

A Compact Cordless Recip Saw

BY JEREMY KASSEL



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The Bosch GSA18Vkit comes with a 4.0-Ah FatPack battery. But for a lot of his work, the author ran it with a 6.3-Ah Core battery, which performed exceptionally. On most jobsites, a reciprocating saw is used in short bursts, allowing the tool and battery to take a break and cool off. One battery is usually enough.

When I first started my remodeling career, in 2004, I felt that cordless tools were implements of convenience, and not for performance or longevity. Corded tools and pneumatics were the core of any construction site for being reliable and steadfast. A lot has changed. Cordless tools not only have become as powerful and reliable as corded tools, but in some ways have eclipsed them. This could not be more true than with the Bosch Compact Reciprocating Saw.

Truly one-handed. When I first got this saw, I noticed immediately that it could be held in the operating position with one hand. When using a traditional rear-handled reciprocating saw, I keep my left hand underneath the front of the saw. While this cutting position is still possible with the Bosch, it's certainly not necessary and maybe even a little uncomfortable. The one-handed usage of this tool is where it really shines.

Versatile and durable. My business partner and I used the recip saw for a variety of remodeling tasks. When we were cutting out the over-sheathed sections of window rough-openings, the short and well-balanced design allowed me to place a free hand on the cutoffs. We also cut out an old entry door, which required cutting the nails driven through the jambs into the rough framing. The rounded footplate of the saw allowed me to "roll" the front of the saw on the jamb and through the cut. Previous to handling the Bosch, I was much more familiar with a traditional reciprocating saw, on which the footplate is flat and only minimally pivots on the rivet that fastens it to the saw. The rounded footplate of the Bosch made cutting much smoother with the blade buried into the work. Last, we tried it on cutting stair stringers (we typically use a circular saw and finish out the kerf with either a jigsaw or hand saw). The Bosch was able to handle this task, but it took a bit more finesse. Sawdust was more prone to collect adjacent to the cut, thereby covering the pencil lines and kerf.

Because the tool was shipped to me as separate components, I don't have a hard case or soft bag for it. I was concerned early on that tossing it in and out of cases with other tools might be an issue, but the tool has been durable. It has been not-so-carefully put in an open pickup-truck bed and inside other tool cases, inadvertently brushed with mud, and more. It even survived unscathed after being dropped off the top of a 6-foot stepladder onto a blacktop driveway.

The Bosch recip saw did everything I wanted it to, and more. The portability and convenience of a cordless recip saw matched with the power of the Core 6.3-Ah battery make this tool a serious contender in the reciprocating-saw market. I'm a contractor with a heavy focus on remodeling, and the Bosch has already taken the No. 1 position in our fleet of recip saws. For the work that we do, having one battery hasn't hindered us.

The saw is available as a tool-only (\$110) and as a kit (\$219; comes with one 18V 4.0-Ah FatPack battery, one BC1880 18V Fast Charger, two 6-inch bi-metal blades, and a carrying case).

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The Layout Square Gets Some Major Upgrades

BY CHRIS ERMIDES

This square may look conventional, but it is far from ordinary. Well-known for building the world's first titanium-handled hammer, and then re-imagining it into the Martinez M-1, former framer Mark Martinez says he's been asked for years to develop a titanium layout square. What started out as a concept drawing in mid-June of this year journeyed to prototype in just six weeks. Martinez's Instagram followers helped shape the square by providing feedback on his posts as he shared the tool's development—making this the first crowd-sourced construction tool in the industry.

The square has pencil notches every $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, from $\frac{3}{8}$ inch up to $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. It features purposefully aligned punch-outs that offer more layout options for framers than other squares on the market (for example, 22.5 degrees). In addition to knock-outs at $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, 1 inch, and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches, there are

marks for $3\frac{1}{2}$, 5, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Also, there is a knockout that fits metric and imperial circular saw arbor nuts so it doubles as a blade wrench as well.

Martinez says that it's the most accurate layout square on the market, comparing its precision to that of high-end woodworking squares used by furniture makers. The square itself is made of military-grade titanium while the housing that holds one bubble vial is made of aluminum. Because it's made of titanium, it is lightweight and also virtually impossible to break.

