

On Test



Main components of T2: Trimmer on base; Dust-extractor spout; Roller copy follower with clear plastic deflector; Guide bush and carrier

Trend T2 Laminate Trimmer

Trend have added another machine to their growing range of power tools. This time it's a small laminate trimmer which fits in under their T3 router. Ron Fox gives it a try

The spate of new products from Trend continues unabated. The latest one to come my way is the T2 laminate trimmer, a 450W, single speed, non-plunging little machine with a number of rather unusual features.

Design and handling

To begin with, the shape is quite unorthodox. A handle, reminiscent of the old-style orbital sanders contains an old-

fashioned trigger switch with a locking button. The base is vaguely delta shaped with a curved cut-out below the motor spindle and forked ends. A handle on the base facilitates two-handed operation although for many jobs I suspect it will be used one-handed. Three 6mm tapped holes are set in the base, two of them in the standard EDT positions so that the trimmer can be mounted in a table or used with a number of bolt-on accessories.

Depth of cut is set by means of a knurled wheel on a threaded rod to make the adjustment, and a thumbwheel to lock the position when set. The collet is the standard Trend T5 1/2in collet, but the 8mm one can be fitted if required. Cutter fitting and removal is a two-spanner job. Motor no-load speed is 24,000rpm.

Added extras

The T2 comes with a set of

accessories that includes a fitted plastic carrying case, a clear plastic dust extractor spout, a roller copy follower, an 18mm guide bush and carrier, two spanners and an instruction manual.

The main photo shows the T2 with its standard accessories and photo 3 a close-up of the depth-setting mechanism and switch.

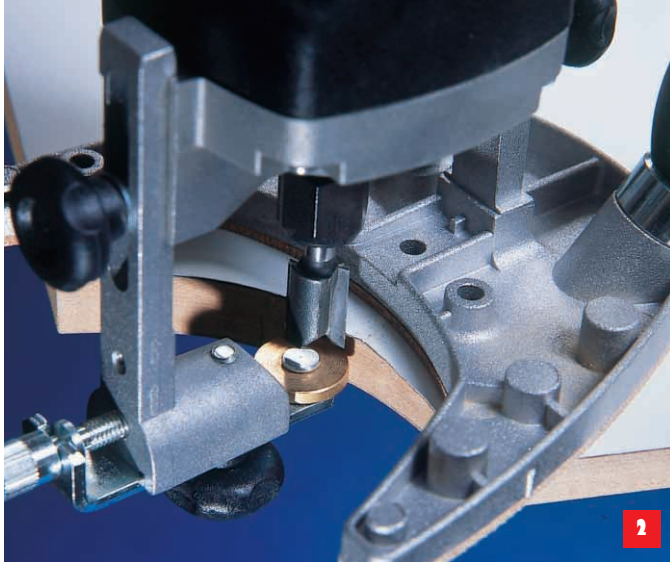
The shape of the base brings the collet quite close to the base casting and a maximum cutter diameter of 23mm is specified. Bigger than this and the cutter would foul the base. A selection of cutters suitable for use with the T2 is shown in photo 4. These include bearing guided trimmers, a pierce-and-trim cutter, a V-groover, a combi-trimmer which trims plastic overhangs at 90° or 45°, a small rounding-over cutter and a 1/2in straight. Many other cutters can be used provided their diameter does not exceed 23mm.

The T2 is sold as a laminate trimmer but the instruction manual also gives guidance on its use for guide-bush work, rebating etc. with the copy follower, and edge-profiling with bearing guided cutters.

The tests

Since the T2 is described as a laminate trimmer our first tests involved trimming plastic overhangs on straight and curved boards. Photo 5 shows a small workpiece being trimmed with a bearing-guided flush trimmer installed. This was very easily done; the handle and switch fell naturally under the right hand and the base grip knob enabled the left hand to steady the machine.

Photo 6 shows a laminated plaque being trimmed with the combi-trimmer set to give a 45° chamfer on the edge, controlled by the copy follower. The chamfer reduces the tendency for the edge of the



Curved overhang being trimmed with roller copy follower and straight cutter

plastic to chip.

Finally, photo 2 above shows a concave shape being trimmed using the copy follower and a straight cutter. All these jobs were completed without trouble and confirmed that the T2 was good at the job it was designed for.

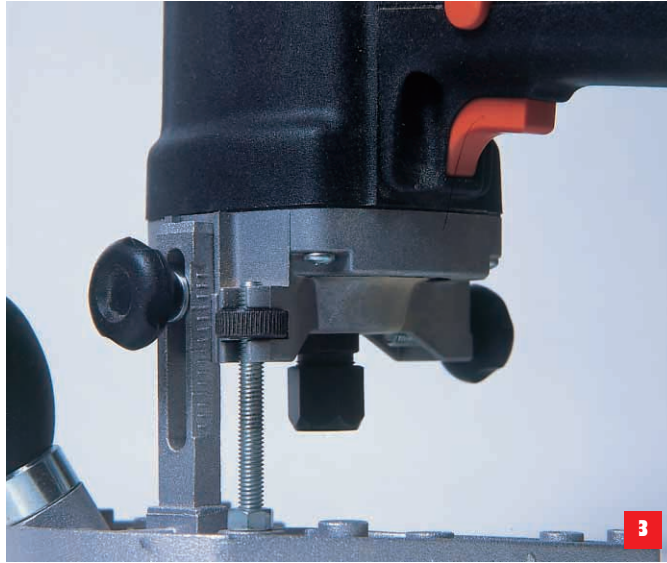
Note: The instruction manual is very definite that the dust extractor spout should be fitted at all times, because it is also designed as a guard. We, of course, fitted it for the tests but for the photographs it was removed for photographic clarity. Always fit it when cutting

