

Bosch Worksite Table Saw

by Dave Crosby

The most noteworthy development in portable table saws since we last reviewed them here (see *Toolbox*, 10/98) is the Bosch 4000 Worksite Table Saw (Bosch Power Tools, 4300 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60646; 877/267-2499; www.boschtools.com). We received a model for review shortly after it was introduced at the August 1999 National Hardware Show and have been giving it a workout ever since. It looks like the manufacturer listened to feedback from the field — attention to detail is evidenced throughout the design, with many desirable features and few drawbacks.

Plenty of Power

The motor on this saw uses what the manufacturer calls a Torque Response System. By constantly sensing the load on the motor, additional power is supplied as needed to maintain a steady motor speed. This system works beautifully, resulting in smooth, effortless cuts. With a Magna 10-inch Combination blade, this saw excelled at all of the ripping tasks I tried, from framing lumber to hardwood. We fed poplar, alder, oak, and 8/4 ash to this saw, and it handled them all with ease. To press the saw harder, I cut dados up to 13/16 inch wide and 3/4 inch deep in pine and red oak, and with the slower feed rate you'd expect, the saw had no trouble.

I don't know how long the universal motor will last under heavy use, but I haven't popped any breakers with this saw, I haven't overheated it yet, and it runs at the end of a 50-foot 10-gauge extension cord just fine. Speaking of motors, Bosch claims 4.4 hp for this saw, which may be true for "maximum developed horsepower," but it's an almost useless number for evaluating continuous-duty output.

Good table, good fence. The best motor in the world isn't worth much if

the rest of the saw can't keep up, but the Bosch checks out good here. The table seems sturdy enough, and the manufacturer advertises a finish tolerance of less than 0.040 inch, which has thus far remained true.



The Bosch Model 4000 Worksite Table Saw has plenty of power and features that would make it welcome on any job.

The finish feels about right, but the aluminum is soft enough that it's easy to scratch and dent. A leaf on the 29-inch-wide (by 21 1/2-inches-deep) table quickly and easily extends to the right on two rails, providing 40 1/2 inches of support overall and a cutting capacity of 25 inches, so sheet goods are not a problem (see Figure 1). The scale is designed to remain accurate and usable throughout the range.

Fence operation is smooth, well

with even at close tolerances. After the initial setup, it stayed true and can be re-aligned using the supplied hex wrench if necessary. An adjustment screw at the back of the fence allows you to set the locking tension according to your preference and ensures that the self-aligning fence clamps tightly at both ends (Figure 2).

At 60 pounds, the saw is comparable to other saws in its class and not at all difficult to carry. Molded handgrips and



Figure 1. The table extends to provide 25 inches from fence to blade, and an accessory outfeed support adds 18 inches of depth. Note the cord storage lugs on the back of the saw and the molded handgrip on the right side of the tabletop.

Figure 2. The self-aligning fence locks into a V-groove at the back of the saw; tension can be adjusted with the screw visible at the end of the fence. Note blade and wrench storage on the right side of the saw.



Figure 3. The large, well-designed switch is in easy reach in case of emergency (left). The lever at upper right locks the table extension. The cam-action bevel stop is visible at both ends of the bevel range.



good design help, and I could easily carry the saw through a 2'-8"-wide door. If you're disinclined to lug heavy tools or regularly work upstairs, you might prefer a lighter saw. I think the performance is well worth the extra effort, and I don't see the weight as a significant problem for most uses.

Durable and adjustable. We shipped this saw across the country and back after its initial setup so we could get a few different opinions. When I got the saw back, the packaging looked terrible and I feared the worst for the saw, but when I checked it over, it was still dead-on. If for any reason the blade does need to be re-aligned to the miter-gauge slots, it's a quick job with four bolts and the hex wrench.

It's in the Details

Soft-start technology provides smooth, quiet startups, and the switch on the

left side of the saw is well placed for convenience and safety. An arbor lock provides for easy blade changes with one wrench, which finds secure storage along with the hex wrench in an attached blade tote.

