◗ Toolbox

New Compound Miter Saw from DeWalt
by Gary Katz

I have been considering replacing our job-site workhorse, my Hitachi 15-inch chop saw, for a while now. After some checking around, I decided the DeWalt 706 might be a good candidate. I put the 706 through its paces, and I'm sold.

Our crews have been using the Hitachi 15-inch for more than 15 years. It has been a staple on our job sites and excelled in durability and capacity. As production trim carpenters, we prefer to cut all our baseboard and crown molding standing up because it saves time and effort and increases profitability. We need equipment that will hold up to abusive conditions. The Hitachi has always met our requirements, though at more than 50 pounds, it's a little heavy.

The DW 706 weighs in at around 40 pounds, which is one of the reasons I wanted to try it. Sure, less weight usually means less durability, but at my age, I'm worried about my own durability. This saw is light enough that I can lift it onto my stand with one hand.

Pros and Cons

As with any tool, the DW 706 has some features I like and some I don't. For example, the blade change is a little rough; to remove the blade, you have to force it against the blade guard. I know it comes out, because I changed the blade right after using it. The 60-tooth DeWalt blade that came with the saw screamed too loud and didn't cut smoothly. Both the cutting action and the finished cut were rough. But equipped with a different blade, the DeWalt cut as well as my favorite Makita 1211 slide saw.

The DeWalt is equipped with a nice on-board torx-head wrench, which fits everything you will ever need to adjust or remove. The sliding fence works smoothly in both directions, so switching between compound bevel cuts and straight miters is fast and easy. I wish my sliding saw had such a well-designed fence (see Figure 1).

The 706 has eleven positive stops, but the steel pin-and-plate detent system allows total sensitivity for dialing

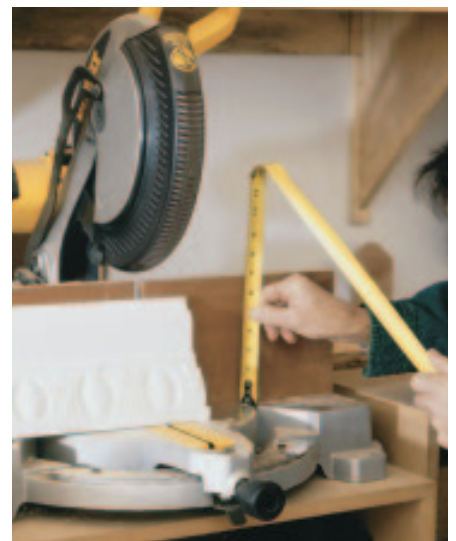**Figure 1.** The well-engineered fence allows fast and easy changes from bevel to straight miters.

Figure 2. The DW 706 will cut 7-inch stock with an auxiliary fence and a little push on the guard.

in special cuts. The miter gauge and the bevel gauge are both extremely visible, and the blade guard allows good visibility of the blade, too. The guard travels smoothly but seems a little

Figure 3. The DW 706 will bevel left and right but still has greater capacity against the fence.

flimsy, and I wonder about its long-term durability.

Another thing I like about this new saw is that it's quiet. I felt comfortable using it without hearing protection — something I'd never attempt with other miter saws. Part of the reason it scores lower on the decibel scale is the rear belt drive. I thought the belt drive would also mean a soft start, but this saw jumps a little at the starting gate. It has a 15-amp motor and turns at 4,000 rpm, which makes for ample power.

Great Cutting Capacity

I've saved the best part for last: DeWalt advertises the 706 as capable of cutting 6 inches vertically, but I've measured it at $6^1/2$ inches. With a $3/4$-inch auxiliary fence, it will cut 7 inches standing up (Figure 2, previous page). The guard needs a little push for this size stock, but the saw cuts like a

champ. Few of us ever run into crown molding that this saw will not cut in position. If you do, remember that the DW 706 is a double-bevel compound miter saw, so you could always cut the stock on the flat with two passes (Figure 3). However, I've found that this saw has greater crown-cutting capacity with the material standing up than with it lying flat. When it's lying flat, the saw can cut about 8 inches at 90 degrees or $5^3/4$ inches at 45 degrees. The guard hangs up a little when cutting deep-profile or cove-type crown lying flat.

All in all, this saw is a good tool, and I think most builders would be satisfied with its features, performance, and capacity. ◢

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