

Trend



Contents of
Routasketch box
(excluding router)
with bases assembled

Routasketch

Crafter and woodwork enthusiast Jean Fox tries out Trend's new router design, drawing and copying device, with a little help from husband - 'guru' Ron

I have been a woodworker for the last 25 years, but I do not generally use a router (the house is full of them though - I am married to Ron Fox). I do, however, use a laminate trimmer to do freehand routing of signs and pictures so I was very interested to see the Trend Routasketch, as there seemed to be several areas where I could use it. The well-

packed box was left with me and so I got started.

The contents of the box are two base plates, two U-shaped supports, two arms and assorted nuts, bolts, guides and a good instruction book. It took me approximately half an hour from opening the box to *'the router should now be fitted'*. The instructions were clear and there were no

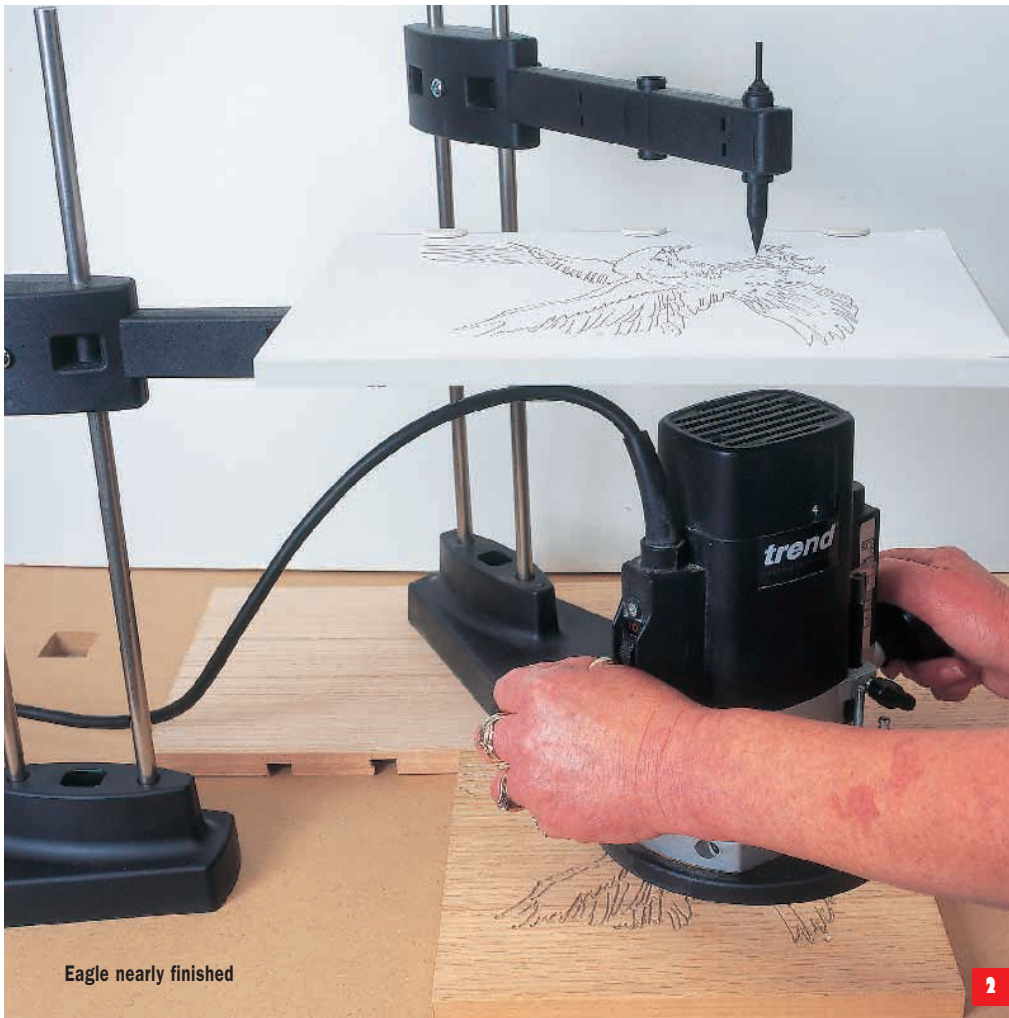
problems in assembly, which would probably be even quicker without the assistance of my five-year old grandson, who had already helped his grandfather to assemble another Routasketch.

Setting up

The Routasketch can use a comprehensive range of routers as it has a universal fixing

“The Routasketch can use a comprehensive range of routers as it has a universal fixing plate”

On Test



Eagle nearly finished

plate, and the instruction book has a table showing which holes to use. I chose a Trend T5 with a V-grooving cutter.

