

There are some power tools that make a huge difference to one's operating activities. This new Bosch plunge saw and rail system has certainly changed aspects of my working – and hugely for the better

## Bosch GKT 55 GCE plunge saw & rail

Faced with the prospect of ripping down a full-size 18mm ply board, a solitary and difficult struggle at the saw table is now a thing of the past. And while it has always been just about possible to make a half-decent cut with a regular hand-held circular saw and a straightedge, the difference between that and the Bosch plunge saw is astonishing.

### A simple concept

The saw and rail concept has been around for a while now, but every new version seems to advance the original design just that little bit further. In use, the rail – a precision-extruded length of low-friction aluminium – is simply laid onto the object board, where it remains

£439



### Maximum accuracy

The rail has an additional flat strip of rubber inserted in the leading edge. This is trimmed with the first cut and ensures that the blade will make successive cuts with maximum accuracy right up to the edge, as well as preventing breakout on ply and veneered boards. As long as you position the rail on the correct side of the marked line (ie not on the waste side), it's as simple as making a mark at each end, laying on the rail and off you go.

### Standard features

The saw itself is a solid piece of kit (I dropped it off the bench once and it didn't seem to be harmed in any way) and a great example of the quality of today's machining and manufacturing techniques. The thin kerf blade is completely shrouded by the base and body housing, and plunges to any required depth from 0 to 57mm. The depth is simply set by a grip lever with a red plastic tab indicator. This is a clever little

device which has two positions to take into account the thickness of the guide rail itself. It's a real delight to use.

### Managing the dust

Like all hand-held circular saws – and especially one where the blade is almost fully enclosed – extraction is a key issue, and here we have a standard (or as standard as we can



The exhaust port swivels for ease of use. The knob on the sole plate adjusts the grip on the rail

hope for) diameter outlet port that should fit most vacuum systems. The enhancement on this one is its ability to rotate and thus achieve the most convenient angle for both saw and operator. It's always good to be able to concentrate on the cut itself, and everything that can be done to smooth the transit of the cable and hose umbilical is a good thing in everybody's books.

### Who needs instructions?

We men have a (deserved) reputation for impatience when it comes to learning how a new tool or device functions, but the Bosch saw and rail system almost encourages the user to chuck the instructions away. Certainly, after I'd managed to lose the set that came with the test sample, I found that everything was as straightforward as I could have wished for.

The saw, in trademark Bosch Blue (Pantone 652), has bright red accents which denote adjustments and points of interest generally. Thanks to this eminently sensible scheme, I was able to locate the spindle lock with ease and thus effect a blade removal without frustration. And a very interesting blade it is too – 165mm diameter, thirty teeth and a very thin kerf all combine to produce one of the finest cuts I've ever seen. The results were as though I was working in a furniture factory.

### Safety first

It's a pretty safe system too, and compared to the risks involved in working with a table saw, you could almost give it a PG rating. Once the saw is securely positioned on its rail, it requires the sliding of a thumb-operated lock button before the saw can be lowered into position, then it's just a case of pulling the trigger and sawing away. Such is the cutting accuracy of this saw that it's also possible to plunge directly downwards into a board for something like a sink cut-out, with little fear of skewing the cut and messing up your 4m length of expensive worktop.

### Summing up

I have to give this rail saw system a big thumbs up, and all the others that went before. Bosch has managed to eliminate the shortcomings of earlier models and, if you've been waiting for the right time to invest in a rail system, now is it. **MC**

### SPECIFICATION

|                  |                                                                         |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MOTOR            | 1400W                                                                   |
| BLADE DIAMETER   | 165mm                                                                   |
| NO-LOAD SPEED    | 3600 to 6250rpm                                                         |
| BLADE TILT       | -1° to 47°                                                              |
| MAX DEPTH OF CUT | at 90° 57mm<br>at 45° 42mm                                              |
| WEIGHT           | 4.7kg                                                                   |
| ACCESSORIES      | blade, two 1.6m rails, rail connector, rail storage bag, L-BOXX for saw |

### VERDICT

This is a superb piece of kit that will hugely improve your making.

- PROS**
- Accuracy and ease of use
  - Quality of finish
  - Compatible with other rail brands

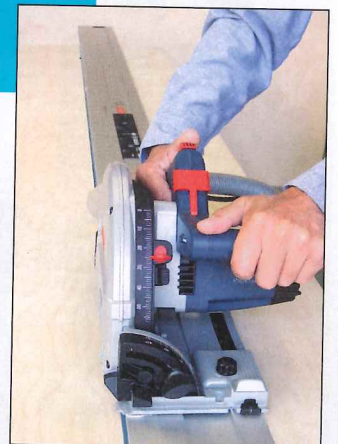
- CONS**
- Mild irritation with trailing cord and extractor hose

### VALUE FOR MONEY PERFORMANCE



### FURTHER INFORMATION

- Bosch Power Tools
- 01895 838743
- [www.bosch-pt.com](http://www.bosch-pt.com)



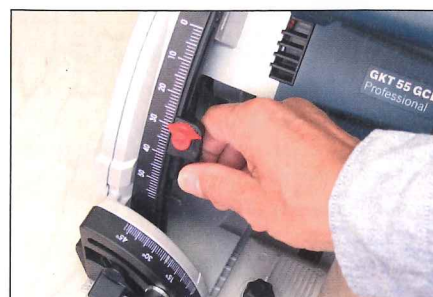
The saw and rail ensure a professional quality of cut on 18mm birch ply



With the two protective end clips removed, the rail sections are readily fixed together with the twist of a coin



The thumb-operated lock button in action on top of the handle. Note the red spindle-lock cover positioned forward of it



The depth of cut is set using the large scale. The smaller angle scale for setting bevel cuts is at the front of the saw body



The black strip on the underside of the saw is the low-friction groove which engages with the rail and ensures a smooth action



The first cut will trim the protective strip to a perfect fit. The clear adjustable dust shield increases extraction efficiency



Once the first cut has been completed on a sacrificial board, the saw is ready for proper use. Note the offset of protective strip