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TOOLSOFTHETRADE.NET

Toolbox

EDITED BY BRUCE GREENLAW

Bosch GLM 100 C Laser Distance Meter

I've been tracking the steady evolution of laser distance meters since evaluating 13 top models for the January 2013 issue of *JLC*. At that time, the versatile, efficient, and economical Bosch GLM 80 was my overall favorite. The new Bosch GLM 100 C resembles the GLM 80, but adds some enhanced specs, a micro-USB port and cable, and a Bluetooth module for pairing with mobile devices. After exploring the new meter for awhile, I decided it's definitely noteworthy.

MEASURING RANGE & ACCURACY

The GLM 100 C can measure lengths from about 2 inches to 330 feet, or about 25% farther than the GLM 80. You typically need to aim at an accessory target plate to reach the maximum. The unit is accurate to $\frac{1}{16}$ inch and displays fractions down to $\frac{1}{32}$ inch, the same as the GLM 80.

STANDALONE FEATURES

Minus the Bluetooth module and micro-USB port, the GLM 100 C is almost a clone of the GLM 80. Both are powered by an internal rechargeable 3.7-volt lithium-ion battery that delivers up to 25,000 measurements per charge. Both can calculate square and cubic feet; add, subtract, multiply, and divide dimensions and calculations; and take a continuous reading while moving toward or away from a target, automatically freezing the minimum and maximum distances measured (great for measuring diagonals). A built-in inclinometer not only reads slopes and angles, but works in the background to make indirect vertical or horizontal measuring exceptionally easy where direct measurements are impractical or impossible.

Both models can mount to a tripod, and both can pop into Bosch's optional R60 alu-

minum rail to become a 2-foot electronic spirit level. A programmable timer delays the shot after you press the measure button, a tailpiece lets you measure precisely from inside corners, and the display is the brightest I've seen and can be set to rotate automatically for an easy read regardless of orientation. Both meters carry an IP54 rating, indicating that dust intrusion and water splashes do no harm.

Like the GLM 80, the GLM 100 C also has handy estimating shortcuts and an erasable memory. But the former stores one constant and up to 20 measurements or calculations, while the latter stores a constant and up to 50 entries. Both can delete selected individual entries or the entire memory.

CONNECTIVITY

Download the free "GLM measure&document" app with a compatible iOS or Android device, and your GLM 100 C is ready for wireless Bluetooth interaction.

I tested the app with my iPod touch, scanning the QR code on the laser package for an easy download. To establish the wireless connection, I enabled Bluetooth on the iPod and opened the app, then turned on the GLM 100 C and pushed its Bluetooth button. The Bosch operating manual only mentions the app, so I learned the ropes by exploring the app itself for a few hours, tapping the help icons for information.

For starters, the app lets you use your mobile device to change the meter's settings, select the measurement type, and take measurements. The Bluetooth range is supposed to be about 30 feet, but my iPod triggered plenty of measurements from greater distances, though the connection became less dependable. This remote control is cool, but I'm not convinced that it's all that useful.

Better yet, the app can manage your measurements in a variety of ways. For instance, you can quickly transfer the meter's memory to your mobile device, where you can delete or name individual measurements, perform calculations, and email the edited list.

Raising the bar, you can create and name a project folder, snap one or more photos with your mobile device, draw dimension lines on the photos with a finger, and then shoot the measurements with the GLM. Follow the simple rules, and the app will automatically insert these measurements next to the appropriate dimension lines while also listing them under a separate tab. You can drop text and audio memos into each photo, too, where they appear as virtual Post-it notes. When you're ready, you can email a PDF of the project, which will include everything but your audio memos. You can even insert your company logo and contact information in there.

I created several test projects and emailed the PDFs to my laptop, which was a piece of cake. You can also email the labeled photos or the measurement list separately, but the list arrives as a CSV file that can be a hassle to work with. Bosch says a fix is forthcoming. Also, the app's calculator defaults to metric during some operations, which Bosch is also working to repair.

Thanks to the battery charger and the micro-USB cable included in the kit, you can charge the meter by plugging into an AC outlet or a USB port. If you have a Windows XP or Windows 7 computer, you can make the micro-USB cable even more useful by downloading Bosch's GLM Transfer Software at bosch-professional.com/static/specials/glm100c/gb/en/. The simple software allows you to tap into the meter's memory from a computer, where you can open it in Microsoft Excel, copy it to the Clipboard, save it as a Notepad file, or just erase it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The rechargeable GLM 100 C can measure lengths with a simple point and click, but it also is an exceptional estimator, reads angles, has a great display, and can clamp into an optional rail to become a 2-foot electronic spirit level. At first I thought its Bluetooth module and mobile app might be overkill, but for many applications they indeed make it easier to store, manage, and share measurements. If I needed all of these features, the $300 price tag would work for me.

