

## On Test



# Trend

## insert plate

**Gordon Warr tests another new product from Trend. This time it's their new insert plate designed to be used in a home-made router table**

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**M**ost router users at some time or other are attracted to the idea of making a router table, indeed many successfully do so even though they may already have a commercial table. Now Trend have introduced yet another item to their long list of accessories for the router enthusiast, and this is aimed directly at those who want to make their own table.

It's fairly easy to make the actual table top in the workshop and the legs or cabinet base to support this. Making a simple fence is not too difficult either, but making the table insert which at the same time provides a means of holding the router presents rather more problems. This is where Trend step in, for the

insert plate which is one of their new products is designed to solve this problem.

### Product design

It measures 305 x 230mm, and is 8mm thick. Made of thermoset phenolic plastic, it is very rigid and incorporates two concentric snap-in glass reinforced polycarbonate rings. These give three holes with diameters of 98, 68 and 32mm, with a clever feature that the plate is moulded with a very slight crown for improved performance. On the underside there are a series of concentric and radial lines for easy centring of the router. Also included is a lead-in pin with a couple of holes drilled in the insert giving a choice of positions for this, and four corner clips for securing the top. It is designed for mounting in a top with a

thickness of 19mm, although it will adapt to thicker material.

### Mounting the plate

I thought I would put this insert to the test, at least as far as mounting in a top to see if there were any difficulties. I had a piece of MDF of just the right size at 500 x 480mm, but with a thickness of 25mm. A rectangular hole has to be cut in the centre of this, all the necessary dimensions being included in the fitting instructions. There is a choice of just how this hole is cut, I tried both a jigsaw and as an alternative, a portable circular saw.

When using the circular saw I found it better to limit the projection of the blade so as to just penetrate the MDF, and with both saws I brought the side fence into use. Even with the circular saw I had then to

use the jigsaw to cut completely into the corners where the circular saw had left incomplete kerfs. On balance, I achieved a more accurate cut when most of the cutting was carried out with the circular saw, with the jigsaw just

## Adapting to fit

**In order for my 25mm thick MDF to accommodate the insert without using longer screws in the fixing clips, I reduced the thickness of the top down to 19mm in the four corners where the clip would locate. This was achieved very simply by using a large diameter saw tooth bit in a drilling machine.**



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Alternative method of removing waste with a circular saw



Even when using the circular saw, a jigsaw completes cutting in the corners



Forming rebate using straight cutter

confined to the corners. It is necessary to form a rebate with the router around the edge of the cut-out just made, this is so that the insert plate will fit in and be flush with the surface of the MDF. This can be achieved either by working from the inner edges of the cut-out, or from the outer edges of the top. I decided on the latter using the fence and a straight cutter, both the width and depth of this rebate were carefully checked with the depth being measured accurately with a dial gauge.

**Mounting the router**

It is of course necessary to mount the router onto the plate. For this, the facing to

the underside of the router can be removed, and then this facing located on the plate using the markings on the underside to achieve concentricity. The mounting holes can then be marked and drilled and the top surface countersunk. Another method would be to use a pattern of the base of your router as a template for drilling the mounting holes (as suggested by Ron Fox) thus making sure the holes are accurately placed without the risk of any damage to the router face plate. Three holes are required for the Trend T9 router, smaller routers only have two holes in

the base for mounting purposes. Securing the insert in the MDF and the router to the insert are quick and simply carried out, although it's worth saying that using a router when inverted is very much easier if a fine height adjuster is a feature of the router, alternatively one can be added to most models.

**Further information**

**Cost:** £29.99 plus VAT  
**Contact:** Trend  
 01923 224657  
 www.trendm.co.uk



Fixing the router to the insert



The insert in place in the top

**The verdict...**

I've had previous experience of using this pattern of insert, and found it to be a thoroughly sound method of mounting the router and providing alternative apertures to suit cutters of various diameters. To make this Trend accessory fully usable I now need to make the remainder of the table. Trend can again be of help here, for they also offer an adjustable fence, horizontal and vertical work holding clamps which apply pressure to the workpiece, and an NVR switch so that activating the router can be controlled independently of the tool itself.



Inserting the lead-in pin



The two rings 'snap' in place



The top with lead-in pin in one of the alternative positions