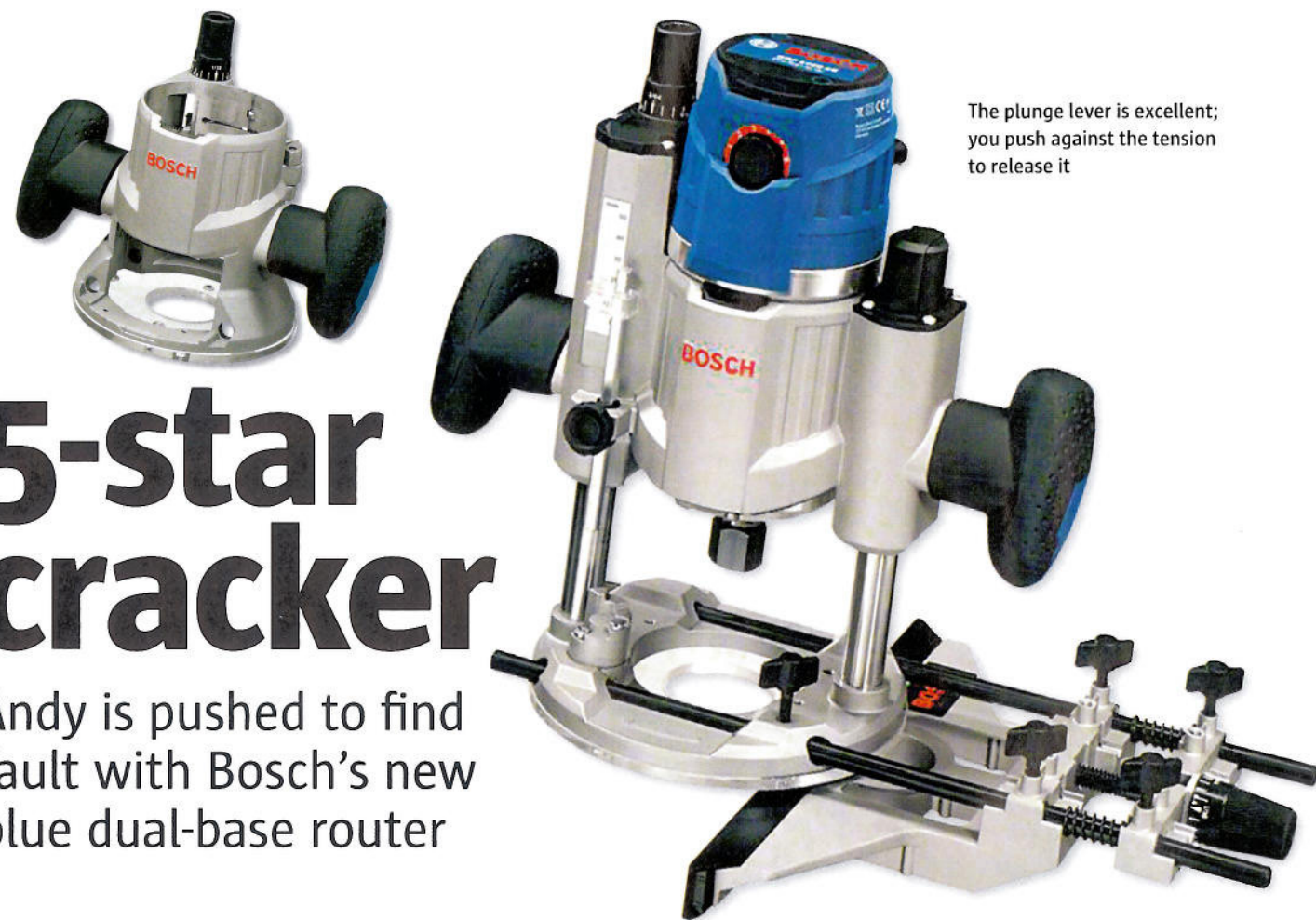


5-star cracker

Andy is pushed to find fault with Bosch's new blue dual-base router



The plunge lever is excellent; you push against the tension to release it

I was a great fan of Bosch's GMF1400 model but here we are around seven years later and to say the company has moved on in leaps and bounds with this latest model would be an understatement; it's an absolute cracker of a machine.

The biggest change is that both bases now have integral trigger-operated power switches with lock-on buttons, even though the body is still completely removable. This allows control of both the power and the plunge – in plunge-base mode – without having to take your hand away from one of the grips. This is the result of

integral contact points that link with the motor housing once it is fitted in place.

