



**TESTER** Anthony Bailey routs neat joints with a new dovetail jig from Trend

# Router Test



▲ The Trend DJ300 dovetail jig

# Trend DJ300 dovetail jig

**T**HE DJ300 dovetail jig is capable of holding components up to 300mm (11½in) wide to produce standard ½in through or lapped dovetails.

Additional templates DJ300/01 and DJ300/02 allow the production of ½in lapped and rebated dovetails and comb joints respectively.

The jig is made of rigid pressed steel and is intended to be screwed to the edge of a bench or a board for clamping into a Workmate.

Workpieces are held by two sprung-pressed steel bars, each with clamping knobs. Adjustable edge guides allow the position of the dovetails to be preset, so that the dovetails can be accurately centred. These stops are interchangeable for different joint types.

**"I found that deep passes were too aggressive, a series of finer cuts producing a good result"**

### Setting up

Assemble all the parts of the jig according to the clear diagram. Adjust the locknuts to position the precision-machined aluminium template 8mm (⅝in) away from the jig. Attach the guide bush to the base of your router, fit a fine height adjuster and install the jig's dovetail bit.

Prepare stock accurately – noting that drawer backs and fronts must be the same thickness. The manual shows ideal timber

widths providing full pins and tails at each end – OK if they fit your furniture.

Provided the correct edge guides for the correct cutter are used they have a built-in offset that ensures perfect alignment once the joint is assembled. A setting block can be made to reset the jig from one joint type to another without using measurements.

The workpieces are mounted in the jig in pairs, inside faces out, with the socket part upright and the pins horizontal. For an even



▲ Clamp the workpieces into the jig, inside faces out



▲ Set the depth of the cutter

number of pins and tails push the workpieces against the left-hand edge guide, uneven against the right-hand one.

The template is slid on and locked down on top of the workpiece.

### Test cut

Using offcuts for making test joints, make any adjustments required. Switch on, push the router into the first recess and pull outwards following the curved edge of the jig. Continue into the next recess until the joint is complete.

To avoid damaging template or workpiece, always slide the router in from the front of the jig and withdraw it in the same way. The dovetail cutter 'undercuts' a mite aggressively, so keep firm control at all times.

Repeat the operation to ensure that the tails are properly rounded for a good fit. To adjust the joint, raise the cutter to tighten it or lower it for a looser fit. Repeat on new test pieces until the joint is just right.

If 'breakout' occurs on the inside – the visible face when in the jig – of the socket, cure the problem by clamping a thin piece of ply in front.

The manual gives clear information on setting up the other template and cutter variants. I tried the square-edged combing jig. This is cut, using No. 2 edge guides, with the Trend straight bit, which has both a long cutting edge and shank. Placing a scrap piece under the horizontal workpiece prevents the cutter from damaging the jig on

the last pass. I found that deep passes were too aggressive, a series of finer cuts producing a good result.

### Conclusion

The manual ensures that this jig is extremely easy to use, and demonstrates how to make small but important adjustments to the joint fit.

Trend suggest the use of a ruler to set the cutter depth, but the provision of a 'U'-shaped adjustable cutter depth gauge would make this task easier.

This jig proved so useful that it will probably get quite a thrashing before I hand it back to Trend. ●

▼ The finished dovetail joint ready for assembly



### Prices

Basic jig, cutter, guidebush and template	£117.38
Optional lap dovetail template	£35.13
6mm cutter to suit	£23.44
Box comb joint template	£35.13
12.7mm cutter to suit	£22.26

All prices include VAT. See page 86 for contact details