

CORDLESS, COMPACT & QUIET IN USE

A specialist product, this cordless router from Bosch is ideal for creating edge profiles or laminate trimming, although there's no option of a side-fence

Not so long ago a cordless router was little more than a pipe dream for woodworkers. Now there are three on the market, although this new tool from Bosch appears to be very different from the Ryobi R18TR (tested in GW324) and the Makita DRT50 (watch out for a test soon). Firstly, it's powered by 12V batteries, rather than 18V, and is altogether

smaller physically. It wouldn't have been a surprise if Bosch had simply revamped their superb GKF 600 mains-powered palm router, adding a power pack on top. But the GKF 12V-8 is a totally new beast and looks quite futuristic, if not a little ungainly.

Brushless Bosch

The router comes in a tough L-BOXX storage case, so if you have other Bosch power tools these can be stacked and locked together for transport. Included are two 3.0Ah Li-ion batteries and charger, with recharge time around 70 minutes.

You insert a battery into the top of the tool, with green LEDs illuminating for a few seconds on the plastic casing to indicate remaining capacity. The on/off slider switch is nicely recessed to reduce the chance of accidental activation, though like any power tool you should always remove the battery (or mains plug) first when changing a bit.

Fitted with a brushless motor, the single speed of 13,000rpm is considerably slower than a 240V router – even the cordless Ryobi runs at 29,000rpm. But for small bits this isn't a major problem, though the resulting finish



on timber is arguably coarser.

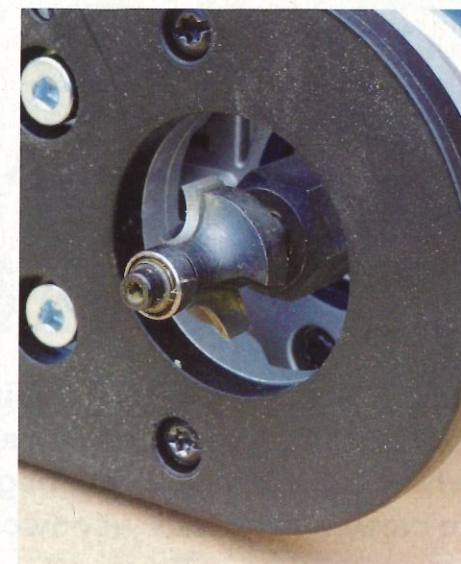
A 1/4in collet is provided, with 17mm locking nut above. You can fit both 6mm and 8mm collets, though these are not included. Fitting a bit is a cinch – you pull the red plastic collar (attached to a steel lever) outwards from the body to lock the spindle. Then insert the shank, tighten with the wrench provided and push the collar home again. Simple, fast and effective.

Plunge action

The alloy baseplate is a decent size, so there's less chance of the router tipping as you follow an edge. Neatly finished, there are two finger grips at the square end (well away from the cutter) for steadying the tool, if necessary. Screwed to the baseplate is a 7mm-thick dense plastic facing, which prevents damage to vulnerable surfaces when



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There's no detachable base here, though the built-in plunge action is straightforward enough. With maximum plunge of 26mm, you can set cutter depth approximately by depressing a large side button. This frees up a pair of spring-loaded steel columns, which are attached to the base. One column is threaded and incorporates a fine adjuster collar at the bottom. A full rotation equals 1mm of travel, up or down. Around the other side of the tool is a thumbwheel for locking the selected depth.

Unfortunately there's no side-fence, which means you're restricted to either using bearing-guided bits, or running the tool against a guide clamp or batten. Parallel edges to the base means that although this works OK, it's a bit of a faff when you need to run a groove away from an edge.

Ergonomics

Bosch are renowned for designing ergonomic power tools, and they've gone to town

here, with balance and control exceptional. Designed to be held halfway down the tool, your hand naturally rests on the rubber-shrouded ledge, thumb and fingers wrapping around the body. Once you get used to it, the grip feels pretty comfortable and safe. Overall weight with battery fitted is 1.29kg.

Conclusion

If the whine of a 240V router puts you off, you'll probably welcome this tool. It's beautifully quiet in use, although there's no means of hooking up a vacuum extractor. To give some idea of performance, I managed to rout 10m of softwood with a bearing-guided ogee bit with a fully-charged battery.

Unlike the Ryobi router (and possibly the new Makita), this little Bosch is quite a specialist product. For creating edge profiles or laminate trimming it's a good tool, though remember there's no side-fence. With that in mind, it's unlikely to replace a mains router in most workshops. You can buy the router bare for less than £140 if you have compatible Bosch batteries. **GW**

SPECIFICATION:

- ▶ **Battery voltage:** 12V
- ▶ **Collets supplied:** 1/4in
- ▶ **Speed:** 13,000rpm
- ▶ **Weight:** 1.1kg (without battery)

▶ **Typical price:** £287 (inc VAT)

▶ **Web:** www.bosch-pt.com

THE GW VERDICT

PROS:

Compact; very quiet; simple spindle lock; supplied with L-BOXX, two 3.0Ah batteries and charger

CONS:

No side-fence or extractor port; low single speed

▶ **RATING:** 4 out of 5



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