Toolbox

Hilti WSC 267-E Circular Saw

by David Frane

Late last year, Hilti introduced its first circular saw, the WSC 267-E. This 7¼-inch model has some unusual features, so I was eager to try it out. Right off the bat, I was struck by the saw's shape and configuration. The tool has an in-line motor but is proportioned and balanced like a sidewinder.

The in-line gearing allows it to produce high torque at low rpm. Like most in-line models, the Hilti is narrow from side to side — but it's also short from front to back, making it far less nose-heavy than other in-line saws. Not counting the cord, this tool weighs 10 pounds, which means it's slightly heavier than a sidewinder but significantly lighter than the average 14-pound in-line model.

Guide Rail

The most unusual feature of the WSC 267-E is an accessory, the WGS 1400-2 Guiding Rail. This aluminum straightedge fastens to the work with screw clamps that fit into a slot on the bottom side of the extrusion. A ridge on the upper side of the extrusion fits into a slot in the bottom of the saw base and guides it along the rail. There is no slop in the fit, so the cut can be very clean and straight.

Fast setup. The blade does not quite touch the edge of the rail — it just kisses the edge of a rubber strip glued to the bottom of the extrusion. This makes it much easier to use the fence because you can lay the rubber edge against the cut line and know that's where the blade will be. There is no need to measure some distance off the cut line and clamp the fence there. The guide rail, which is 55 inches long, makes this saw an excellent tool for crosscutting sheet goods and trimming door bottoms. Not only do you get a straight cut, but the rubber strip prevents the blade from splintering the side of the work that's against the fence.

A familiar design. If the fence setup sounds familiar, that's because it is. Festool pioneered this design, and Hilti uses the same extrusion as Festool. I know, because I tried Festool's saw on Hilti's fence and Hilti's saw on Festool's fence. The only difference is that the Hilti fence is notched at one end to accommodate a conventional blade guard. This allows you to set the saw on the end of the fence with the blade guard down. Festool's saw does not have a guard, because it plunges down like a router to start the cut. This works fine when you use a fence, but it means the saw can't be used for freehand cutting. In this regard, Hilti's saw is more versatile than Festool's because it works both on the rail and freehand.

Cutting

The Hilti's blade is on the right, just as the blade on a sidewinder would be. I cut left-handed, so the cut-line indicator on the base is very easy for

Hilti WSC 267-E Specs

Amps: 13.5

Weight: 10 pounds

Spindle speed under load: 1,900–3,900 rpm

Maximum cutting depth at 0 degrees: 2⅝ inches

Maximum cutting depth at 45 degrees: 2 inches

Blade size: 7¼ inches

Street price for kit: $439

Hilti Corp.
800/879-8000
www.us.hilti.com

me to see. But if you cut right-handed, you need to lean out over the saw to see if the indicator is hitting the line. The saw tilts 0 to 45 degrees and will cut up to 2⅝ inches deep at 90 degrees, and up to 2 inches deep at 45 degrees.

The motor on this saw draws 13.5 amps and with no load has a top speed of 4,300 rpm. These numbers are pretty close to what you see for other in-line models. What's different is that the saw takes a second to come up to speed — not because it's weak but because it has an electronic control that soft-starts the motor. This makes for smoother starting (less torquing) and reduces the likelihood that you will blow a breaker. According to the manufacturer, the control maintains constant speed by matching the electrical input to the cutting load.

The tool is also equipped with a variable-speed dial. I can understand this feature on a jigsaw, but I can't see why a carpenter would want to use a circular saw at anything but top speed.

Power. This saw exhibited good power when cutting sheet goods and crosscutting 2-by material. But when I ripped framing lumber, it did not feel quite as powerful as the DeWalt in-line saw I normally use. The WSC 267-E is not particularly loud, but the gears do make more noise than the gears on other in-line models.

Features

The Hilti is well-balanced and the rubberized grip is comfortable to grasp. There is a safety button just above the grip; you have to press it with your thumb to activate the motor. Normally, I don't like this kind of thing, but since the button is conveniently placed, using it is not a hardship.

The blade is covered by a sheet-metal guard that you can retract by pulling a lever near the top of the housing. The guard will retract on its own and does not tend to stick, even when making small trimming cuts. Chips exhaust through an adjustable port at the rear of the saw. You can direct the chips by twisting the port, or you can remove the port and connect the saw to a vacuum. This arrangement is not 100 percent efficient, but it will collect the vast majority of the sawdust.

From the blade side, the Hilti saw looks like a sidewinder. In this photo (top) the author uses it with an optional guiding rail to crosscut a sheet of melamine. Viewed from the opposite side (above), it's clear that the saw is an in-line model.

Other features include a ribbed magnesium base, an arbor lock for changing the blade, and a bevel mechanism that requires you to lock and unlock two different levers to tilt the blade. I like the first two features but would prefer to use a single-bevel lock. The heavy rubber cord is 16 feet long, which is convenient when you are doing trim or working in a shop and do not want to use yet another extension cord.

