



TOOLS & EQUIPMENT FEATURE

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with Roger Bisby

Roger Bisby gets his hands on a saw that's all the Rage.



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Theory of Evolution



As impressive as it is, the blade is only half the story. The saw has a high torque, low speed motor with a thermal cut-out to prevent stalling. The gearbox is a very robust all metal affair that is built to withstand the uneven shock loads that are placed upon it by chipping and unpredictable materials such as nails in timber. You can buy other blades for this saw to cut timber or plastic.

Full marks for the carrying case, which allows the saw to be put away with the fence attached. Other manufacturers please note the generous size. You don't have to fiddle about arranging the cable when you put the saw away. On the down side, the knob that secures the fence is too close to the side handle. It needs a little more space to allow it to be adjusted easily. The other handles are well placed and comfortable, with nice squashy bits to help reduce vibration and increase grip.

Rage is a great name for a saw – provided, of course, that it lives up to its name. The multipurpose blade claims to cut steel, aluminium, plastic and wood. Oh dear! I have just noticed that it doesn't mention cement board – which was the first job I gave it to do. We needed to cut some sheets of Knauf Aquapanel and it seemed to be a better bet than an angle grinder. It certainly produced less dust and I didn't notice it protesting. I also ripped a length of CLS down the length. It wasn't great at this because it doesn't really have any set on the blade, but it did it all the same.

The reason it can cope with a range of materials is partly down to the blade design. There is nothing new about beefed up Tungsten carbide tipped blades. Most power tool manufacturers have a blade in their range with a bit more metal at the back edge. This prevents the teeth pinging off when they hit an obstacle. The Rage multipurpose blade uses a different approach. The teeth are interspaced with depth gauges rather like a chainsaw, so the blade acts as a chipping blade. The teeth can never cut more than the difference between the depth gauge and the tip of the tungsten tooth. This also makes the blade easier to control. The downside with this blade is that in a deep cut you can't correct any tendency to run off the line, so you need to set it straight and keep it that way. It is often better to run two passes when rip cutting timber.

There is no lever on the guard so you can't lift it to feed the blade into the work. The instructions tell you to place the blade on the work piece rather than feed it in running. This effectively lifts the guard to start the cut. You can also make sure that you are on the line but you should then pull the blade back ever so slightly to start it up.

The training video that comes with the tools shows a variety of cutting applications. It would seem that this is the primary use. It will cut steel up to 6mm thick so it is ideal for cutting metal stud walling and ceiling components. It will also cut window frames, cable tray and pipes so it should appeal to all trades. It will rip a piece of plywood down reasonably well, but if you just cut timber then there are plenty of woodworking saws on the market. Not many of those saws, however, will cut laminate as well as this one. Cutting from the underside the line is clean and fine so you could get away with a straight finished cut if you don't have a router and jig to make a final cut. The design of the blade means it will also last a lot longer than a wood blade will on chipboard or laminate.

The casing at the side acts as a chip collector. It has a very small capacity but it is essential to contain the chips when cutting steel and this is another reason why it is a better bet than using a wood saw with a metal cutting blade. If you are cutting lighter material, such as the board that we cut, you can fit a dust extractor by removing the plate and fitting a nozzle. A good flow of air will also help keep the blade cooler. You don't need lubricant for metal cutting.



Roger says:

■ "This is proving a very popular saw and because it is selling in volume the price is low. If you cut a fair amount of metal, the Rage will save you a lot of time and trouble – not to mention giving you a straighter, more professional cut. It certainly beats using a jigsaw or recip saw on straight cuts, but it is no good around curves and corners."

For more information on the Rage saw circle PHPI readerlink 153

