



From The Shop



The newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Woodworker's Guild

Issue 10.2006

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Upcoming Meeting Information

Next Meeting: October 17th, 2006 (3rd Tuesday!)

Location: Lehigh Co. Senior Center
1633 Elm Street
Allentown, PA

Speakers and topics:

- **Members Woodworking Contest!**
- **Take 10 – 10 minute Q&A**

FESTOOL INVASION!

FESTOOL. If you have stopped in to Woodcraft, you have seen these tools. You will not see them in the bog box stores. Think of FESTOOL, what is the first thing that comes to mind? If you have looked at the price tags, you think “expensive”. When I heard that this vendor was coming in to do a presentation, I said that I hoped that they would tell us why we would want to pay more for a tool. I can say, for me, that the gentlemen who presented the tools answered that question. These tools have very impressive capabilities aside from the superior build quality.

A little general information up front. FESTOOL offers a 3 year warranty. Pretty impressive. They advise that they have lower vibration, heat dissipation, and noise than the competition. They also advise that their dust collection is superior. They are sensitive to tool comfort and pay attention to ergonomics in designing their tools. You would expect these things of a top quality tool. It seems they walk their talk.

The presenters were introduced by Ron Wiley. The presentation was divided into two stations: One station was manned by Rick Busch, the other by John Schaeffer. Rick did the presentation on the circular saws and jig saws, and John worked the station where the sanders and planers were demonstrated. While

both gentlemen obviously had their canned scripts and chronology, the presentations were very interactive.



Rick Busch did the impressive presentations of the jig saws and circular saws.

I went over to the circular saw and jig saw station first and probably spent too much time there before going over to the sanding demo. Too much to see and take in! The immediate reaction when you look at their saw is “where’s the blade?” These are retractable saws. Interesting as a safety feature AND far safer when doing a plunge start to a cut. Two models were demoed – the T55 (6 ¼” blade) and the T75 (8 ¼” blade). Immediately, we saw that, with FESTOOL, you are buying into a potential system – potential meaning there are endless accessories built around their tools, most with uses applicable to many of their tools. These saws have electronic speed control that varies the speed of the blade according to the load. This speed adjusting feature lowers the speed at idle to lower noise and there is also a soft startup type speed adjustment to lower shock to the device and vibration to you. These saws (and all FESTOOL products) have been designed and modified with a great deal of field input.

FESTOOL sees people use a circular saw held against a straight edge to cut a straight line. So they designed a fence system where the saw rides ON the fence, not against it. This means the you are not pressing the saw against the straight edge the entire time of the cut and less danger of the straight edge slipping. Also, there is a replaceable soft material that they call a splinter

guard that minimizes splintering. This guide rail, available in lengths from 32 to 197", has a non slip bottom that can essentially be set on the material with the edge on the scribe line and then the saw is set into a track, and with the downward pressure you would apply anyway, the guide rail is held to the surface and the cut made. The guide rail is designed to not scratch surfaces. If you want to ensure that the guide rail does not move, there is a very versatile clamp.



A good look at the circular saw sitting on the channeled guide rail. A close look at the left side of the guide rails will show a black rubber lip, or splinter guard that the saw blade rides next to. In addition, if you bevel the saw, the blade STAYS on the line, unlike conventional circular saws. Solidly constructed as well.

Dust extraction, as they put it, is another part of the FESTOOL system. The tools plug into a vacuum unit (they call it a CT unit – CleanTec). When the tool trigger is pulled, the outlet in the vacuum unit detects the current flow and it turns on. There are 3 sizes, all with HEPA filters. Chips are collected in bag for easy disposal. There are a series of storage containers called “systainers” than not only clip to one another, but also clip to the top of the vacuum so you can use the cart-like construction of the vacuum to carry accessories.

