

New Tools From the Builders' Show

by Dave Crosby

Once a year, we cruise the aisles of NAHB's International Builders' Show — along with 70,000 other trade professionals — to see what we can find that's new and noteworthy. Here are some highlights from the tools unveiled at the show.

Compound MiterSaws

Porter-Cable introduced the Model 3802 12-inch Compound Miter Saw and the Model 3807 10-inch Sliding Compound Miter Saw. Expected to sell for \$380 and \$529 respectively, these saws show significant improvements over the Delta models they are based upon. Both saws have redesigned cast metal feet (instead of plastic) with a wider stance and more knuckle room plus a top-mount carry handle, a Riptide blade, and a riveted metal bevel

scale. The Model 3802 also features a cam-lock miter adjustment handle, which is comfortable, fast, and appears to work well.

Contact: Porter-Cable, P.O. Box 2468, Jackson, TN 38302; 901/668-8600; www.porter-cable.com.

New Finish Nailer

Of the new tools Stanley-Bostitch brought to the show, the N62FNK 15-gauge Oil-Free Finish Nailer got my attention. According to the manufacturer, at 3.8 pounds this is the lightest 2½-inch angled finish nailer in the industry and provides a 33% increase in power over the existing N60FN nailer. The weight loss is achieved with a magnesium housing, a high impact composite magazine, and 16 fewer parts than the previous model.



The new Model 3807 Sliding Compound Miter Saw (left) and Model 3802 Compound Miter Saw (right) both show significant improvements over the earlier Delta designs they are based upon.

For easy cleaning and clearing of jams, the magazine can be partially or fully removed in seconds without tools. The adjustable exhaust is also tool-free, as is the “dial-a-depth” drive adjustment. This tool comes with a sequential trip trigger installed and a contact trip trigger along with 1,000 2-inch nails in a plastic case. The trigger conversion takes less than two minutes with a screwdriver. Also included is a no-mar tip plus a spare tip which stores on the side of the magazine.

The durability of the composite magazine is the first thing everyone asks about. The nails run in a stainless-steel track which the manufacturer says handled over a million nails in testing without failure. I ran several hundred nails through the gun and then broke two sticks of nails into small pieces to see how the feed track would handle them. They all ran through the gun without a problem. The manufacturer’s test criteria for this tool included hundreds of drops, over a thousand impacts, and dragging it nearly one and a half miles across plywood. For my own non-scientific evaluation, I took the magazine off, put it on the sidewalk, and jumped on it half a dozen times with both feet. I put the magazine back onto the gun, and it worked fine. Of course, curiosity did prevail. After I was done with the review, I had to find out how tough this magazine really was. I removed it from the tool and stomped it far worse than a finish nailer would ever be treated, even by accident, unless maybe if you ran it over with your truck. Eventually the magazine follower broke, but the magazine was still completely intact. With a little thumb pressure on the nails to make up for the missing follower, the gun fired perfectly. I would say it’s plenty tough enough for normal use and then some.

Wondering what the claim of “400 inch-pounds of driving power at 100 psi” meant in practical terms, I tried this tool out with 2-inch fasteners on a variety of materials. Shooting 1/2-inch

thick base molding to Douglas fir or hem-fir framing lumber was of course not a problem, and the depth control gave predictable results. Encouraged by this, I tried shooting together two pieces of 5/4 walnut. No problem there either; likewise for red and white oak. At 100 psi, the nails were set about 1/16 to 3/32 inch into the oak. The tool will handle up to 120 psi, so this task

seemed to be well within the tool’s ability.

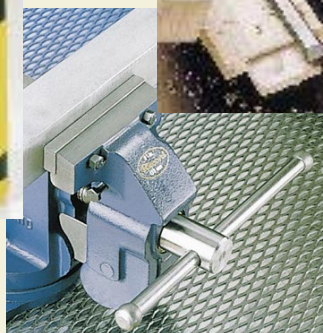
During a demonstration at the show, someone was fastening wood to a CMU with this tool. Although I’m not sure this is recommended practice, the tool looked like it was doing fine. I tried this with base molding on a 4-inch solid concrete block and the nails stood about 1/8-inch proud at 100 psi. I wasn’t

TOOLBITS

English Imports

Record vises and Marples chisels, both English-made lines, will now be widely available in the USA. You can now also get Jet-Black chalk for your chalk line, too. This latest addition from Strait-Line is said to be permanent and more visible than other colors on certain surfaces.

Contact: American Tool, 701 Woodlands Pkwy., Vernon Hills, IL 60061; 847/478-1090; www.american-tool.com.



Pipe Joiner

Two 12-foot lengths of quarter-inch chain plus an extendable handle on the PJ414 Multi-Purpose Pipe Joiner provides a straightforward approach to joining medium and large gasketed pipe fittings including PVC, ductile iron, clay tile, cast iron, and concrete up to 14 inches in diameter. About \$150 at your contractor supply store.

Contact: Reed Manufacturing, P.O. Box 1321, Erie, PA 16512; 800/666-3691; www.reedmfgco.com.



Toolbox With Loading Ramp

With over 57 cubic feet of storage, the six-foot-wide Model 91 Storgemaster has all of the usual features you’d expect from Knaak, plus a built-in 12-gauge steel reinforced ramp for loading large tools or equipment on casters. It’s a beautiful thing.

Contact: Knaak Manufacturing, 420 E. Terra Cotta Ave., Crystal Lake, IL 60014; 800/456-7865; www.knaak.com.



The new Bostitch N62FNK is light and powerful, and has a removable magazine that allows you to clear jams in seconds.

This mangled nail jammed entirely inside the N62FNK, yet fell out easily when the magazine was released — no tools required.



The SteelSite line from Ryobi includes the Metal Hole Punch and the 14-inch Metal Cutoff Machine.



too worried about it since I don't expect to be nailing much trim into concrete any time soon.

I was most interested in trying out the new jam-clearing feature. I figured that if I fired enough nails into one place the gun would have to jam eventually. When it finally jammed after a couple hundred rounds, the nail had four distinct bends in it (see photo, above) and was still well inside the tool. All too often a serious jam means a serious lapse in productivity. In this case, I released the magazine, the mangled nail fell out, the gun went back together in seconds, and it continued to work just fine.

At first glance, this finish nailer looks like a winner. It's light, comfortable, handles well, has plenty of power, and appears to be durably constructed. The provision for clearing jams is excellent. Time will tell how this tool holds up over the long haul. We'll put it out into the field and keep you posted. Suggested retail price is \$399.

Contact: Stanley Fastening Systems, Rt. 2 Briggs Dr., E. Greenwich, CT 02818; 800/782-6539; www.stanley-works.com.

Steel Stud Tools

New from Ryobi is the SteelSite line of steel-stud framing tools, including the 14-inch C2600 Cutoff Machine at \$199, the SGL1150 4¹/₂-inch Angle Grinder at \$69, cordless drill/drivers in 12-, 14.4-, or 18-volt models with single-sleeve keyless chucks, and a Cordless Metal Hole Punch slated for release later this year.

The Cutoff Machine features a new extended cast iron base and tool-less fence adjustment for cutting through pipe up to 5 inches in diameter or tubular steel and 2x6 steel studs at angles up to 45 degrees. The 14.4-volt Hole Punch makes either 1¹¹/₃₂-inch or 7/8-inch holes in studs up to 18 gauge and is expected to make about 500 holes on a single charge.

Contact: Ryobi America, 1424 Pearman Dairy Rd., Anderson, SC 29625; 800/525-2579; www.ryobi.com.