GLM 100 C Specs

Power: rechargeable 3.7-volt lithium-ion battery
Range: 2 inches to 330 feet
Accuracy: ± $\frac{1}{16}$ inch
Smallest fraction: $\frac{1}{32}$ inch
Price: $300
Included in kit: charger, micro-USB cable, hand strap, belt pouch
Warranty: 1 year (2 years if registered), 30-day money-back guarantee

Bosch / 877.267.2499 / boschtools.com

Bruce Greenlaw is a contributing editor to JLC.

GENTLE IMPACT DRIVER

My company builds decks framed with light-gauge steel, and we drive about 5,000 self-tapping screws per month using Makita 18-volt brushless impact drivers to assemble the framing and secure the decking.

My veteran carpenters can consistently sink these screws at full throttle and release the trigger at just the right time so they don't overdrive and break the screws. But my less-experienced carpenters don't always react in time, causing some screws to snap.

I recently learned that Makita's 18-volt model LXDT06 brushless impact driver includes a unique Quick-Shift Mode that combats overdriving by reducing the rotation and impact speeds after the screw tips punch through the steel. When *JLC* asked if we would like to take the tool for a spin, I readily accepted. The verdict? The feature works great.

Unfortunately, the driver costs $190 for the bare tool and $360 for the complete two-battery kit, or about $30 to $40 more than my equivalent impact drivers without the Quick-Shift Mode. At that price, I'll stick with my other drivers, live with some broken screws, and let practice make perfect.
—*Robert Shaw owns Colorado Deck and Framing, in Colorado Springs, Colo.*

Photo: bottom right, Mary Shaw

Quick-Change Nailer Hook

Some pneumatic framing and roofing nailers have built-in hang hooks, but many popular models don't. Without a hook, you're constantly holding these bulky tools between your knees, carrying them by hand up and down ladders, and parking them precariously on stepladders, top plates, and roof sheathing.

Add-on hooks are available, but most of them bolt awkwardly to specific models only. The Pneuhook universal quick-change hook, which was just unleashed by veteran Cape Cod residential and commercial carpenter Scott Jacobson after two years of field testing, may just be the solution to that problem. It's equipped with a coupler and a male plug so you can simply snap the Pneuhook onto the nailer's male plug and snap the air hose onto the Pneuhook. This design suspends the nailer head-first for maximum stability, allows the hook to swivel to your desired position, and makes it easy to swap the hook between multiple nailers. The hook also can hang from a nail and can double as a blade wrench for your circular saws.

Oregon production framing contractor Terry Goodrich has been using Hitachi framing nailers with bolt-on hooks for years, so we asked him for an opinion of the Pneuhook. After using a pair for several weeks, his framers are really impressed. Goodrich says he wouldn't hesitate to pay the asking price.

The Pneuhook comes in black or yellow. It costs $30 with a ¼-inch I/M-style coupler and plug, or $40 with a ⅜-inch P-style or H-style coupler and plug.

Visit pneuhook.com to view a video or to place an order. —*B.G.*

SMART SAFETY

Lately I've been using the new Bostitch Smart Point pneumatic 18-gauge brad nailer, 15-gauge DA-style angle finish nailer, and 15-gauge FN-style angle finish nailer (bostitch.com).

These nailers employ a new type of safety that I really like. Other brad and finish nailers force you to compress a spring-loaded nose against the work surface to fire a shot. With Smart Point nailers, however, you just touch the non-marring tip to the surface, with no pushing required. No contact, no shot. I didn't realize how much focus I put into compressing the nose until I no longer had to do it. The small nose fits into tight spaces and gives you clear sight lines, so you can accurately place your fasteners.

I also appreciate that these tools are oil-free, which helps prevent staining, and they include a built-in pencil sharpener that helps keep my layout marks crisp.

I've used plenty of other brad and finish nailers over the years, but these are my new favorites. A 16-gauge Smart Point model is also available. Prices range from $120 to $190. —*Gary Striegler is a trim carpenter in Fayetteville, Ark.*