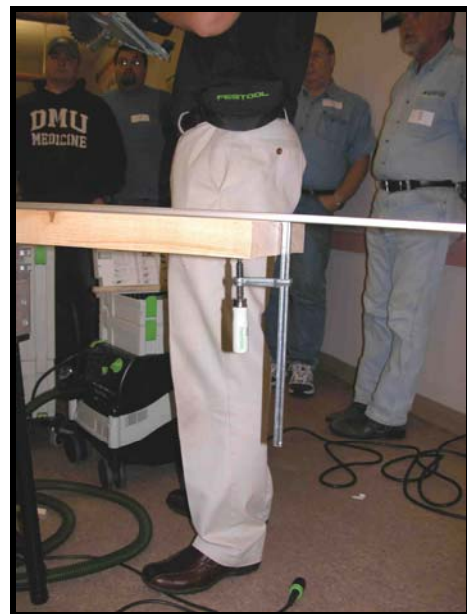
Blades on these saws are NOT standard sizes – the arbor hole is much larger than standard. They are very easy on and easy off, and the blades cost about \$30 for the smaller size and \$45 for the larger, but these are said to be premium blades. The saw contains a built in splitter in back of the blade to keep cuts clean and non binding.

You may have noticed a work surface in these photos that has hole in it. This too is part of the FESTOOL

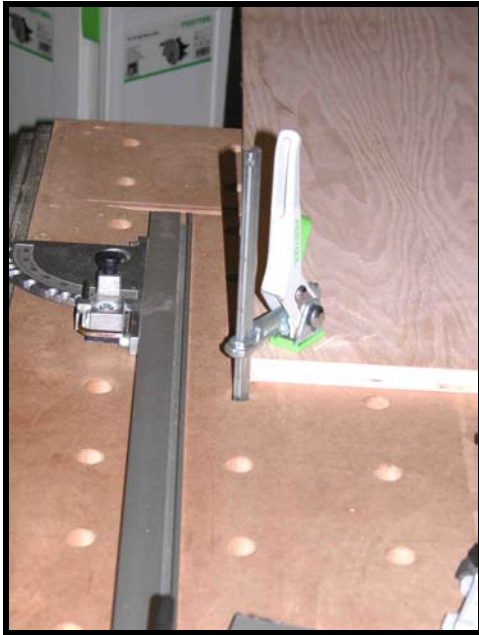
system. The table, along with guide rails and, yes, a miter system makes for a very versatile cutting station that essentially eliminates the need to a sliding compound miter saw. The guide rails fit the jig saw and router tools, and, combined with miter gauge and guide rails, have all sorts of potential. The tables come in two sizes and come with miter gauge, guide rail that allows work to be slipped underneath, and an adjustable stop.



Note where the plug connects onto the tool – the power cord connects to FESTOOL units with a common interface –one cord will fit all units! Of course, you get a cord with each unit, but this is a really nice feature.



Clamp in place for a cut on heavy stock. This has one end that fits into a track and secures it to the work.



The FESTOOL worktable. Here you see how a clamp can be placed almost anywhere. The miter gauge is also seen in this shot.



Another style of miter gauge that can be used without the work table.



A shot of the miter gauge that comes with the table, the elevated guide rail stock can slip underneath. Saw rides on guide rail, almost simulating either a radial arm saw or a compound miter saw in function.

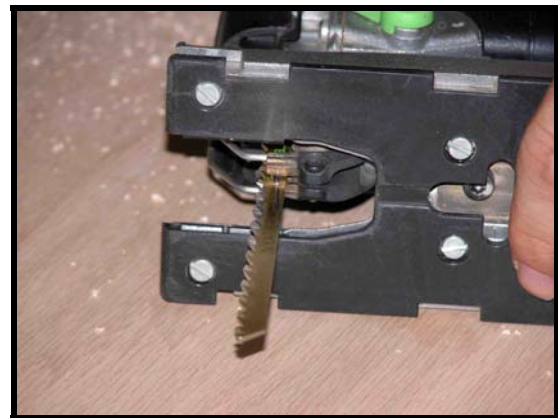


Above photos illustrate the saw blade difference as opposed to a conventional circular saw, and the blade installation port.



A long guide rail for a long cut in thick stock. It was accomplished easily.

OK – on to the jig saws!