Pros and Cons

The WSC 267-E would be a good saw for a finish carpenter who does occasional light framing. I could not see using it for heavy framing, because it lacks a rafter hook. Also, with a retail price of $299, it isn't the kind of tool you want to see falling off the roof. It's less powerful than other in-line saws, and for roof cutting you want a model that tilts more than 45 degrees.

The best thing about this saw is the edge guide. Without it, I wouldn't want the saw. The guide enables you to make clean cuts in melamine and finish plywood; guideless, you can use the saw freehand like any other saw.

The Hilti would not be my first choice for cabinetmaking. For that I would want Festool's saw, because it's quieter and runs more smoothly. But if there were some reason I needed to use the same saw for everything, I'd consider buying the Hilti.

The kit version of this tool costs $439 and includes a saw, a case, a 55-inch guiding rail, two clamps, and two blades.

Lock, Stock, and Barrel.

If you've ever spent an hour prepping a door slab for a lockset, or, worse, bored a hole in the wrong location, you'll appreciate the Porter-Cable *511* cylindrical lockset installation kit. It includes a boring jig, bits, and all the tools necessary for drilling and mortising cylindrical locksets. Suitable for both $2\frac{3}{8}$- and $2\frac{3}{4}$-inch backsets, it works with doors from $1\frac{5}{16}$ to $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches thick. You can find it on the Web for about $170.

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

Hold the Door.

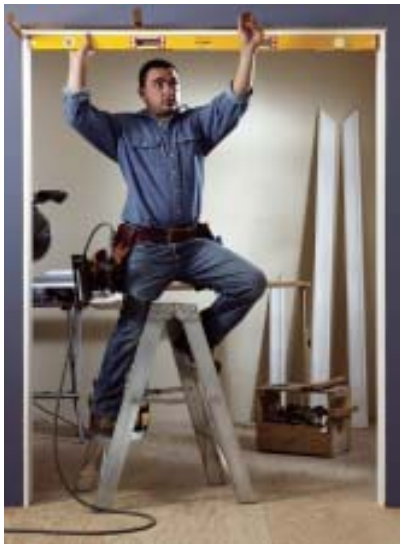
Made from Baltic birch plywood and select maple, the Templaco *Door Holder* is described by the maker as "the tool you would make if you had the time." Unlike metal versions from other manufacturers, this door holder is so sturdy you need only one — plus it's less likely to damage the door, says Templaco. It sells for about $60.

Templaco, 800/578-9677, www.templaco.com.

Levelheaded.

Many door hangers are already familiar with Stabila's *Jamber Set* (left), which consists of a 78-inch and a 32-inch level packaged together for hanging doors ($160). Recently, the company introduced another level designed for door hangers, the 59-inch *model 37459* (right). This device is perfect for leveling the head jambs on double-door setups, and it has the same attributes that have made Stabilas professional favorites — including acrylic block vials, sturdy aluminum frames, and nonmarring rubber end caps. It costs about $75.

Stabila, 800/869-7460, www.stabila. com.



Diesel Power. In addition to anecdotal evidence that diesel engines can boost your confidence and virility, these motors get better mileage and last longer than their gas counterparts. So it's not surprising that diesel engines are starting to show up on portable generators. Rated at 5,000 watts with another 1,000 in reserve, the diesel-powered Master *MGY5000C* has plenty of juice for even the most power-hungry job site. Powered by a Yanmar 9-hp, overhead-valve engine, the MGY5000C will run for more than eight hours on a single 4.2-gallon tankload. It costs about $4,250.

Desa, 866/672-6039, www.desamasterheater.com.

Quiet Down. Listening to a generator all day can get old fast. Not only is the noise grating for you and your crew — the constant drone won't win you any friends among the neighbors, either. Yamaha's *YG4000D* could be a solution to this problem. At 69 decibels, it's among the quietest commercial-quality generators available, says the company. It produces a maximum of 4,000 watts and features a low-oil warning system, a cast-iron cylinder liner, auto idle, and an 11-hour run time on a full tank. It weighs 132 pounds and has a suggested retail price of $2,100.

Yamaha, 800/962-7926, www.yamaha-motor.com.

Going Mobile. Most domestic trucks have a PTO (power take off) port already built into their transmission, or it's offered as a $250 option. Generally, the PTO port is used for running hydraulic pumps for dump bodies, cherry pickers, and the like, but one company is using this feature to run AC generators. Mounted under the cab, the *RealPower Generator* produces an astounding 12,000 watts of power delivered in both 240-volt and 120-volt

outlets. The RealPower generator is compatible with most Chevy and Ford heavy-duty automatics and some Ford 5- and 6-speed manuals; a version for Dodge's new 6-speed manual is coming soon. The generator costs about $4,800 installed.

RealPower, 877/670-7325, www.realacpower.com.