

EXCLUSIVE!

Mafell M55 CC plunge saw

Topping even Festool for quality and special additions, this is a marvellous saw



Back in *GW201* I looked at the various plunge saws on the market, and although Mafell had one in the shape of the KSP 55F, it was a sort of hybrid. It was a cross between plunge and standard circular saw, lacking the full functionality of the others. With this new saw, however, the balance has certainly been redressed.

Starting with the basics, it's fitted with a Cuprex 1400W motor. This is designed for increased speed and power, so you shouldn't feel wanting on deeper plunge applications. Variable speed for differing materials is normal on these saws. This one has a simple dial tucked in on the end of the motor housing.

It's 'simple' that often makes something that bit better, especially here, where some simple additions to introduce function or user friendliness making huge differences.

Simply different

As the plunge is what makes these saws so special, the first simple addition is a rotating dial used to set the plunge limit. This has offset cursors, one indicating the depth straight off the base, while rotated it compensates for the thickness of the guide rail ensuring the correct depth whatever the situation.

There's a simple hex wrench adjustment that fine tunes the depth of cut to accommodate regrinds of the blade, ensuring continued accuracy. I commented on the lack of adjuster to snug up or account for wear on

A smooth ride and intuitive adjusters put it high on anyone's list

the original saw when on the rail, which this has now been addressed.

The base of the saw has a removable insert that allows the saw to fit on Festool guide rails. That's probably where Mafell sits as a brand, around the Festool end of the scale.

Cutting on the track is as clean as a whistle. The initial cut skims the track for a zero clearance while engaging a small lug at the back of the saw, the saw overrides the plunge, limiting the depth of cut to 2.5mm to make a scoring cut in laminates and veneered stock. It also offsets the blade fractionally so that when the full cut is made the resulting edge is

exceptionally clean on both faces.

Alongside the front of the blade is a small clear window that can be slid down to the guide rail for additional suction when the saw is hooked up to an extractor, keeping the work area free of dust. The saw tilts to maintain the same position on the rail at any angle, so the zero tolerance cut remains, keeping the cut clean.

There are a couple of overrides on the angle setting as well, a small slider on the alloy base allows the saw to tilt to a negative 1° undercut for bringing up any butting cuts clean on the top face. At the other end of the scale, another slider allows the saw to tilt up to 48° to deal with out of square corners.

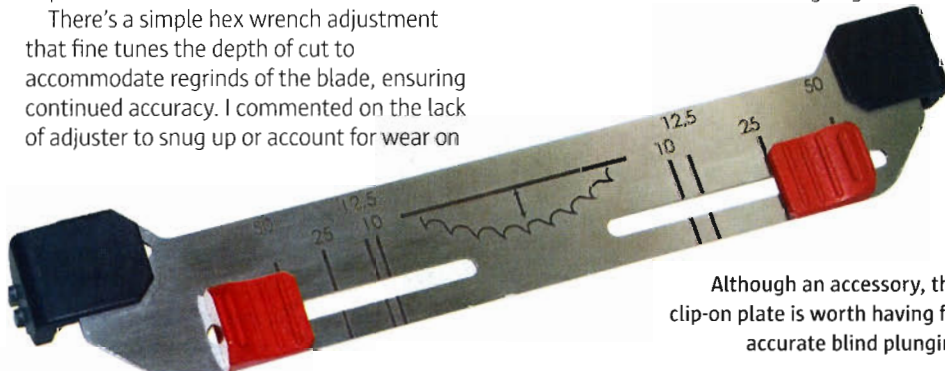
If you use a normal circular saw for bevel cuts away from the rail there is usually a simple cursor on the front for either 90° or 45° settings. Mafell has a very nifty sliding guide that moves as the base tilts so the cursor adjusts accordingly no matter what the angle; the cursor aligns so you can saw accurately without the rail if needed.

The final gem is blade swapping. Pushing the large button on the handle and pulling the lever automatically drops the side guard and at the same time, locks the spindle and isolates the power, needing only the onboard hex wrench to release the blade.

Worth the wait

Mafell has come up with a saw that was well worth the wait. For features, the DeWalt is its closest rival, with the anti-kickback, parallel plunge and double-sided guide rail its strong points. But the Mafell is a smoother ride and the inclusion of simple yet intuitive adjusters should put it high on anyone's list. Back to the drawing board for Festool, it seems!

