

Bosch 1590 EVS Jigsaw

by Chas Bridge

When *JLC* asked me if I wanted to review the Bosch 1590 EVS jigsaw, I thought this would be a great opportunity to upgrade my 20-year-old basic-model jigsaw.

It had been a while since I'd looked at jigsaws, so when I pulled this one out of the case I was surprised by how heavy it felt and by the number of switches, slides, and dials. It seemed like there were far too many bells and whistles. After reading the manual, however, I realized I could have used each of these features at one time or another during the life of my last saw.

I'm strictly a finish carpenter, so I can't vouch for how this tool would work for someone in another trade. But as far as finish carpentry goes, the 1590 EVS did everything I asked of it — and it never even broke a sweat.

Power and Control

First and foremost, this saw runs smoothly and has plenty of power. It's hard to slow this beast down. With other jigsaws, I've often gotten into trouble making tight radius cuts: the blade binds, the saw jumps, and the blade gets bent. Bosch's saw has enough power to cut its way out of most of these situations. It cut $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood, double layers of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch lumber with equal ease. In the past I would use two saws for sink cut-outs: a circular saw for the straights and a jigsaw for the corners. The 1590 EVS cuts so fast that I stopped reaching for my circular saw; I now use a jigsaw for the entire cut.

One feature I really appreciate is the "precision control" blade guide: little clamps that limit lateral deflection by holding the sides of the blade (see Figure 1). This feature makes it easier to make accurate cuts because the blade is less likely to take off in its own direc-



tion. I'm almost embarrassed to admit that I wouldn't want to give up the two-finger trigger that comes on this saw. It's longer and wider than the triggers I'm used to, so it's very comfortable to use. The trigger is also lockable with either the left or right hand.

Shoe

The saw is very stable because the shoe has a full 3 inches of contact. Many saws have stamped steel plates with rolled edges, but this one has square edges and is made from a combination of aluminum and steel. The 1590 EVS comes with a non-marring plastic overshoe that slips over the plate. This could be handy for cutting finished materials, but I worry more about grit getting between the work and the shoe than about the roughness of the shoe itself. If I'm cutting painted or lacquered surfaces, I mask the surface, not the shoe.

One thing I didn't like about this saw

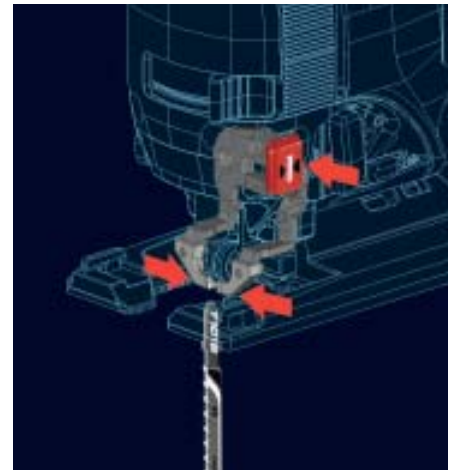


Figure 1. The blade guides pop open when you remove the blade. Pressing the red button on the left side of the housing re-engages them.

is that it's not compatible with the Collins Coping Foot (Collins Tool Company, 888/838-8988, www.collinstool.com). I install a lot of crown, and the coping foot allows me to cut the copes with a jigsaw instead of by hand. The coping foot fits older Bosch saws, but the precision-control blade guides keep it from fitting this one. The foot-plate on the 1590 EVS is so wide that it's nearly impossible to use it to cope crown. Collins Tool told *JLC* that they were still deciding whether to produce a coping foot for the new Bosch saw.

Other Features

On the back of this saw is a variable-speed dial that can be used to limit the number of strokes per minute. I never used this feature. Instead, I left the saw on the highest setting and control speed with the trigger. The dial might come in handy if you cut a lot of metal because you can set the saw to max out at a lower number of strokes per minute.

