

Record TS250SB

Some corners are cut in this new cut-price table saw

Record describes this saw as having been designed for the serious home user who wants to accurately process solid timber and sheet materials. This promise definitely seems to be borne out and, more importantly perhaps, at an appealing price.

The basic model sells for just short of £800, or you could go for the option tested here and have the full squaring panel and auxiliary table for £999.95. Of course there tend to be compromises when you try on the one hand to give the customer capacities and desirable features, but on the other try to stay within a price band – and this is the case here.

Old and new

Back in GW145, I looked at the model that this saw is based around, the TSPP250. The main difference between the two is that the TSPP250 has a pull-through saw head, a sort of under-slung crosscutting function, whereas this model has a traditional fixed saw head, so the work is always fed into it. However, I said then that the pull through was a feature I was unlikely to use often, and with a sliding carriage as standard, there's little point anyway that I can see.

I had concerns with the power output of the

TSPP250, as I felt it struggled to cut timber under a steady feed speed. But I was essentially using a pre-production prototype, so this hopefully would have been addressed in the finished model. Indeed, I found myself happily ripping 75mm-thick yellow pine with the newer TS250SB, and the capacity and motor specification is the same as the TSPP250.

I felt some slight vibration through the cut, but the finish left from the saw was excellent. Although the fitted 36-toothed TCT blade is good enough, swapping for a purpose suited blade rather than the generic one supplied will also increase the overall performance.

Build quality and adjusters

The cast iron table spans from the right of the blade, made from two pieces and measuring 670 x 800mm. An additional fabricated steel table adds an additional 355mm width, giving a maximum rip of 904mm. Fluidity in the blade adjustment is somewhat lacking though – it's pretty clunky, and looks like an area affected by the price factor, with the use of plastic over metal for adjustments.

The saw has a single wheel for adjusting the blade height, and the tilt is set with a twist

knob. This tilt function engages in a cogged crescent, again plastic, as a rack and pinion type movement. These crescents are front and rear to stiffen up the movement and keep it aligned as it's adjusted. It's not the easiest method of setting the tilt, though. A dedicated wheel is usually far easier to alter, and other saws use a worm drive that is far more fluid.

I'd also much prefer these crescents to be in steel or alloy for better wear and tear, but the tilt function is probably unlikely to get as much use as the fences and carriage, which are certainly better quality. There's a five year warranty on the saw too, so there shouldn't be a problem if the tilt function does wear.

On guard: the fence

The rip fence is definitely substantial, with a big cast iron block sitting on a solid running bar, locking with a single cam lock lever. There's also a useful metal fine adjuster for fine tuning a cut. Everything holds solidly, and the cast iron resists any flexing as you cut.

On top of the casting is a lever to release the L-section aluminium fence extrusion. This allows it to slide back for ripping timber and to be rotated for thinner stock. The extrusion is 82mm deep, offering full support of stock cut at the maximum ripping depth capacity.

To the left of the blade is the 1005 x 247mm aluminium sliding carriage sitting tightly to the blade, and in doing so, offering better accuracy when crosscutting.

This runs very smoothly, tracking along on bearings, so it's very fluid throughout its travel and you can cut up to 915mm.

A further outrigger assembly has the 600 x 410mm squaring frame, fabricated from a welded steel box section. This allows the crosscut fence to be altered for angled cuts up to 45°. A pin locates it to the frame, with a pretty crude aluminium bracket and wingnut locking any setting by clamping it. I found that it cannot be altered too smoothly, but it does lock firmly.



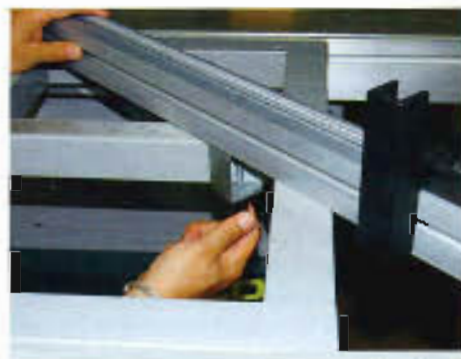
▲ Pic 1: The sliding carriage runs very smoothly, giving you a 900mm capacity...



▲ Pic 2: ...but the blade adjustment, using a rise and fall wheel, isn't the smoothest



▲ Pic 3: These cogged plastic adjusters at the front and rear set the angle



▲ Pic 4: The cross-cutting fence is locked with this pretty crude bracket



▲ Pic 5: This simple flange supports longer pieces as you cross-cut



▲ Pic 6: Cutting 50mm-thick stock is easy, the blade leaving a clean finish

For crosscutting longer pieces that would normally try and tip, and would be tricky to hold without a hold down, there's a simple aluminium flange at the end of the fence to hold the free end up. It is simple, but extremely effective!

If you take up the option of the outrigger but don't always need it, it removes easily. A couple of wingnuts hold it in place, and the outrigger, being telescopic, simply sits flush to the cabinet side so you also free up space.

With the sliding carriage sitting tightly to the saw, Record has opted for a mitre slot within the aluminium extrusion rather than within the cast iron. So if you don't want to set the long crosscut fence to cut shorter stock, you have to rely on the proprietary fence rather than being able to use one designed for the purpose, as the slot is non-standard. The one supplied is pretty decent though, so you can make good use of it rather than abandoning it to the cupboard.

Is less more?

By aiming this saw at the end user wanting a saw with a sliding carriage that offers more for your money, Record has plugged a hole. But the reduction in cost is, well, costly. If you don't necessarily alter the blade too often,

then the sliding carriage and fence, plus the cast iron table, is a big consolation. But I'd much prefer a smoother action and a bit more metalwork in this area. Budgets are budgets, though, of course.

The motor power does seem a little low for a 10in saw, but my initial tests on 70mm stock gave no cause to worry. With 50mm-thick material, which is probably the most used thickness in general day to day work, the saw should be easily powerful enough. In summary, a few weak spots, but nothing you wouldn't expect from a cost-cutting model.

The Woodworking Verdict

- + Good carriage and rip fence
- Clunky and plastic blade adjustment

Rating ★★★★★

Typical price: £999.95

Made in: China

Motor: 2hp

Speed: 4000rpm

Max rip @ 90: 80mm

Max rip @ 45: 59mm

Noise level: 86 decibels

Record Power 0870 7701777

www.recordpower.co.uk