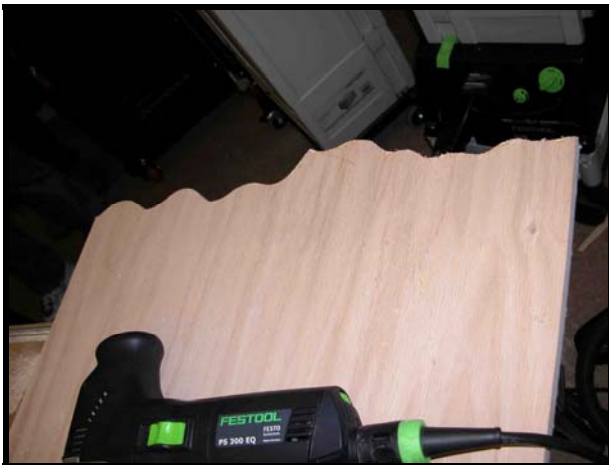
A good look at the carbide guides on the FESTOOL jig saw. To adjust, tighten until the paint JUST starts to come off the blade. This uses the familiar Bosch CLIC blades configuration. They have their own line of blades too.

Jig saw. Picture rough edges. Picture crooked lines. Picture a non square edge due to blade flexing. Pick up a jig saw for hard to get at cuts or just because it is convenient. Well, judging from the demo we got, this is not so with this one. The FESTOOL jig saw comes in two models, as do most – a top handle and a barrel

grip. It can ride on the same guide rail as the circular saw, and the accessory base to do this is standard, making it capable of cutting very straight lines if you must use a jig saw for that purpose. The carbide guide blocks assist in this as well. It takes the same power cord and dust extraction fittings as other FESTOOL products. There is also a splinter guard that works like a close fitting table saw guard to minimize chipping. There are typical accessories like a parallel stop and a circle cutting jig. The constant speed maintaining electronics keep the saw from overheating and minimize vibration. But – enough about the features. Does it work?



The barrel shaped model with the splinter guard just having been put into place. Not. Note the plug adapter – same as the one on the circular saw, as is the dust collection hose fitting. The above cut on the right top of the board was made before the splinter guard was put into place. The saw blade cut the groove in the splinter guard when it was inserted. Saw base is non marring and tilts 45 degrees.



The “before” using the splinter guard cut is on the right and you can “sort of” see the fuzzy edge. The cut on the left side was done with the splinter guard. The blade used was a coarse cut blade and the cut was made very fast. The edge was quite smooth.

I feel that all guild members who saw the demo were well impressed with the function of this saw and the

speed and quality of the cut. The dust collection worked well too.



Top handle model. May be better for those with smaller hands.

The sanders!



John Schaeffer hold up the HEPA filter from the dust collector that was hooked up to the sanders. John supported the sander demo. He was supposed to hold it up in front of his face!



The FESTOOL RO125 sander. This is a 5” sander with two sanding modes. The new 6” RO150 FEQ was also demoed. Both are dual mode ROTEX models. See the text.

Sanders. Not real sexy tools. They sand. FESTOOL has a number of models available: A profile sander, small vertical rotary sanders, more heavy duty L-shaped rotary models, and then heavier models to horse off stock. FESTOOL calls their dual mode rotary models ROTEX, as they have two modes – a traditional random orbit and a combo circular and random orbit combo. The ROS mode is for fine finishing and the “combo” mode is for more aggressive sanding operations. Switching modes is accomplished by turning a knob. These units use the same power cord and duct extraction hook ups as the other tools. There is vibration minimizing mechanics in these models.

John Schaeffer had some huge pieces of walnut that was rough sawn and let guild members have at it. The pieces went from rough sawn to glassy smooth in about 5 minutes or less. The surface was not level – remember, we do NOT prep wood with a sander but with a jointer or planer and finish with the sander. But – if this thing did this kind of stock prep to rough sawn wood, it would be very impressive for what we use it for – finish sanding on wood that has been run through machines. The exception – and this may be of interest to some – is if you are looking to finish a rustic piece – these sanders in rotary / random (or combo mode as I described it) would make fast work of stock removal.

FESTOOL uses a system that they call Jetstream in their sanders. With a hole in the center, it prevents a vacuum from forming between the sandpaper and the workpiece and enhances airflow. There was almost NO dust with these machines hooked up to the duct extraction units. Jetstream supposedly makes sandpaper last longer. FESTOOL markets their own line of sandpaper that is supposed to last longer. It uses a hook and loop type of attachment.