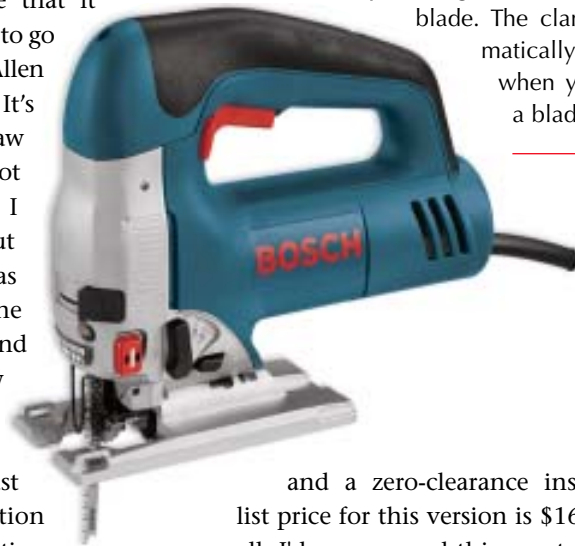
This saw is equipped with a toolless

blade clamp and a toolless bevel adjustment. The toolless mechanisms are so natural and intuitive that it would be hard for me to go back to using an Allen wrench (Figure 2). It's great to grab the saw and know you've got everything you need. I once had to make a cut close to a wall and was able to remove the base, make the cut, and reassemble the saw with no tools.

The 1590 EVS also has a switchable dust blower, a four-position control for orbital action, and a 12¹/₂-foot professional-grade cord. The motor is rated at 6.4 amps and has speeds from 500 to 2800 strokes per minute. The saw weighs 6 pounds.

I tested the kit version of this tool, which comes with a sturdy plastic case, three blades, a no-mar plastic footpad,

Figure 2. The black lever on the front of the housing activates the blade clamp. Pulling the lever ejects the blade. The clamp automatically engages when you insert a blade.



and a zero-clearance insert. The list price for this version is \$169. All in all, I'd recommend this saw to anyone who does a lot jigsaw work and needs a first class tool. According to the manufacturer, a barrel grip version of this tool will be available later this year.

Chas Bridge is a finish carpenter in Sequim, Wash.

Wrench-Free Blade Changes: Porter-Cable's 324MAG Circular Saw

by Gary Godbersen

I recently had a chance to try out one of the latest additions to Porter-Cable's line of circular saws: the 324MAG, introduced this past March.



This is one of four new saws (two blade-left and two blade-right) that include a toolless blade-changing system. Instead of the standard bolt or nut that's tightened with a wrench, it uses a hand-tightened bolt with a retracting lever for better grip (see Figure 1, next page). The back side of this lever-bolt has a serrated face that meshes to a serrated washer on the front side of the blade. As the bolt is tightened, you can actually feel the washer and blade pull tight to the arbor. The system also includes an arbor lock on the top of the saw.

The toolless blade system definitely makes changes faster, and I never had an occasion when the blade loos-

ened. My first thought when I slid the retractable lever away from its resting spot was that it was not long enough to easily remove the blade — others thought the same when they looked at the saw for the first time. But I was able to remove the bolt quite easily. This is due to what I can only call a ratcheting action. It works and feels similar to the clicking you get when you tighten a drill bit in the newer "ratcheting" keyless chucks. The arbor lock is easily accessible compared to those on other circular saws I've used.

The other notable new feature on this saw is the dust nozzle located at the front of the blade guard. Porter-Cable always had a similar arrangement with a removable elbow, but now



Figure 1. Porter-Cable's new toolless blade-changing system uses a knurled bolt and washer to keep the blade secure. A small lever (left) slides out to provide a grip and additional leverage. The design also puts the arbor lock on top of the saw (right) where it's easy to see and reach.



the nozzle stays on the saw. It rotates a little more than half a turn, so you can aim the dust toward the rear, the front, or to the side, which helps keep it out of your face when you're cutting door or window openings on standing walls (Figure 2). Alternately, the 1-inch nozzle can be attached to a vacuum or dust-collection system to keep the workspace clean.

The Verdict

In general, this saw performs well, and I found it easy to use. The 15-amp motor provides plenty of power for engineered and pressure-treated lumber. At 9.6 pounds, the saw is noticeably lighter than others in its class. The reinforced magnesium shoe is nicely suited for ripping against a guide because the perimeter is 1/4 inch thick, providing a beefier edge than thinner aluminum versions. The blade also tilts to 50 degrees and has a positive stop at 45 degrees. The molded rear handle has a cushioned insert that provides a nice nonslip surface when your hands are sweaty. The only aspects of the saw I didn't like were the uncomfortable forward grip and the cheap-feeling plastic levers for adjusting blade depth and bevel.



