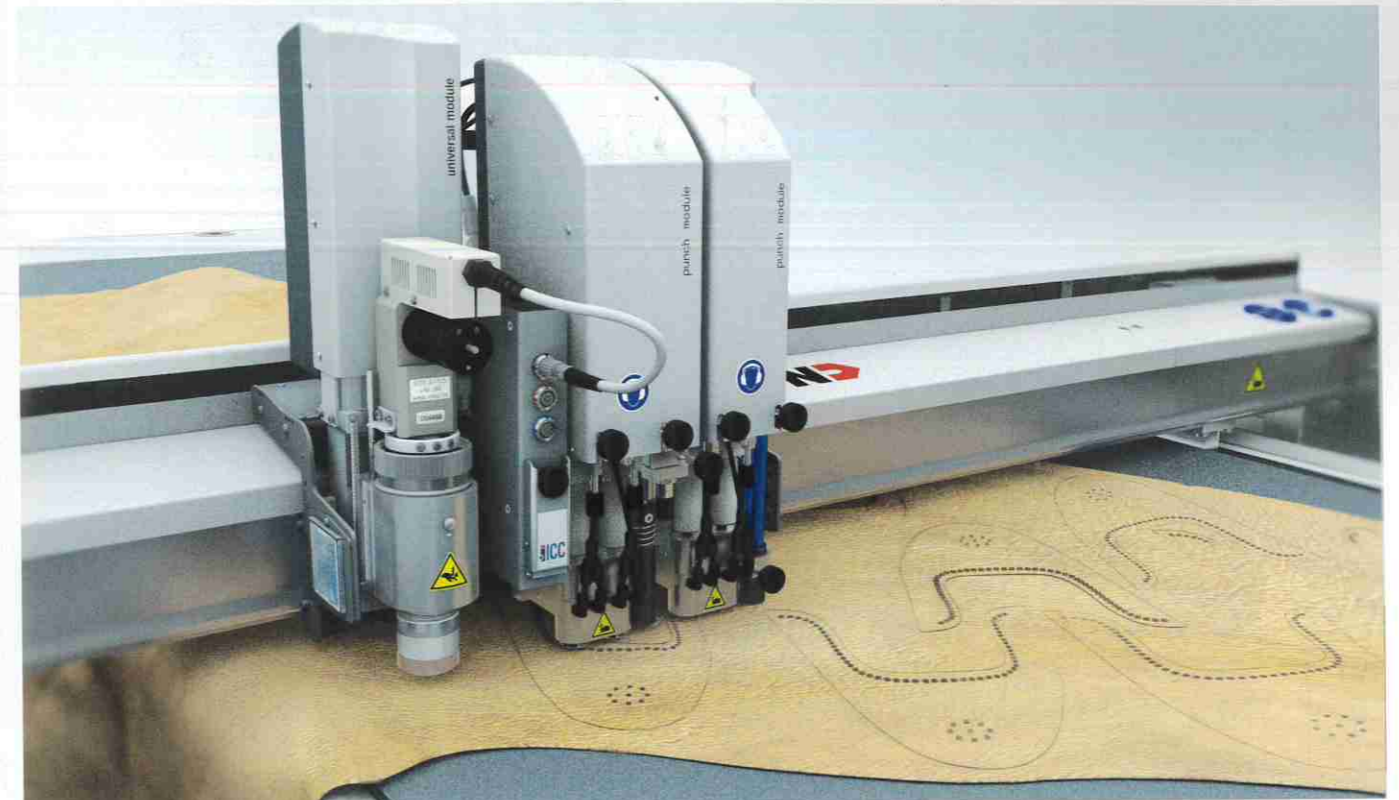
“Manually punching hole patterns is very challenging. Even the most experienced craftsmen cannot come close to the precision and speed of the Zünd cutter.”

Integral to production

Despite the strong focus on traditional craftsmanship, Alta Zapateria is open to employing modern production equipment. With the investment in a Zünd G3 cutter with projection system, digital leather cutting became an integral part of the company's production workflow. For Albadalejo and his team, a primary goal of the cutter acquisition was to preserve Alta



Alta Zapateria combines a respect for traditional craftsmanship with the most modern production equipment available.



The G3 cutter can be used to create patterns and templates from all but the toughest leathers.

Zapateria's many proprietary templates in digital form. Other requirements for the new system were to increase the precision of the leather cutting process and to speed up the time-consuming punching operations dictated by intricate hole patterns.

Perfect fit

“In our testing, we quickly discovered that the Zünd G3 cutter would fulfil these needs perfectly,” says Albadalejo. “What convinced us was Zünd's unique ability to combine high levels of performance, precision and reliability as manifested in the G3. With the new cutting system, we are taking a step into high technology while maintaining our identity as a high-end shoe manufacturer that takes great pride in traditional production methods.”

Digital advantages

Until now, innumerable cardboard templates were stored in boxes, requiring maintenance and organisation that became increasingly complex and laborious. By digitising the company's exclusive templates, Alta Zapateria has been able to significantly increase production security. What's more, implementing model changes or modifications of existing templates has become a lot quicker and easier.

The G3 cutter is used for cutting patterns and templates as well as for production. Only particularly challenging leathers, such as the extremely tough shell cordovan, are still being cut by hand because of the variations in thicknesses.

Even though increases in productivity were not one of Alta Zapateria's primary concerns, the management is thrilled with

the speed and accuracy in which the Zünd Punching Module executes hole patterns. “Manually punching hole patterns is very challenging,” says Albadalejo. “Even the most experienced craftsmen cannot come close to the precision and speed of the Zünd cutter. Alta Zapateria represents exclusive quality and the art of traditional shoemaking.”

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“The Zünd cutting system similarly stands for top quality and reliability; as such, it has met our requirements thoroughly and completely, and allowed us to combine state-of-the-art technology with traditional craftsmanship.”

Further information
Zünd
www.zund.com