Care needs to be taken when fitting the router as it is attached to its carrying plate from below and the weight of the U-bar and arm can cause problems. The judicious use of a couple of blocks of wood to support the inverted base and router is helpful.

The line-up bush to centralise the router bit was no problem to put in place and use for its required purpose, but removing it was a different matter. I had to call the routing 'guru' to help and I still don't know what I did wrong, but it must have been user error because I managed this bit fine the second time.

The template carrier was clamped firmly to the edge of

the table, a piece of Contiboard was selected for engraving and the router carrier and template follower were positioned as per the instruction book. Not lacking in confidence, I decided to choose from the templates in the pack provided, the eagle that appears on the box lid. The template picture slots under the edge of the carrier plate and lies flat under a sheet of acetate. The system is quite simple. The outline is followed on the template by a plastic pin controlled from below by guiding the router. As the line is followed, its twin is cut into the board below by the router. Easy? Takes some practice. Remember you must watch the pin, not the router.

In use

Before plunging the router I tried a few dry runs and

discovered a couple of useful points. Do not run the router lead from above; if it touches the drawing plate it will move it. The entire router carrying plate needs to be on a level at all times as the weight of the U-bar will cause it to tip. If necessary, make a same thickness framework around your workpiece.

The moment of truth. I set depth of cut to about 1.5mm, lined up everything, positioned the guide at my chosen start point, switched on, plunged the router and started my eagle.

As long as you go slowly it is not too difficult to follow the template outline fairly closely. You soon establish a routine of plunge, follow line, release plunge, move to new position, plunge etc. Photo 2 shows the eagle nearing completion.

The result

It took me a long time and I was somewhat disappointed when my final outline cut ended about $\frac{3}{8}$ in from my start point. Closer inspection also revealed one good and one very dodgy talon. The problem turned out to be that if you are following a line across the whole width/depth of the paper, the U-bar on the router base can touch the drawing plate and move it in its clamp.

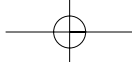
Concentrating on following a line, you do not notice at the time. Check constantly for this situation or a lot of effort and materials can be wasted.

Overall I was quite pleased with my first effort and tried out my own flower picture and rough notice. You can see from photos 3, 4, 5 and 6 that it is possible to reproduce drawings quite accurately with the Routasketch even at a first attempt.

The verdict...

The Routasketch is an inexpensive device for reproducing drawings in wood. It does this very well and good results can be obtained with only a little practice provided certain sources of error are borne in mind and guarded against. Ideally, choose templates that are not fussy, and where the line is not absolutely critical.

It has great potential for decorating things like toy boxes for those without the confidence to work freehand and, at its price, certainly deserves a place in the workshop of the woodworking enthusiast.



Eagle with template provided

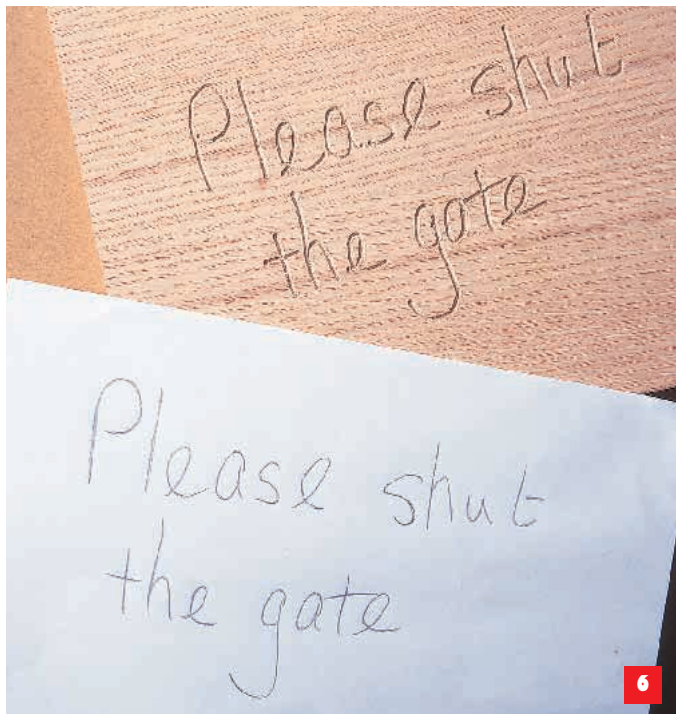


Flower with template drawn by me



Pudsey bear with my template

On Test



Simple sign with template



This is what happens if the drawing carrier plate moves

I had one try at following round a solid template. I think I was using rather too much force to keep the guide in contact with the edge of the dolphin. The drawing plate again moved unnoticed, with the fairly spectacular result shown in photo 7. I have yet to try this one again.

Further information

List price: £35.20
Contact: Trend
 0800 487363