Figure 2. Unlike the removable dust nozzles on previous Porter-Cable sidewinders, the MAG series dust nozzle stores on the saw where it connects the front and back of the blade guard. It can be rotated about a half turn for directing dust away from your face or for use with a dust-collecting vacuum.

The blade-changing system on the 324MAG makes this well-designed circular saw stand out. If you're in the market for a new sidewinder or are tired of hunting for that elusive blade wrench, I recommend taking a look. The 325MAG (blade-right) and 424MAG (blade-left)

include a brake and sell for \$149. The 324MAG (blade-right) that I tested and the 423MAG (blade-left) have no brake and sell for about \$20 less.

Gary Godbersen is a carpenter and woodworker in Northern Vermont.

CONCRETE TOOLS

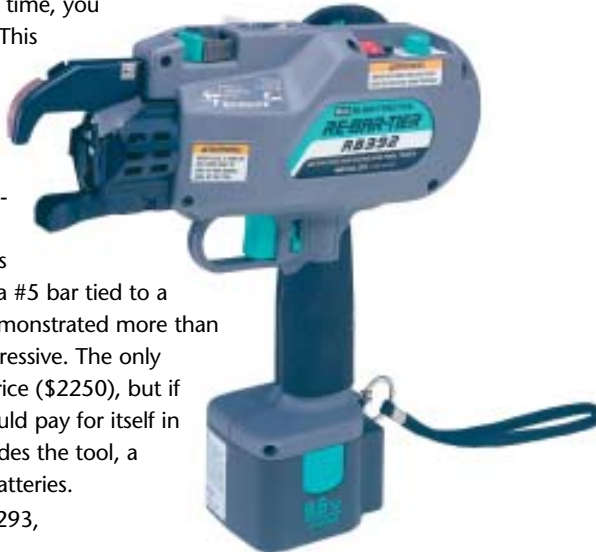
Wide Format. If you're hoping to pick up the pace on your next slab pour, you shouldn't be without one of these little gems. The *Hog* line of magnesium floats are 3³/₄ inches wide, making them about 1/2 inch wider than many mag floats. According to the manufacturer, the new floats not only cover more ground but they also last longer. Available in lengths of 12 to 24 inches, they're available with either wood or cushioned DuraSoft handles. The company says they're ideally suited for working with air-entrained concrete. Prices start at \$18 for a 12-inch model with a wood handle.

Marshalltown, 641/753-0127, www.marshalltown.com.



Tie One On. If tying rebar all day isn't your idea of a good time, you might try a *Max RB392*. This 3¹/₂-pound cordless tool will tie together two pieces of bar in less than one second. It uses three wraps of 21-gauge wire for increased strength. It can make ties from two #3 bars up to a #5 bar tied to a #6. I've seen the tool demonstrated more than once, and it's pretty impressive. The only obstacle might be the price (\$2250), but if you use it enough it should pay for itself in time saved. The kit includes the tool, a case, and two 9.6-volt batteries.

Max USA, 800/223-4293, www.maxusacorp.com.



Bag Blender. Mixing one or two bags of concrete or mortar mix is no big deal, but if your job calls for a steady diet of bagged concrete, you might look to a portable mixer like the *PortoMix* from Stow. With a capacity of up to 3 cubic feet, the mini mixer can make pouring post footings or small slabs a lot easier. It uses a Baldor 3/4-horsepower electric motor and has a rust-free polyethylene drum. According to the manufacturer, the 138-pound mixer will fit in a car trunk. It sells for \$645.

Stow, 877/289-7869, www.stowmfg.com.

Not the Same Old Grind. Concrete grinders are often huge walk-behind machines. But for smaller projects, the *Bosch 1773AK* surfacing grinder might be a better choice. The hand-held machine uses a 5-inch diamond cup wheel and features what the maker claims is the "most comprehensive dust-removal system available." The motor spins at 11,000 rpm and has a "Service Minder" light that alerts users when it's time for maintenance. It also features a sealed switch and epoxy-coated windings for better protection from dirt and grit. It looks like the perfect tool for cleaning up formwork ooze. I found it on the web for about \$370.

