

The Spirit's Medium

(A Customer Review of the GCC LaserPro Spirit LS)



I recently purchased a GCC laser engraver for my awards business, and I wanted to write up a document of my experience with the purchasing process, the machine itself, and offer up some feedback to GCC (manufacturer) and JorLink (retailer). I thought this document could also give a truthful and unbiased review of the machine for future customers. I began training as an engraver on laser and rotary machines in 2010, and was trained on an Epilog Helix (40 watt) and Hermes Vanguard 7200. I decided to go with GCC, and have been happy with that choice.

Purchased From: Jay Spencer at Jorlink USA, Inc. in Greensboro, NC

Purchased: April 2015

Model: GCC LaserPro Spirit LS (80 watt)

Purchasing Experience: I drove up from Columbia, SC to Concord, NC to demo some Epilog machines, and figured since I was going to be close to Greensboro, NC I'd try and work out a trip to demo the GCC machines as well. I contacted Jorlink last minute, and Jay was super helpful. He stayed after hours to accommodate my schedule, answered all of my questions, and showed me a variety of machines. After the demo, one of Jay's coworkers treated me to BBQ and conversation before I began my trip home. Very nice touch! Over the next few weeks I compared a few different makes and models of laser engravers, discussed desired features/delivery date, negotiated pricing, etc. JorLink's staff was extremely helpful and didn't pressure me in any way. I had reps from some other companies neglect my questions via email/phone, and most were a bit pushy. Some were even aloof, and gave me the impression they didn't care to have my business. I know some folks may get jaded in any business over time, but it's nice to have an attentive sales rep when pursuing a \$20,000+ purchase.

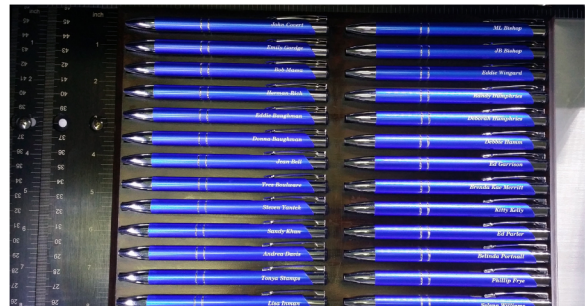
Aesthetics: The blue/grey colors are sharp, and I really like the pebble texturing on the blue paint. The bright red and yellow on the emergency stop make me feel like I am operating some



huge piece of important manufacturing equipment, and helps keep customers from even thinking about touching my machine *grin*. The black hardware ties it together nicely. There's plastic screw covers on some brackets, but it would be nice to see the screw covers used on all the brackets, or just all black screws. There's a gold GCC 25th Anniversary emblem that came on my machine that looks terrible. It clashes pretty bad, and I purchased my machine in 2105, so not sure why an emblem from 2014 is on there unless my machine sat in a warehouse for a year prior to purchase? Maybe GCC just ordered a ton of these, or maybe they wanted to boast about their quarter century of successful business for more than one year, which is understandable. There's two make/model labels on the front. One is black and silver on the left quarter panel, and clashes with the color scheme a little, especially since the gold anniversary emblem is right above it. The main label is on the front door/hatch and looks fine except the yellow in the label is a bit off from the yellow on the emergency stop, but it's hard to match colors on different textures. There's white warning stickers and yellow warning on all sides of the machine. I think they would look better if they were all white, but they are easy enough to remove with a little solvent. Overall the machine looks great.

Delivery & Setup: My machine arrived ontime, in perfect condition, and the setup service from JorLink was topnotch and appreciated.

