

Pfeiffer – Keys



Dear Newsletter Subscribers,

March 16, 2025

It's time to update you on the past few months. The sales launch of the keys, which was announced in the first newsletter, has now passed, and among other things, you should know why.

The mechanical designing of the single-lever key took more time than expected. A precise replica of Uli's single-lever key, which I initially considered, resulted in an, from a technical point of view, unnecessary variety of components and even raw materials, which naturally drove up the manufacturing costs. So, I revised the key again with the goal of reducing both aspects without changing the actual functionality behind the keys. This was successful. After that, we started purchasing materials and manufacturing the components. Since last week, parts for 25 "Dirigent" and 10 "Einhebel" keys have been completed, and I celebrated this properly.

Now, all parts (>700 pieces) need to be grinded and coated with Zapon lacquer to achieve the same finish as Uli's keys. In my opinion, this finish is simply unparalleled in its simplicity and elegance. Because fortunately tastes differ, there will also be, for example, nickel-plated keys available in the future.

I have set up a workshop in two adjacent garages of my company. In addition to the necessary machines (lathe, milling machine, graver grinder, belt sander, and engraving machine), there are also storage shelves, a drawer cabinet for small parts, hand tools, and assembly tables. Unfortunately, one thing is still missing - a heating system. That absolutely has to be installed before next winter. Another thing still missing is a painting booth for applying the Zapon lacquer. The painting booth is under construction since yesterday, based on Uli's sketches and descriptions.

The whole process has taken much longer than I originally anticipated. I've sacrificed a few weekends for contesting (including CQ 160m, one of my favorite contests), acquired the machines, and set up the workshop. I've learned (again) that things often take multiple attempts when doing them for the first time until they turn out as intended. And last but not least, I still have my "main business" to run.

So, I am now a bit more cautious with optimistic delivery forecasts. Based on my current understanding and the insights from the previous paragraph, I estimate about another 5-6 weeks until the first keys are ready for delivery. Unfortunately (hi), I also have to take a two-week vacation in April.

One thing is definite: I will present the keys at this year's HAM RADIO in Friedrichshafen from June 27 to June 29, 2025 and I would be delighted to meet you there in person!

With sincere thanks for your patience and best regards,

Martin Pfeiffer, DL1MP / N4VV