Although an accessory, this clip-on plate is worth having for accurate blind plunging

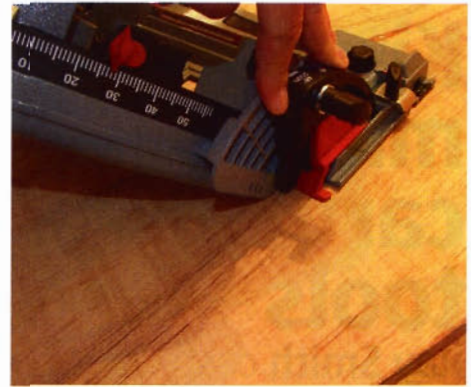




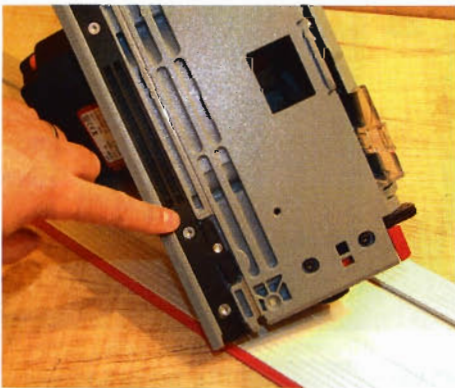
▲ Pic.1 Sliding this button across limits the plunge for pre-scoring, giving very clean cuts in veneered and melamine stock



▲ Pic.2 Rotating this button automatically compensates for the thickness of the guide rail – pretty nifty



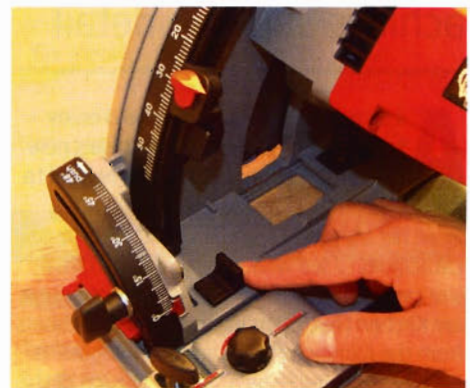
▲ Pic.3 Lifting the lever drops the flap automatically for blade changing. It locks the spindle and trigger at the same time



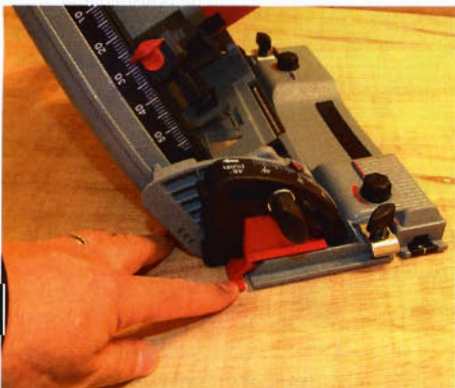
▲ Pic.4 Removing the wide plastic insert allows the saw to be used on Festool and other rails



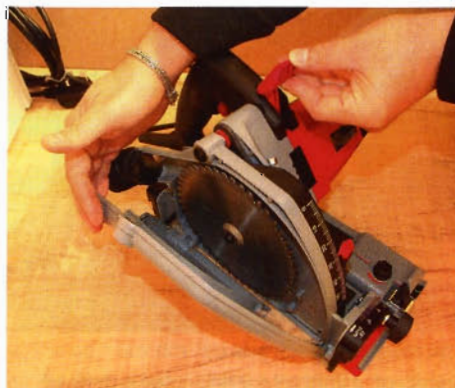
▲ Pic.5 The scoring facility on melamine is excellent, the initial score cut fractionally offset



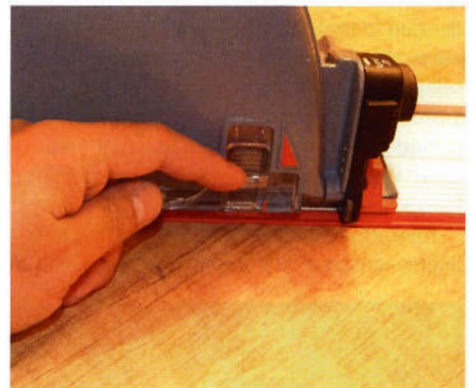
▲ Pic.6 This button lets the saw tip inwards by 1° for slight undercutting



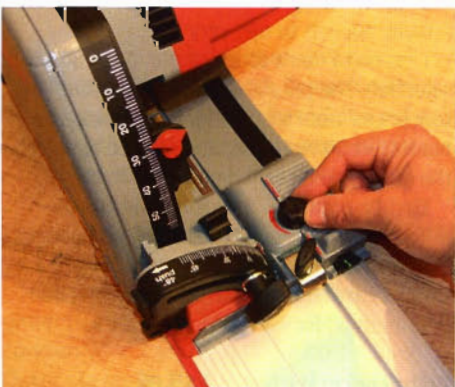
▲ Pic.7 As the blade angle alters, this cursor slides out to indicate the kerf position



▲ Pic.8 Lifting this lever drops the flap automatically for blade changing. It locks the spindle and trigger at the same time



▲ Pic.9 Sliding this cover down increases the suction around the blade to keep the cut line quite clear



▲ Pic.10 The fit to the rail is snugged up with small offset cam knobs



▲ Pic.11 Here you see the insert that tightens the fit to the rail

Good The Woodworking Verdict

- + Smooth ride, intuitive adjusters
- Just a little pricey

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: **£439** (with 1.6m guide track)

Made in: Germany

Max cut @ 90°: 57mm

Max cut @ 45°: 40mm

Power: 1400watt

Speeds: 3600-6250rpm

Weight: 4.7kg

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