I must confess that I spent so much time at the sawing demo I missed a lot of the great presentation John did on various sanding pads and papers. FESTOOL did have a catalog that describes everything in detail. The hand planer was also demoed.



The finished result being checked out..



Guild members tried out the ROTEX models in a time trial!



..... and finer....



Pretty good!

Systems...

Finally, FESTOOL really touts its systems approach to tools. Dust extractors with oversized wheels that can double as the base to a cart. The base it represents has the capability to hold “Systainers” (system containers? DUH!) on top – they clip on. There are varying sizes of dust extractors and Systainers. You

can hold all of your accessories either at home or to the worksite. I must say these things are pretty slick.



Dust collector in the rear with Systainer on top, and a large sized Systainer in front with circular saws on top.



At the sanding demo, a Systainer sits atop of the dust collection unit and hold sanding accessories.



The Dust Extraction unit – guts view. Disposable bag.

Other Stuff we did not see....

FESTOOL carries a line of routers. Three sizes – 8.5 amps, 11.7 amps (2 ¼ horse), and 16.7 amp (3 ¼ horse). All plunge. All tout 1/256th of an inch fine adjustment. Soft start. Electronic speed control. Uses the track system, same power cord, same dust extraction hose. These were not demoed, but if there is one tool that woodworkers buy for the hell of it, it is a router. I have 5. Because they were there to be bought.

Here are photos for your info:



2 ¼ horse model



8.5 (1 ¼ horse?) model



3 ¼ horse model

If you were not at this fun meeting, stop by Woodcraft to pick up a catalog. Most of the tools are also there for a little hands on. FESTOOL has fixed prices on all of their items. This means that prices are published in the catalogs and are the SAME no matter where you buy.

For my part, I have always been a pretty loyal Porter Cable and DeWalt buyer. Solid tools for the money. Yes, I have an occasional Hitachi item here and there. I walked in looking to see the difference for the money,

and I came away impressed. YES, these are not for anyone. YES, if you use tools for a living, these are worth it. The system, portability, storage, common modules, robust construction, warranty. For the home shop, I need a new jig saw (I had to Porter Cable models break down on me – same part), and instead of running out to plunk down \$140 on a regular one like I had intended on doing, I am going to take a second look at the FESTOOL. And the dust collection units are also impressive. FESTOOL offers package deals on tools with dust collection (extraction?) units.

Thanks to John and Rick for a nice job, and to Ron Wiley for setting this up.



FESTOOL packed up to go home!

Virtual Shop Tours – Terry Green!



Terry Green (standing) shows some photos to Art Silva

Ever hear of the show “Everybody loves Raymond”? I will call this “Everyone now Hates Terry.” Maybe not

hate, cause he is one nice guy, but ENVYs for sure! What a set up! And KUDOS to Terry for stepping up and being a contributor during the September meeting. Here goes, and hold on!



Terry's shop. Built to BE a shop. Building is 24x48, of which 24x32' is workshop. Ceilings are 10' high.



Terry's 3 hp dust collector is outside of his shop. Keeps noise down in the shop. Easier to empty outside. Double metal fireproof doors salvaged from a construction site.



Walk in the double doors and you see this. Clamp rack on right. Mats are all over the place to avoid fatigue and Terry got them inexpensively from places like Harbor Freight and Ollies.



Table saw an extension table. Table was raised to proper height on blocks and wheels placed on the blocks. Table also salvaged – looks like an old office conference table. Lathe to the rear.



Another view of duct port wall, wood storage, clamp rack. Delta air cleaner cleans air and also helps circulate heat.



Looking back at the doors. Note the blocks raising the outfeed table. Pellet stove provides heat. Dust collection ducts on the one wall. Jointer and planer, largest chip generators, placed closest to dust collector. The planer is an 18" unit and the jointer a 6" model. A dehumidifier is installed in the shop.



Terry loves his Inkra fence and extension table mounted router. Terry advised it takes a long time to set up but is worth it. Table saw is a 3 hp, 10" model. Router Terry uses in the side table is a 3 1/2 HP Porter Cable.



