

# Faster by half

With many benefits claimed for this versatile, new hammer drill from Bosch, Roger Bisby can't resist seeing if it meets his standards.

The Bosch 36 volt GBH SDS hammer drill is said to give 50% faster work rate and a 100% more life than its predecessor. It also comes in different configurations to suit the kind of work you do. If, for example, you need an SDS drill to make ceiling fixings you will be better off with the lighter compact model, which drills up to 18mm in concrete. If you want to do some sustained chiselling and drill up to 28mm then the heavier GBH 36 volt VF-LI plus, shown here, will give you plenty of hitting power with its higher single impact. Then if you want to do a bit of screw driving or drilling of timber or steel then the model with the interchangeable chuck is the one you need.

Sometimes, of course, you can have a bit too much impact on a tile, brick or section of rendering, so Bosch has incorporated an Electronic Precision Control to tame the beast by giving you a 70% power setting. This provides a slow start and lower impact, which is ideal if you are trying to chip a hole out in brickwork without destroying the bricks.

On full power you not only have more impact and speed but you also have an electronic clutch called Electronic Rotation Control. This will stop the drill body spinning if the drill bit jams but it works in an interesting way. A motion sensor in the drill detects any sudden sideways movement in the body and switches the drive off. You then have to depress the trigger and start again – hopefully having first freed the drill bit. If you are holding

the drill very tightly to stop the body moving you may actually prevent the body moving fast enough to activate the clutch, so you may think the ERC isn't working. So, counter intuitively less is more, a slightly looser grip on the drill allows the safety device to kick in. Similarly, the clutch will not activate on the 70% setting because there isn't enough kick.

## Easy and comfortable

The rear handle of the drill is independently sprung to dramatically reduce vibration and if you know enough about SDS to allow the drill to do the work, rather than forcing it in, then you will find this a very easy and comfortable drill to use.

I couldn't complete any cordless review without mentioning the battery, because faith in the batteries is as important as faith in the tools. Bosch has a CoolPack battery

system, which allows air around the cells to dissipate the heat from each cell individually, rather than letting one hot cell affect the one next to it. The electronic cell protection helps prevent overload and over heat and deep discharge. This is said to increase the life expectancy of the batteries by up to 100%. That said if you are leaving a cordless tool unused for months on end then it helps to give the batteries a maintenance run and charge.

I always tend to avoid talking about prices of power tools because there are so many deals being done at any one time, but looking at the offers on this drill and batteries I was amazed at just how competitive it is. If you are looking for a cordless hammer drill it is hard to beat, and a three year warranty means you aren't likely to find yourself holding a pup.

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## FEATURES AT A GLANCE

- Up to 50% faster work rate due to higher single impact energy and 100% more lifetime (compared to predecessor GBH 36 V-LI)
- Bosch Electronic Rotation Control (ERC) retains control if the drill bit jams and adjusts performance to provide optimum results in sensitive materials
- Vibration Control for low user fatigue
- Up to 240 holes in concrete with one battery charge (diameter 6 x 40 mm)
- Three functions: drilling, hammering, chiselling
- CoolPack increases lifetime by up to 100% (cf. Li-Ion batteries without CoolPack)
- Bosch Electronic Cell Protection (ECP): protects the battery against overload, overheating and deep discharge

