

Festool TS 75 EQ

by Kreg McMahon

In my work as a professional handyman, I'm called upon to do a wide variety of finish carpentry tasks. Many of them are made easier by Festool's TS 55 plunge-cut saw, which I've owned for a year now. Recently, I had the chance to try Festool's newest plunge-cut saw, the TS 75 EQ. It's similar to the TS 55 except it has an 8¹/₄-inch blade that allows it to cut 2³/₄ inches at 90 degrees and 2¹/₈ inches at 45 degrees. (The TS 55's 6¹/₄-inch blade cuts 1¹⁵/₁₆ inches and 1⁷/₁₆ inches, respectively.)

In my opinion, all finish carpenters, cabinetmakers, and remodelers should consider adding one of these two tools to their arsenal. Although it won't replace an everyday circular saw for cutting framing, it's the perfect tool for special high-accuracy cuts.



Festool TS 75 EQ

Depth of cut with guide rail: 2¹/₈ inches at 45 degrees; 2³/₄ inches at 90 degrees

Blade diameter: 8¹/₄ inches

Rpm: 1,350 to 3,550

Bevel capacity: 45 degrees

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Features

The secret to these saws' accuracy is the guide rail: It comes in eight different lengths from 32 to 197 inches. For greater versatility, connectors are available that allow you to join rail sections.

The rail has a rubber lip that presses onto the workpiece to prevent splintering; it shows the exact path of the blade even when the saw is set to cut on a bevel. You don't have to compensate for the width of the saw shoe the way you do when you use a shooting board or aftermarket guide — you simply put the rubber lip on your measuring marks and start cutting. And you don't need to clamp the guide; it stays where you put it. Just remember that you'll need to trim the rubber strip by making a full-length test cut before using the guide for the first time.

The tool's plunge-cutting action is unique, too. The TS 75 EQ doesn't have a rotating lower guard, like an ordinary circular saw; instead, its blade pivots through the bottom shoe. It's a great design, and I think it's safer than a conventional blade guard. Marks on the housing show exactly where the blade will enter the wood and where the cut will stop. I've heard that this feature makes the saw a favorite among high-end hardwood flooring installers, who use it for cutting in decorative borders.

Toolbox | Festool TS 75 EQ

The TS 75 EQ weighs 13½ pounds — a little heavy, but it's so well-balanced the weight isn't really noticeable. Since Festool is a German firm, the saw has metric depth-setting marks, which I found a little annoying, but after a while I got used to eyeballing the correct depth. An intelligently designed modular carrying case keeps the saw protected and the accessories organized. All the company's tools are packed in "Systainer" cases that stack and lock together for transport.

Applications

My first day out with the TS 75 EQ, I made several crosscuts on a sheet of ¾-inch cabinet-grade plywood. After marking measurements on both sides of the panel, I placed the 55-inch guide rail on the marks, set the depth adjustment, and

Making straight cuts on panel products is easy with the TS 75 EQ. The saw's aluminum guide rail comes in eight different lengths and has a nonskid bottom that eliminates the need for clamps.



One of the saw's few sticking points is the metric markings that show the depth-of-cut.

started the saw. The motor has a soft start and maintains a constant speed under load. It also has a variable-speed function for cutting everything from wood and plastics to aluminum and ferrous metals. The saw cut the veneer plywood in no time flat and provided straight, splinter-free cuts on both sides of the blade.

In my job, I hang a lot of new doors in old jambs; most times I have to trim the door bottom. The saw and guide worked beautifully for this task — even when the cut tapered down to zero.

Perhaps the greatest challenge I threw at the saw was trimming 6 inches from a laminate countertop. Since the counter didn't have a backsplash, I used the guide to make this cut. The saw worked perfectly — the guide didn't slide around

and the laminate blade provided a smooth, splinter-free cut.

The Verdict

I highly recommend this saw. It does everything the company says it will and then some. Perhaps the only obstacle is the price. The rig I tested — the saw, a 75-inch guide rail, an extra laminate blade, and a pair of rail connectors — sells for \$750, a sizable investment. Still, I don't mind spending money on tools that work well and save me time. As far as I'm concerned, buying a TS 75 EQ is money well-spent.

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