to guard against sharp laminate shards and harmful dust. We also advise the wearing of protective eyewear and the use of some form of dust extraction.

Other applications

We put the T2 through its paces as described in the instruction manual.

Edge moulding - We made a number of moulded edges using small-diameter bearing-guided cutters. Photo 7 shows the edge of a board being rounded over with the small



Close-up of depth-setting mechanism and switch, showing thumb wheel, knurled adjustment knob, trigger switch and locking button

rounding-over cutter from the Trend boxed set. The picture shows clearly the two handed operation.

Guide bush work - The 18mm guide bush is held in a carrier that fastens to the base with an M5 countersunk screw. This is a rather fiddly operation and, like several other adjustments, needs the dust extractor spout to be removed and then replaced. The bush is a simple sleeve with a limited amount of up-and-down adjustment to cater for different template thicknesses. The maximum

specified cutter diameter for use with the bush is 11mm.

For the test, I cut several pieces of chipboard to make up a router stand, using a template made of 6mm MDF. The exercise took me back to my days with the old Black & Decker HD1250 non-plunging router. The technique is to set the depth of cut for a light pass, tilt the router back towards you, switch on and return the router to the vertical lowering the rotating cutter into the workpiece and bringing the guide bush against the edge of the template.

Selection of cutters suitable for use with the T2. Maximum diameter is 23mm



Router stand with laminate overhang being trimmed with bearing-guided flush trimmer fitted

On Test



Plastic overhang on wall plaque being trimmed to 45° with combi-trimmer and roller copy follower

Photo 8 shows the work in progress with the T2 and a completed piece also in the picture. The nature of the exercise gave me a stable cut for the inside (clockwise) cut, but a very unstable one for part of the outer (anti-clockwise) cut, where very little base was running on the template. For serious work I would - as always - put packing pieces around the outside of

the workpiece to stabilise the trimmer base.

Cutting curves - Since the T2 base has the standard EDT M6 threaded holes (with three M6 CSK machine screws provided as standard) I tried it with my home-made trammel bar to cut a curve in the top of a small board intended as a wall plaque. The trammel fitted straight on, but not at the



Moulding the edge of a board with bearing-guided round over cutter

Further information

Price: The T2, in its fitted case, and complete with the accessories shown has a list price of £163 inc. VAT, but should be available at around the VAT-free price of £139.

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angle I would have like because the holes in the T2 base are not in the same

positions relative to the cutter axis as in the standard EDT router base.



Guide bush work. Router stand being made with template, guide bush and 1/4in straight cutter. A completed stand is also shown in the picture



Home-made trammel bar fitted to T2, cutting an arc in a small board



First shot at lettering with the T2, fitted with a V-grooving cutter

Photo 9 shows the curve being cut with a 1/4in straight cutter in the T2. For this picture the dust extractor was left on the machine. The connection to my extractor was via a stepped rubber adapter. This happens to be a Draper, but similar adapters are available from Trend. The plastic extractor spout has an

external diameter of 29mm.

With only 450W at our disposal, the curve is cut in a succession of light passes, with the depth of cut being reset after each pass. Without the plunge facility, this makes the operation somewhat tedious.

Freehand routing - I asked my wife to try the T2 for freehand

routing (she is an expert at this, and reviewed the Trend Routasketch in issue 47).

Photo 10 shows her first efforts, using a V-grooving cutter. As with the guide bush job, the cutter is set to depth and locked, and the switched-on cutter lowered into the workpiece. The verdict was that, with a bit of practice to get used to the different handling characteristics of the T2, lettering and other freehand

jobs could be successfully accomplished.

Table routing - Since the instruction manual mentions mounting the T2 in a router table, I tried out of curiosity to put it in the new Trend starter table. It fitted easily with the controls accessible for adjustment, but beyond this I did not go. I would not reckon to use the T2 in a table unless forced by circumstances.

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The verdict...

The T2 is first and foremost a laminate trimmer aimed at the tradesman, joinery shop and shop-fitting firm where trimming is a daily activity. Frankly, despite its accessories, it is overstraining it to try to use it as a general-purpose machine, with its limitations on power and cutter diameter. We quickly got to like it for its intended application and we can imagine that many tradesmen with a day-to-day need for this sort of application will benefit from having one at hand ready to pick up, trim, and put down again. Beyond this, if nothing else, its price will be a serious bar to anyone who simply wants a small general-purpose router, but that of course is not what it has been introduced for.





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