The motor body has an aluminium lower part that slides into each base, with a plastic top shell that houses the speed control dial. This has a range of 10,000-25,000rpm to cover the usual different types of material and bit diameters, although a chart within the router manual indicates a 40mm optimum diameter, which with a 1600W motor is probably prudent, so bigger-diameter panel raisers may be outside its remit unless you take it in smaller steps than you might on a bigger

motored model – something to consider if you do tend to work heavier cuts, in the router table especially.

It's certainly man enough for the hardcore bench work of the 1/2in router in general, and I've used it for rebating the bottom of a door to take the weather bar.

This is a thoroughly powerful beast that, unlike its predecessor, comes with a fence as standard.

Bit swaps are as you would expect, and the router comes with a 1/4in and 1/2in collet and nut assembly as standard.



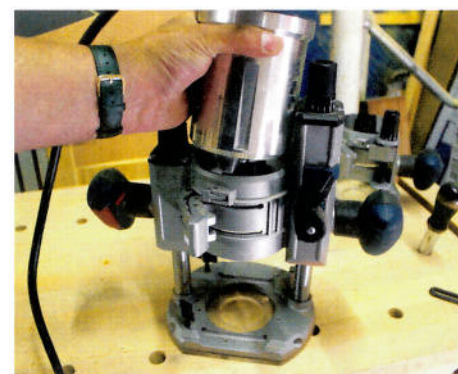
▲ The dual base allows the fixed base to remain in a table



▲ There's a through-the-base adjustment for inverted work



▲ You can also fine tune the cutting depth from above with this knob



▲ The motor slots into each base very quickly



▲ Bit swaps are done with the usual single spanner/spindle-lock configuration



▲ The guide-bush system allows bushes to be swapped in and out without tools



▲ You can fine-adjust the setting even after the plunge is locked



▲ Freehand work is good; although quite big the router is very controllable



▲ The 1400W motor is man enough for heavy-duty applications such as worktop joints

Bases basis

So the bases are what it's all about, and aside from the aforementioned trigger-operated power switching, there's a full gamut of adjustments with which to tweak the settings.

Both bases have basic height adjustment; the plunge base has the standard plunge lever to allow fast adjustment, self-tightened by pushing against a spring so it locks itself once released – an excellent feature.

The fixed base has a 3-step adjustment with notches in the motor housing locking into the base to give a rough position before fine-adjusting to the desired protrusion.

The finer adjustments on both bases are the same when adjusted from above with a large knob, with micro adjustments to make precise settings. A hex recess in both adjusters can be used with the adjustment knob to gain more control and alter the settings with ease.

For table work the fixed base comes into its own as it has a further option to adjust the height through the base, allowing any alterations to height to be made via a large key from above the table when it's inverted.

Both bases use identical toggle clamps so base switching is quick and smooth. The big advantage is that the fixed one can live in the table ready for use.

Also in the kit

Alongside the fast base swap, Bosch has included its equally quick and useful tool-free guide-bush system, with each bush locked in by a rotating collar on the base. This collar is

independent of the bases so can be fitted to either as needed and while the bushes are specialised to the Bosch system, they are really quick and of great benefit if you do template and jig work especially.

Each base also has its own dust kit fitting directly to the base with small thumb screws.

These, along with the scratch bases themselves are clear to help give good views to the working area, although static can still cause occasional dust build-ups.

An additional and very useful function is the LED lights around the collet that illuminate directly to the base area once the trigger is engaged.

Completing the kit is the fine-adjusting fence, lacking in the predecessor, so you now have an all-encompassing router that has power enough for heavier work and can easily be put into table mode in seconds while retaining the same ease of adjustment as the plunge base in hand-held mode.

It's certainly a winning combination in my book, and while the wattage is low in comparison to many workhorse routers out there, take a pass or two more than usual on bigger work and you have a router that does the biz with ease.

Conclusion

Bosch has certainly come up trumps with this particular router; it's exceptionally well thought out and covers pretty much every area of hand-held and inverted heavy-duty routing, and with the usual Bosch attention to detail, it's a great machine to use.



▲ The fine-adjusting fence is great for rebating work

The Woodworking Verdict

+ Interchangeable bases; fast-swap bushes; LEDs; excellent plunge lock
– May lose out to others because of lower-powered motor

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: £442.80

Made in Mexico

Motor: 1600W

Speeds: 10,000-25,000rpm

Collets supplied: 1/4in & 1/2in

Plunge: 76mm

Weight with plunge base: 5.8kg

Weight with fixed base: 4.3kg

Web: www.bosch.co.uk