

Mark Cass gets his eager hands on Trend's T5 router and, opposite, **Gordon Warr** sees how the competitively priced Erbauer ERB255GS sliding mitre cuts it

TREND T5 ROUTER

Picking up a brand-new T5 router the other day was a bit like meeting an old friend just back from a long and refreshing holiday – the well-known appearance is comforting in its familiarity, and you just can't help thinking how good they're looking after all this time. Based on the fondly remembered Elu MOF 96E, Trend's replacement, the T5, has been around for years, and is considered by most to be the best of the Elu clones, something there has been no shortage of in virtually every DIY shed in the land.

What's new

Sensibly sticking to a winning formula, the only differences instantly apparent are the re-shaped thumb knobs on the base and side, and – something of huge benefit to anyone (like me) with a poor short-term memory – a simple sticker indicating which of the two handles is the tightening one. Despite having used one of these routers for years, I still find myself going for the wrong grip depending on which way it's facing.

Another welcome change is the addition of some effective dust extraction, something that wasn't considered overly necessary when this machine was first designed. Fortunately now, however, manufacturers recognise the need for health and safety, and this clip-on spout certainly fits the bill. As with many of these 'retro fit' adaptors, access to fit is a bit on the tight side, and it's best to clip the spout in before you fit a router cutter. Be careful fitting and removing it until you get familiar with the action as I suspect it may be possible to snap it in two if you're a bit heavy-handed.

The T5 has a nice smooth plunging action, with springs set up just about perfectly, and the twist knob makes going up and down a doddle.

For those who have never used one, the fine-height adjuster is a boon and, as its name suggests, permits really accurate adjustment for depth of cut. It simply replaces the regular depth stop and engages onto the thread of the tallest of



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The fine-height adjuster screws onto the tallest pin

the three revolving guide pins. These are all adjustable, set on a rotating capstan, and can each be set so as to provide progressive increments to work in tandem with the aforementioned stop, a system which can be seen – in varying degrees of effectiveness – on many other routers today.

In use

The T5 is as good as ever; there's something about the size and balance of this router which somehow makes it feel safe and unthreatening.

The positive on/off switch – one which doesn't require the operator to hold it 'on' in use – slow starts the motor and it's a doddle to 'tune' the speed to suit the job courtesy of the speed control dial.

Freehand work is easy to control, and

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VERDICT

A timeless mid-range classic, maturing nicely and still going strong – if not stronger.

PLUSES

- Proven design
- Top-quality manufacture
- Suitable for nearly every routing job

MINUSES

- Potentially vulnerable extraction spout

SPECIFICATIONS

Power	1400W
Weight	2.7kg
Max. cutter dia	40mm
Power cable	3.3m
Plunge	50mm

Comes in plastic case with: micro-adjustable side fence, dust extraction spout, beam trammel for 8mm rod, fine-height adjuster, 20mm dia guidebush, 8mm collet and spare nut, 17mm spanner

Price: £159 inc VAT
Availability: Trend
Freephone: 0800 487363
Website: trendmachinery.co.uk



The T5 with side fence fitted, note micro-adjuster

when required, the side fence is both straightforward to fit and easy to adjust.

Changing cutters is simple enough; all that's needed is the spindle lock and the 17mm spanner for this elementary job, and there's plenty of room in there for even the largest hand.

Being a Trend machine it's obviously compatible with the vast majority of their kit, something which is worth considering if – like many of us – you're an accessories junkie.



Baseplate detail, note mounting points for guidebush



Once you've got the knack, it's easy to fit the extraction spout