Bosch, 877/267-2499, www.boschtools.com.



SPECIALTY NAILERS

Vinyl-Bead Stapler. Trimtex vinyl corner bead has proved its value to many builders and remodelers who appreciate the product's unique profiles and durability. The only drawback I can find is the expensive spray adhesive commonly used to attach it. An alternative is a specialty stapler like the *5020 pneumatic stapler* by Duo-Fast. It uses divergent 1/2-inch crown staples and has a suggested retail price of \$160. The company also offers an electric stapler if you don't want to lug around a compressor.

Duo-Fast, 888/386-3278, www.duofast.com.



Fun Gun. Looking a lot like a laser gun from a sci-fi movie, the *Makita AG125* uses repetitive blows like a palm nailer to shoot individual bulk nails from 3 to 4⁷/₈ inches. While it won't fit in extremely tight spaces like a palm nailer, the larger frame and cushioned grip make it more comfortable for all-day use. It features adjustable depth of drive and a belt hook that can be mounted on either side of the tool. The street price is about \$325.

Makita, 800/462-5482, www.makitatools.com.

Heavy Hitter. Sometimes bigger is better. If you're looking for a nailer that can shoot longer nails for timber construction, dock building, or other heavy-duty applications, check out the *D160* from Quicknail. This monster will shoot up to 6³/₈-inch nails in softwood and up to 5¹/₈-inch nails in hardwood. Nail diameters range from .138 to .168 inches



and are available in screw-shank and hot-dipped galvanized varieties.

The manufacturer will also make custom nails for specialty applications in 32-box quantities. According to

the maker, the 13¹/₂-pound nailer can be used one-handed — you might want to start training before you get one. It sells for \$1100.

Quicknail, 888/624-5486, www.1888nailgun.com.

Tar-Paper Stapler. About two years ago, my wife decided she wanted to tackle some upholstery projects. Figuring there's no bad reason to buy a pneumatic tool, I got her a *US58 Upholstery Stapler* from Porter-Cable. After the sofa was done, I decided to try it for stapling 30-pound felt during a siding project. In a word, it's perfect. After struggling for years with hammer tackers that jam and don't drive staples adequately, the fast and lightweight stapler proved a joy to use. It never jams or leaves staples proud. And because you already have air supplied to a siding or roofing nailer, it doesn't require any additional setup. I'm sure it would work equally well for installing staple-up fiberglass. It uses Senco "C"-type 22-gauge, 5/8-inch crown staples available in lengths from 3/8 to 5/8 inch. I bought it reconditioned for about \$65. Now I just have to get that tar off the nosepiece.

Porter-Cable, 800/487-8665, www.porter-cable.com.



SPECIALTY NAILERS

Rock Runner. I think anything that promises to make hanging drywall faster and easier deserves a serious look. Although it looks a lot like a siding or roofing gun, *Max's CN351R-ST* is a coil drywall nailer. The single-purpose nailer has adjustable depth-of-drive and a special nosepiece to keep nails straight so they won't tear through the face paper. It has a 200-nail magazine and drives 1¹/₄-, 1³/₈-, and 1⁵/₈-inch plastic-collated, ring-shank nails. I found it on the web for \$480.

Max USA, 800/223-4293, www.maxusacorp.com.

Slim Pin for Trim. Ask any finish carpenter who's recently purchased a micropinner like the *FinishPro10* from Senco, and I think they'll tell you it's changed their life. What's so great about these tools is that the 23-gauge fasteners don't have a head and the resulting hole is so small you don't have to fill it, even with stain-grade work. They're perfect for built-up moldings and cabinet work. One carpenter I know uses it to tack drawer fronts from the front side after the boxes are installed. Once the front is in place, he runs in some screws from the back for permanent attachment. This method gives him perfect alignment and reveals without time-consuming drawer-slide adjustments. Senco's *FinishPro 10* has a 110-pin magazine and drives fasteners in 1/2-, 5/8-, 3/4-, and 1-inch sizes. The kit includes a case and repair tools; it sells for about \$130.

Senco, 800/543-4596, www.senco.com.

