

A router with two bases – one fixed and one plunging – sounds like the best of both worlds. Bosch first tried this with their GMF 1400 model some years ago. Now here comes another dual-base machine

Bosch GMF 1600 CE dual-base router

Compared with the old GMF 1400 model, 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 you will encounter, along with the usual Bosch attention to detail.

Power switches

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 is certainly a more intuitive way of using a router, allowing control of both the power and the plunge (in plunge-base mode) without having to take your hand off one of the grips. To achieve this, both bases have integral contact points that link with the motor housing once it is fitted in place.

Motor characteristics

The motor has an aluminium lower body that slides into each base, with a plastic top shell that houses the speed control dial. This has a range of speeds to cover the usual different materials and bit diameters. A chart within the manual indicates a 40mm optimum bit diameter, so bigger panel raisers may be outside its remit unless you work in smaller steps than you might take with a more powerful model.

It can certainly deliver the regular bench work of the 1/2in router. Using jigs for stair housings and worktop joints are a favoured area for such machines, as well as rebating the bottom of an external door for the weather bar.

Both bases use identical toggle-type clamps, so it's a quick

and smooth operation to switch between them. Bit swaps are standard fare via the usual collet lock button and single spanner, and the router comes with a 1/4in and 1/2in collet and nut assembly as standard.

A look at the bases

Both bases have basic height adjustment. The plunge base has the standard plunge lever to allow fast adjustment, and this is a self-tightening type; therefore you push against a spring so it locks itself once released – an excellent feature. The fixed base has a



The 1600W motor is man enough for most heavy-duty applications such as worktop routing

three-step adjustment, with notches in the motor housing locking into the base to give a rough position before fine adjustment to the desired projection.

The fine adjustment on both bases is done 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 more easily.

For table work the fixed base comes into its own, as it has a further option to adjust the height through the base. This allows any alterations to height to be made from above the table.

The guide bush system

Alongside the fast base swap, Bosch has included the equally quick and useful guide bush system. This is a tool-free operation, with each bush locked in by a rotating collar on the base. This collar is independent of the bases so it can be fitted to either as needed. The bushes are unique to the Bosch system, and are really quick and of great benefit if you do a lot of template and jig work.

More features

Each base has its own dust extraction kit, fitting directly to the base with small thumbscrews. 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.

The LED lights around the collet are an additional and very useful function, lighting up the base area once the trigger is engaged. Completing the kit is the fine adjusting fence, which was lacking in its predecessor.

Summing up

This is 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, and while the wattage is rather low in comparison to many workhorse routers, take a pass or two more than usual on bigger work and you still have a router that does any job with ease. **AK**

SPECIFICATION

MOTOR	1600W
NO-LOAD SPEED	10,000-25,000rpm
COLLETS SUPPLIED	1/4 and 1/2in
PLUNGE DEPTH	76mm
WEIGHT	fixed base 4.3kg plunge base 5.8kg

VERDICT

Bosch has certainly come up trumps with this router. It's a great machine to use.

- PROS**
- Interchangeable bases
 - Fast swap bushes
 - Excellent plunge lock
 - LED worklights

- CONS**
- May lose out to others because of lower powered motor

VALUE FOR MONEY

PERFORMANCE

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Bosch
- 01895 838743
- www.boschpowertools.co.uk



The fine adjusting fence that's supplied with this model is great for rebating work



The motor slots into each base very quickly and is locked in place by toggles



Bit swaps are done with the aid of the usual spanner/spindle lock combination



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



The guide bush system allows bushes to be swapped without tools



Separate dust adaptors and guards are supplied for each base



Although the router is quite large, it's very easy to use freehand