

At first glance this looks like something you could make yourself (and indeed it is), but why bother when this one is so convenient and well-made? Just having a pair of rollers instead of a pair of pegs makes the base much easier to use. It is even supplied with a centring device and the mounting screws...



BY RALPH LAUGHTON

Trend self-centring mortise base

This is one of those jigs that all the routing books suggest you make for yourself. Like many routing accessories, you *could* make a version of it, as I've done so myself in the past. But it's so much more convenient to be able to buy one off the shelf, and the price really is very reasonable.

The base is counter-bored with oversized clearance holes that accept two pan-head screws. The hole spacing is the standard found on all Trend routers, on others such as DeWalt and on the many of their clones. The 168mm (6 $\frac{5}{8}$ in) diameter base can easily be modified to fit other routers as required.

Fitting the base

Loosely fit the pan-head screws and mount the $\frac{1}{4}$ in diameter rod supplied in the collet so it protrudes through the central hole in the base. If you're using the base with a $\frac{1}{2}$ in router, you'll need to fit a $\frac{1}{4}$ in collet or reducer. Pass the plastic alignment plug over the rod and press it into the base to align the base with the router collet. Tighten the pan-head securing screws and the base is now centred. Remove the rod and the plug and fit a cutter.

Cutter length

One disadvantage of using any kind of sub-base is that the available plunge depth of the cutter is reduced. It's unwise to fit the cutter high in the collet to gain cutting depth; cutters should always be seated at or below the 'K' mark. Longer cutters are available in both $\frac{1}{4}$ in and $\frac{1}{2}$ in shanks, and should be used where appropriate. After fitting an appropriate cutter the whole assembly is ready to use. It takes far longer to explain than it does to put together!

Using the jig

The jig could not be simpler to use. The router with the jig fitted is placed on top of the piece of wood to be routed. It's rotated in a clockwise direction until the rollers are in contact with the sides of the wood. After starting the router, the cutter is plunged into the wood and the router is progressed along the wood, keeping both rollers in contact with the sides. This is easily achieved as the rotation of the motor and the cutting action will want to rotate the router in a clockwise direction anyway.

I found it very easy to cut a centred mortise; the only slight problem is seeing where to stop. The hole in the centre is quite



VERDICT

This is a useful accessory that's well made and easy to use. Although labelled a mortising jig it has many other uses, and it will make a great partner for the new T5 router

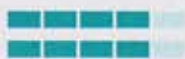
PROS

- Well made
- Good price

CONS

- Difficult to see mark up
- Would have been better made in a clear material

VALUE FOR MONEY



PERFORMANCE



FURTHER INFORMATION

- Trend
- 01923 249768
- www.trend-uk.com

small, and unless you're using a very small cutter it's very hard to see what you are doing. The larger the cutter, the less room there is around it to see what is going on, and the problem is increased by the extra shavings being created by the larger cutter. Marks or stops have to be used to determine the extent of the cut. These will need to register with the edge of the jig.

I think Trend may have missed a trick here. Perhaps the base could have been made from a clear material, enabling the user to see the marks. This would have made it easier to use without having to resort to using additional stops.



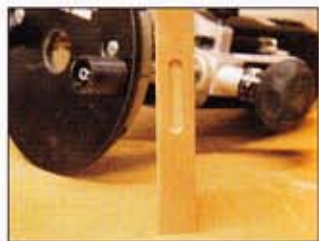
The base is centred using the centring device supplied



It's ready for action once the device has been removed



The cutting action of the router keeps the cutter centred



The finished mortise is ready for the tenon - quick and easy