Interview: Vanik Kaufmann explains the advantages of KaVo's new ARCTICA CAD/CAM system

Not only has the proprietor of the dental laboratory CeraTech in Liestal near Basel been a CAD/CAM user from the very beginning but he also has provided valuable input into the technology's development through his active participation in it. Recently he has become the owner of KaVo's new ARCTICA system. We wanted get his first impressions from working with the system.

KaVo: Mr. Kaufmann, you recently started using KaVo's ARCTICA CAD/CAM system. You have extensive experience with CAD/CAM systems. What do you consider to be ARCTICA's particular advantages?

Mr. Vanik Kaufmann: First of all there is the stripped light scanner. I particularly like that it is a semi-automatic design. With fully automated systems I often encounter problems with cumbersome re-scans when the first scan was incomplete. Scans that require essentially no corrective work can be achieved with very little experience. In addition, it works extremely fast. And even in cases where the scan shows gaps the model can be repositioned accordingly, perhaps by tilting, and the software applies any subsequent corrections automatically.

And what are your experiences with the grinding unit? I really appreciate that it is a compact 5-axis system that not only uses blanks very economically but also that I am finally able to process metal, something that up until now was not possible with small systems.

Is zirconium dioxide still important nowadays? There are still dentists who request metal frameworks. When CrCo alloys are required, we have them externally made by selective laser sintering. When biocompatibility is required, it has to be titanium. We process a large number of titanium connecting bars and up until now had to have them fabricated externally.

Now we are able to do this in-house and the design is simple and fast by means of the software provided.

How practical is the software? It is fantastically simple. E.g. during the design of an anterior bridge, the automatically proposed crown can be moved and rotated through key combinations which are considerably faster and simpler than with other solutions that require multiple key clicks. And its operation is intuitive to learn. Within half an hour of receiving it I was able to do a bar design without a hitch and without receiving any training. KaVo's hotline with remote support is equally fantastic and useful especially in the early stages when one might have the occasional problem: These consultants are highly competent, they can log in remotely and point out mistakes on your own screen or give hints on how to do things even faster.

The multiCAD Software is equipped with open interfaces, but not every scanner supplier offers open interfaces. How much data transfer can you utilize?

We are not only able to do this with manufacturers that provide STL files but also with others who still believe in the advantages of proprietary systems. We are using Rhino's dental software for this purpose; it can convert all relevant data sets to compatible STL files. You also use a printer (SolidScope).

Are you using ARCTICA data in there as well?

Yes, we have decided to no longer do the wax coating for precious metal castings by hand as this is very simple and fast done in the KaVo software. We design the framework on the PC and transfer the STL data directly to the printer. The printer is very accurate and saves us a lot of work.

Besides KaVo's blocks of titanium, zirconium, glass-infused ceramics and plastic, there is the option of using other materials. Do you use them?

We have the open system and do both. Alongside KaVo's materials we also use blocks by RealCAD, the C-Max and listen to the technicians. We fabricate our own plastic and wax blocks that we can use via the exchangeable holder.

Could you share your experience with the implant module? We fabricate connecting bars from titanium with bonded bases. We also use titanium bonded bases for our zirconium abutments since we have had experiences with whole zirconium abutments with screw connection - they loosened over time. For lateral applications we also fabricate titanium abutments which we weld to the bonding base. The design of these abutments too is very amazible: One draws what one thinks.

Mr. Kaufmann, many thanks for this interview!