Looking to the other side, refrigerator provides refreshments and has radio on top. Radial Arm saw on left, 14" band saw next to fridge. All items are on wheels, as Terry uses this shop as a party room when needed. Rolls everything out the double doors! Fire Extinguisher is mounted near the fridge, There are 4 ceiling mounted speakers, handy when parties are in swing. Phones are hooked up to flashers so Terry can tell if they ring while he is using noisy equipment.



Drum sander, mortise machine and, on right, chop saw station. Nice spacing between tools everywhere in this shop. No clutter = safety. Terry did a scaled mock up of the shop, with scaled pieces of paper for shop tools, arranged everything on the template before breaking ground. He allowed for expansion in his plan. No extension cords are needed as he installed loads of 20 amp outlets, and the building is on a 100 amp service.

Terry advised that the building cost \$12,700, and the total investment with tools is conservatively estimated at \$21,000. Terry, you have a great workshop, did a fine job of photographing and presenting your shop, and we appreciate you taking the time to share this

with us, and stepping up to our Virtual Shop Tour request,



View of the other end of shop. Cabinets aplenty! Note emergency lighting in upper right of photo. On the shelf above the far cabinets is what appears to be an old hand plane. This was given to him by his father in law, and that plane and shelf stands as a tribute to him.

Take Ten –Q&A

Q – Member has an exterior door with loose stiles (or the stiles are gone and it needs major repair..). Rest of door is fine. What glue do you use for repair?

A. – Professor Silva advised that Titebond 3 is the solution and some others nodded in agreement. It does dry sort of brown, however.

Q – Member building 4 barrister bookcases. He wants to use brass hardware as original bookcases used. Where do you get these now?

A – www.woodworkershardware.com or www.restorationhardware.com. Or Google a search.

Q – A member has a Powermatic lathe with 3 phase power and wants to convert to single phase.

A – This one was take offline by another member. Keep them coming!!!

Steering Committee Notes

The Steering Committee met on 10/3/2006 at the Woodcraft location. Topics discussed:

- Treasurers report – Andy presented it. Accepted by the team.
- Newsletter cost reduction – printing costs have drastically reduced thanks to the cooperative relationship we have with Woodcraft corporate account for discount printing, increased acceptance of e-mail and web site downloads, and post card reminders.
- Blocks / Bally – Andy has a load of blocks. Allen will be soliciting members for their table top needs. Perhaps we can get some group discounts. And advised that Bally is now making walnut and cherry butcher block that are very impressive.
- Taunton book offer will be coming up soon. Taunton is having a less than great year so the

free shipping may not be offered, but priced will be. Again, payment in advance.

- Lou Supina started a draft of Standard Operating Procedures document.
- Dan has contacted the Central New Jersey Woodworking Association for possible speakers for 2007.

Wood Specials

SHADY LANE TREE FARM

Louise & Mike Peters
5220 Shimerville Road
Emmaus, PA
610 965-5612 Please call

FLEETWOOD LUMBER & FLOORING

BILL BURKERT
27 Rapp Rd.
Fleetwood, PA
610 944-8364 Please call
Member discount 5%

Bailey Wood Products, Inc.

441 Mountain Rd.
RD#2 Box 38
Kempton, PA
610 756-6827

Woodcraft

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Allentown, Pa.,18103

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Member's Mart – For Sale

- Andy got the aprons! \$20 per apron. Nice stuff!
- Dave Dreher, founder and former President of our guild, has all sorts of flashlights and camping lights for sale. Hopefully, we will see him at our October meeting! Some neat stuff!

2006 Meeting Calendar:

Month	Topic	Speaker
September 19th	FESTOOL – Demonstration of products.	Rick Busch – John Schaeffer
October 17th	Woodworking contest	
November 21 st	Dust Collection	Allen Powell
December 19 th	Holiday Party	
January 16 th		
February 20 th		
March 20 th		
April 17 th	Carving	Phil Alcock – NJ Professional Woodworkers Guild

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, October 17th, Starting at 7:30, sharp. Allow time to arrive and be seated before start time.

Location: Lehigh Co. Senior Center

Topics:

- Guild Members Woodworking contest!**
- Take Ten – 10 minute Q&A problem solver session**

Lehigh Valley Woodworkers' Guild
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