Structure & Design: The machine has a nice stature and seems really well designed for the most part. I like the storage cabinet with the double doors on bottom, and the front/back doors/hatches are a nice touch for passing through extremely long items. One negative is that you have to switch the exhaust ports to use this feature. It would be nice to avoid having to move the exhaust. In my setup I'm using a hard metal exhaust tube as opposed to the normal flexi material exhaust. I thought this would be a nice touch and be more rigid, but my oversight of needing to change the exhausts to use the passthrough doors has left me a bit frustrated, and I will need to modify what I thought was an excellent design to take advantage of this feature in the future. Another feature I really like is being able to open the entire top of the machine. It makes cleaning and maintenance a lot easier. It'd be nice if the hinges had hydraulics to assist with closing, and if the top opened towards the back as opposed to towards the front. If the top slips out of your hands the entire top of the machine will crash back down on top of the machine.



Two of my biggest complaints about the machine are the tabletop and the rulers. The tabletop is made of a rough and porous material. It will scratch materials like acrylic, glass, and crystal if you place them on the tabletop and slide/adjust them. I put thick cardstock down to protect my products while engraving them in this machine. Also, when I engrave oddly shaped/raised items I use PlayDoh to hold them in place on the tabletop. The porous tabletop makes it hard to remove the PlayDoh. It would be nice to see a polished table top to prevent scratching of materials, and make cleaning easier. It would also be nice to have the honeycomb table situated under the flat tabletop (like in Epilog machines), so you can remove a thin tabletop out the top hatch, as

opposed to having to situate the thicker honeycomb over the tabletop through the front hatch, which is more time consuming. I always bang it into the sides of the machine when taking it in and out of the machine (can't be good for it). The rulers are adjustable which is nice for more intricate uses, but for my use it would be nice to have them fixed permanently, and to have a software option to reset the home position of the laser without the factory reset option. While troubleshooting an issue with a tech on the phone we adjusted the home position, and it was a pain to get it back to the original home position, and I am still not convinced it's back where it was originally. The rulers are also made of some sort of soft metal. I had the autofocus pen drag across the yaxis ruler (my fault), and it put a pretty deep gouge in it, which surprised and irritated me.



The machine shakes a good bit while engraving, which also surprises me considering it's weight. The servo motors in this machine are a little slower than in my Epilog. If the machine is going to shake so much maybe it should be faster, so this flaw is warranted.

Finally I have noticed that machine will sometimes fail to fire upon startup (maybe 1 out of 100 times). I heard there's a firmware update en route to address this issue, so that's nice.

Tube Power: I ordered an 80 watt laser, which I got for the 60 watt price (trade show special), and the laser showed up firing at almost 100 watts. More value and bang for my buck? Yes please! Very happy!

Software & Drivers: At first I wasn't a big fan of the drivers. The different pen colors and settings seemed a bit silly to me, but now that I've spent some time with the machine I love them. The added customization has been nice. The only glitch that I have found is when adjusting paper size if you use the "enter" key on the number pad it will close the window as if accepting the new dimensions, but fails to update them.

Continued Support: I have received great support from the retailer and manufacturer. Jay with JorLink and Ricardo with GCC have always been helpful, patient, and knowledgeable. I was under a lot of pressure to have the machine installed and fully functional for our grand opening, and when I was having a few adjustment hiccups I was getting really frustrated, and they were always understanding and helpful.

Summary:

Pros:

- Machine looks sharp
- Machine was shipped and delivered in a very timely fashion
- Machine arrived firing above the specified wattage
- Drivers are easy to use and very diverse
- Amazing customer service
- Reasonably priced

Cons:

- Having to switch exhaust port locations when using pass through doors
- Machine top opens towards front, and can slam down quite hard if it slips
- Tabletop is rough and porous
- Rulers are made of a very soft metal
- Machine shakes while engraving
- No home position reset for the laser without an entire factory reset

Special Thanks & Closing:

Big thanks to Jay (JorLink) and Ricardo (GCC) for their help and patience with me while I learned a new machine. They are awesome folks and great at their job. Much props to both of you gentleman. I hope this document helps provide usable feedback that will lead to a number of improvements to the GCC LaserPro in the future, and helps reinforce many of the positive features the machine already has.