As you probably expect, these features, precision, and durability come at a hefty price: \$250. Martinez understands that this square is not for everyone and admits that he's not looking to mass-produce these or compete with less-expensive models that are widely available. He also recognizes that they may be stolen on jobsites and is plan-

ning to offer customizable laser etchings on them in the near future. Production runs will be limited and preorders are now being accepted via martineztools.com.

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Cordless 18V Table Saw

In another move to advance lithium-ion battery technology, Milwaukee Tools introduced a 12-Ah High Output battery as a new addition to its M18 Redlithium battery lineup. While still an 18V pack, the battery reportedly provides more power and runs cooler than others in this series due to its larger cells and internal electronics. According to the manufacturer, the technology allows the battery to deliver 15-amp corded power in a cordless form, allowing the company to cut the cord on more traditionally corded models.

One of the biggest of these announcements was the new M18 Fuel 8 1/4-inch Table Saw with One-Key. Powered by a single M18 High Output 12-Ah battery, the table saw is said to be capable of ripping up to 600 lineal feet of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch OSB on a single charge. The saw features a 24 1/2-inch rip capacity (right side of the blade) and a rack-pinion fence system. It has a maximum cutting depth of 2 1/2 inches at 90° and weighs about 41 pounds. The unit is also One-Key enabled, making it trackable with Milwaukee's One-Key app—adding tool security and giving you the ability to lock it out, hide it, or shut it down once someone turns it on.

The 2736-21HD kit includes one M18 Redlithium High Output HD 12-Ah battery, M18/M12 Rapid Charger, blade, blade wrench, guard, anti-kickback pawls, miter gauge, and riving knife. Cost: \$550. A folding stand is sold separately for \$80. —C.E.



Brushless and cordless. Equipped with a brushless motor that's powered by an M18 battery, the saw spins an 8 1/4-inch blade with enough power, says the manufacturer, to rip any wood species you put through it. Runtime will be determined by a number of factors including the Ah battery you're running, density of the material, and blade type.

Dust Particle Separator From Festool

Following the release of Bluetooth-enabled accessories for its CT extractors, Festool now has a cyclonic dust separator available as well. The CT Cyclone unit is an anti-static, pre-separator that collects large debris as well as coarse and fine dust. A pan, which holds a collection container and disposable bag, locks on top of the CT extractor, holding the Cyclone Systainer on top. A hose attaches the unit to the CT extractor. Because large debris is collected into the separator before it reaches the extractor's bag, it means you'll use fewer fleece bags and the filters will have prolonged life. This setup is also said to maintain high suction power by reducing the load on the extractor's filter. According to Festool, when the cyclonic system is used with a HEPA-certified CT dust extractor, it is OSHA Table 1 compliant. This accessory can be used with all Festool CT 26/36/48 dust extractors. The CT-VA-20 includes a Cyclone Systainer, collection container, Systainer pan, hose connector, lid, and disposable bags, and it sells for \$375. —C.E.



Cyclonic dust separator for portable extractors. Available now, the three-piece unit latches to the top of any CT extractor. The separator has a hose to connect to the extractor. A bottom pan holds the clear collection canister.

Fast-Ripping Sidewinder

Hitachi's C7BUR 7 1/4-inch sidewinder is designed to be powerful and fast. Dubbed the "RipMax," the saw's 15-amp brushed motor runs at 6,800 rpm, which is said to be 40% faster than competitive models. It features an aluminum base, an electric brake, and a dust-blower function for clearing the cutline. When outfitted with a fiber-cement blade and equipped with an optional dust collector shroud connected to a vacuum, the unit complies with OSHA's silica rule. It has a 2 7/16-inch cut capacity at 90 degrees

and 1 7/8-inch cut capacity at 45 degrees. The saw's bevel capacity is 0-45 degrees. Cost: \$170. The saw is also available without an electric brake (model C7UR); that model has a bevel capacity of 0-55 degrees and costs \$150.

Editor's note: Hitachi recently announced that it will change its name to Metabo HPT beginning this fall. Only the name will change; all warranties, model numbers, battery compatibilities, and so on will remain the same. —C.E.



Two versions available. The RipMax is available with or without an electric brake. Both versions have the same features otherwise, though the non-brake model (C7UR) can bevel up to 55 degrees, whereas the electric-brake model (C7BUR) is limited to 45 degrees due to a larger motor housing. Both saws weigh just slightly over 11 pounds.