

BY MIKE TRILLER AND BRUCE CRANSTON

BY DOUG MAHONEY

DeWalt DCN660 Finish Nailer

The DeWalt DCN660 16-gauge 20-volt XR finish nailer arrived when we were just one week into a two-month-long interior trim job, giving us a perfect opportunity to put the gun to work. After having tried several other styles of cordless trim guns, we were excited to try out a fully battery-powered gun that boasts some impressive features. As intrigued by the potential performance as we were, we were also fairly skeptical that a battery-powered gun could replace a pneumatic.

After two months of consistent use and thousands of nails later, we were very happy with how the gun performed. It was able to drive and set nails effortlessly into pine and poplar trim, while it was less consistent in setting nails in harder trim like oak. According to the specs, with a fully charged 2-Ah battery, you can shoot up to 800 nails; we didn't count, but this seems realistic.

DeWalt supplies a well-designed case and a charger, but only one battery; two batteries would be helpful, especially if you're going to use this gun as your main finish nailer. One nice feature on the supplied battery is the level indicator.

We had no problems with jams and misfires when shooting through softer woods and poplar. The gun did jam on a few occasions while firing into oak, and we found the tool-free jam clearing

fast and easy to use. At 6 pounds, the gun's not light, but the ergonomically designed handle and the tool's balance make the gun seem lighter than it really is.

The depth gauge **(1)** gives you a clear indication of the depth setting so every adjustment can be monitored easily. The gun will continue to fire when empty, which was disappointing.

The sequential and bump modes **(2)** allow for fast and precise nailing. Most battery-powered nailers have a recovery time after each nail is fired, but this gun plays like a pneumatic in that respect. The bump mode is fantastic for tasks like running baseboard, though it made us miss an "empty" lock-out feature even more.

Minor criticisms aside, this tool has become a go-to nailer for us. The luxury of being hose- and compressor-free for trim work is priceless, especially because this tool performs so similarly to a pneumatic. And, surprisingly, it's not as loud as other cordless nailers we've used. In short, we would recommend this nailer to any trim crew.

Nail type: 16 gauge, angled 20 degrees; Capacity: 110 nails, 1 1/4 to 2 1/2 inches; Weight: 6 lb.; COO: Germany; Cost: \$400.

Mike Triller and Bruce Cranston are finish carpenters living in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.



Bosch CSM 180 Metal-Cutting Saw

As a remodeler, I spend most of my days cutting wood. When I do have to cut metal, I use a grinder or a recip saw. But after testing Bosch's 18-volt CSM 180 Metal-Cutting Circular Saw, I realized the downside to the methods I normally use. The Bosch saw is capable of making quick, accurate cuts in materials such as steel studs, rebar, threaded rod, conduit, and Unistrut. And unlike the tools I normally use to cut metal, it produces clean cuts and does not shoot sparks all over the place, thanks to the plastic shroud **(1)**. An LED light can be activated by tapping the trigger and not turning on the saw, which is good for lining up cuts.

I used the saw to cut heavy-gauge metal studs **(2)**, rebar, and conduit. In every case, it made a nice, clean cut that was immediately cool to the touch. A recip saw makes inaccurate and ragged cuts, and an angle grinder is slow, hot, and blows sparks everywhere.

Unlike a typical circular saw, there's no bevel and there isn't much in the way of marking on the depth-of-cut adjustment. The footplate is small, the front pommel handle isn't there, and the kerf markings are minimal at best. All of that was fine for me, because this is a tool for cutting lengths of metal, not for notching a rafter tail. Because of the bare-bones design, it is small and light—weigh-

ing in at less than 6 pounds. This makes it easy to use at or above head level. The ergonomics are good; the grip is smartly padded and comfortable to hold. A built-in rafter hook comes in handy and is easy to fold out of the way when not in use.

The CSM 180 comes equipped with a toothed blade, not an abrasive one, so the saw can also cut wood. The saw is not designed for cutting wood, but in a pinch it can be used to make the occasional rough cut when your regular circ saw isn't nearby. It's also good for those times when you hop in the dumpster to consolidate the debris that's in there. You have the convenience of cutting with a circ saw without having to worry about what happens if you hit a nail.

This saw was designed with plumbers, electricians, and HVAC techs in mind. But it would also be handy for the remodeler, who, like it or not, needs to cut metal on occasion. As a remodeling carpenter, I have enough instances when I need to cut metal to justify the price of this saw.

Battery: 18-V Lithium ion; No-load RPM: 3,800; Weight: 5.8 lb. (with FatPack battery); Blade diameter: 5 3/8 inches; Max. cut depth: 2 inches; COO: China. Price: \$350 (kit); \$200 (bare).

Doug Mahony is a carpenter in Harvard, Mass.





Milwaukee M18 Cordless LED Stand and Flood Lights

BY TIM UHLER

For the past 10 years, we've used Wobble Lights as primary lighting. We needed something more portable and we already own a few Milwaukee tools, so I requested to test the new Milwaukee cordless Trueview LED stand and flood lights.

The stand light (1) can be set up from about 40 inches to nearly 7 feet, and its head can be rotated or pivoted. We found that even fully extended, it was stable; the battery, which is located in the base, acts like a counterbalance. The base makes a triangle that measures 26 inches at each side, and the light nicely lit up the room when placed in the corner.

With three modes—2,000 lumens (high), 1,300 lumens (medium), and 850 (low)—getting the right amount of light is easy. When it's time to change the battery, the light blinks, so we were never left in the dark.

The stand light sets up in seconds with a couple of clicks and pulls, and it barely takes up any room in our Sprinter van. Using 4-Ah batteries, we got three to four hours of runtime, depending on the mode. Milwaukee claims that the color of the LED light is a neutral white with a high color rendering, which means the color of the light is more "realistic"; we found it a more comfortable light than the Wobble Light.

Wobble Lights can take 15 minutes or so to fully light. We often lose power on our jobs and even stepping on the cord powering the Wobble Light can cause it to blink out. We were able to keep working, though, while waiting for the Wobble Lights to turn back on, because we had this cordless light on hand. The portability, light output, and adjustability made this light extremely useful. It retails online for about \$250.

The small cordless LED flood light (2) has three modes for light output as well—3,000 lumens (high), 1,500 lumens (medium), and 650 lumens (low). It can either be used cordless, when equipped with M18 batteries, or be plugged in.

This flood light is durable, especially compared with the old halogen portable lights we always broke too readily. A roll cage protects the light and still allows for the light to be moved 240 degrees. It's also compact and portable at 11 inches by 12 inches by 8 inches tall. We found it extremely useful in crawlspaces and in a basement we had to frame and found that it cast enough light to illuminate most smaller areas like bathrooms or bedrooms. It also did a great job of lighting up the cut station. As with the stand light, when the battery starts to die, the light will blink letting you know to change the battery; we got about two to three hours on a 4-Ah battery. It retails for \$150 online. COO: Mexico.

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