Speaking of storage, there are lugs to wrap the cord securely and neatly, and both the rip fence and the miter gauge stow neatly on either side of the saw. If you put an auxiliary fence on the miter gauge, it will still store well, but not so with the rip fence.

Miter gauge adjustment is fast and easy, with stops at 90 degrees and 45 degrees, which are easily rotated out of the way for adjustment up to 60 degrees in both directions. The $3/8 \times 3/4$ -inch miter gauge slots, set 11 $1/2$ inches apart, provide a reasonable degree of accuracy and smooth operation for the 7-inch-wide miter gauge, which rides on an 18-inch rail.

The first thing I noticed about the blade height adjustment is that there is no adjustment lock. This concerned me at first, but thus far I have had no problem with it. I found that if I took up the slack in the gear mesh, and kept the adjustment wheel to the clockwise side of the slack, the blade height remained constant even when cutting dados. Blade height adjustment seemed smooth enough initially, but it soon became stiff and difficult in cold weather. Again, a blast of air and a shot of silicone spray on the guide rails improved the action greatly — in fact, better than new.

Bevel adjustment is advertised as -2 degrees to +47 degrees. If you want to reset the cam-shaped bevel stops, that's true, but then you have to reset them to 0 or 45 degrees again. I didn't particularly like the adjustment action of the bevel stop screws. Although they have held securely so far, I wouldn't want to adjust them too often, and I wonder about their long-term performance. It seems to me that they would have benefited from the addition of a locknut. Otherwise, the bevel adjustment, including the lock lever, works well (Figure 3).

Dust collection is pretty good without a vacuum attached. With the vacuum, it's excellent, with almost no dust visible at all when cutting pine, and slightly more dust escaping with MDF, but still quite acceptable.

Accessories

There are several accessories for this saw, some of which I would definitely recommend.

Stands. A folding stand (TS1000, \$119) and a fixed stand (TS1001, \$49) are both available. The folding stand is sturdy, folds flat, sets up in seconds, and holds the saw securely. One of the many details the manufacturer paid careful attention to was fast, safe setup, which is something that anyone who moves from job to job will appreciate. Two lugs at the front of the saw engage two slots in the folding stand, and then the entire saw drops into a recess in the top of the stand. This is easy to do and requires no fasteners for fast, serviceable placement

of the saw. I was concerned about the durability of these plastic tabs, so I was intentionally not very careful with them in cold weather, and they held up fine. The fixed stand depends on four carriage bolts to secure the saw and seems more than strong enough for shop use. If you don't want to buy either of the stands, the saw sets up well on short sawhorses, but the folding stand is a real pleasure to use and worth considering.

Table extensions. The optional Outfeed Support Extension (TS1002, \$29.99) slides on two rails and locks in place with a thumbscrew, providing up to 18 inches of support for an overall working depth of 39¹/₂ inches. It's convenient, works well, and I recommend it highly. Actually, for the price, I can't imagine passing it up — it sure beats car-

rying around an extra stand. As an added benefit, when retracted, the support seems to provide a little extra protection for the adjusting screw on the outfeed end of the fence, which might otherwise be damaged by rough treatment.

The Left Side Support Extension (TS 1003, \$24.99) adds another 12 inches to the left side of the table and also slides out of the way when not needed. This accessory was not included on the saw I reviewed, but I could picture it coming in handy.

Guard and inserts. The safety guard and anti-kickback pawl assembly can be a real nuisance for some cuts, but it works as well as these things ever work. Because it must be removed for certain cuts, the manufacturer has provided for easy removal and replacement with the same

hex wrench supplied for other adjustments. The screw that normally retains the assembly is captive, so you can't lose it when the guard is removed. This increases the likelihood that the guard will actually be replaced as required, which is a commendable design. A dado insert (TS1007, \$13), a zero-clearance insert (TS1005, \$6), and a molding insert (TS1009, \$13) are also available.

All in all, this is an excellent saw — one that I would buy. Comments by the several other users who participated in this review ranged from "Nice saw" to "Wow, I wish they'd made this years ago." Suggested retail price for the basic saw without accessories is \$539; as reviewed with folding stand and outfeed support, it's \$679. 