

Cabinet Plumbing Jig

BY CHRIS LAND

As a cabinet maker and installation company, we use many different tools in pursuit of our goal to provide speed, efficiency, and precision to every job we work on. We've found that True Position Tools is a company dedicated to producing tools that will elevate your workflow game. It already makes the industry-leading cabinet-hardware installation jig, so when I heard about the release of its Cabinet Plumbing Jig, I could not wait to get my hands on one.

Upon receiving the jig, I was impressed by its zippered and padded bag with hold-down straps that secure it during transport. It also came with a full-color, step-by-step instruction booklet. It's an indication of the quality of a tool when a company puts this kind of effort into creating a storage bag and ensuring you use the tool correctly.

Before using the jig, we first mark a level line on the wall at the sink cabinet's height and lay out its centerline. We then line up the jig's center mark with the centerline on the wall and place two fasteners on either side of the line to hold the top bar of the jig level and steady. Next, we line up the jig's arms (it has three) above each of the plumbing pipes coming out of the wall and tighten the arms using the jig's stainless-steel knobs.

The next step is to mark a centerline on the back of the sink cabinet and line it up with the jig's center mark, using the stops to

keep it in place. Then we trace along the red marking edge of the V-shaped fixed head at the end of each arm to create marks for lining up the edges of a hole saw. It is that simple to mark precise plumbing locations on the back of the cabinet with this jig.

The saying "Time is money" is so true in the trades. While there are many different ways to mark plumbing on a cabinet, one of my preferred methods is to use a torpedo level and mark lines that represent the top and sides of all the pipes. I then measure the location of these lines based upon the level line and center point created in the layout process. Over the past three months, this process averaged 10 minutes for a set of three pipes. When we used this new jig, that task took only two minutes. Not only does the jig increase speed, but it also improves accuracy.

Kitchen sink cabinets also often have an outlet for under-the-cabinet electrical needs, like a garbage disposal. The Cabinet Plumbing Jig comes with a swivel head to mark the location of electrical boxes.

True Position Tools has done its homework in creating this jig. If you mark one or two cabinets a year, this tool may not be for you. If you are marking cabinets professionally on a daily basis, however, this tool is a must for your bag of "tricks of the trade." It costs \$300 at truepositiontools.com.

Chris Land is the owner of Cutting Edge Woodcraft in Greenback, Tenn.



With the Cabinet Plumbing Jig leveled and centered on the cabinet layout, a worker aligns the arms with the pipes (1). After tightening the arms in place, he moves the jig to the back of the cabinet to mark out the pipe locations (2). The jig comes with a padded, zippered storage bag (3).

Photos: Chris Land

Weigh In!

Want to test a new tool or share a tool-related testimonial, gripe, or technique? Contact us at jlctools@zondahome.com.

DeWalt Cyclone Dust Separator

BY NATHAN RINNE

Dust collection has become integral to my setup, whether I'm on site or in my shop; in fact, I've come to dread working without it. While I hook up large tools to a shop collector, I run hand tools like a track saw and sanders through portable extractors. Their filters clog quickly and are costly to replace, though, so I started connecting an in-line cyclone separator to the extractor. The separator collects most of the dust before it ever reaches the extractor, not only keeping the filters running clean but also eliminating the need to empty filter bags multiple times a day. I own three cyclone dust separators—a Festool CT-VA 20, an Oneida Dust Deputy, and a DeWalt DXVCS002—and I've found the DeWalt to be the superior choice.

The more bends, sharp turns, and restrictions in a dust collection system, the greater the loss of suction. The Festool separator has too many of the above, with two 90-degree bends in the included hose alone. Inside the unit is a compact version of cyclone technology that is restricted in piping size and doesn't allow for the volume of airflow needed.

DeWalt took a different approach, using the same tried-and-true cyclone design that's the basis for most industrial collectors. The loss of suction in this type of design, if any, isn't noticeable, as it allows maximum airflow. DeWalt claims that its cyclone separator captures 99.5% of dust, and while I don't have a way to scientifically measure that, I am 99% sure it captures more than my Festool and

certainly more than enough to meet my needs. With the DeWalt at about a third of the price of the Festool and having better performance, it's a clear choice between the two.

I also prefer the DeWalt over Oneida's Dust Deputy, for several reasons, not least of which is ease of assembly: A handful of screws and the DeWalt was ready to go out of the box, wheels and all. In comparison, the Dust Deputy comes in pieces and takes time to set up. The other big reason I prefer the DeWalt over the Dust Deputy is the quality of the build. The Dust Deputy has a 5-gallon bucket and lid attached to a cyclone, whereas the DeWalt has a 6-gallon poly shop-vacuum base with nice, locking latches and a thicker wall. I typically use a 250-cfm Bosch extractor in my shop, which, when I turn it on, will regularly flex the sides of the Oneida bucket and nearly collapse it if I put my hand over the hose. Not so with the DeWalt, which remains rigid without losing its shape or succumbing to the pressure. And it beats the price of the Dust Deputy by about \$8.

I always appreciate getting more for less and recommend DeWalt's cyclone dust separator over both Oneida's Dust Deputy and Festool's CT-VA 20. Price: \$135. dewalt.com

Contributing editor Nathan Rinne owns Rinne Trimcraft in Missouri. He specializes in on-site carpentry and ornamental built-ins. Follow him on Instagram at @rinne-trimcraft and on Facebook at facebook.com/rinnetrimcraft.



The DeWalt DXVCS002 cyclone separator moves with the work, thanks to its casters and stable base (1). Compared with the author's Oneida and Festool units, the DeWalt has a larger capacity without adding too much footprint and has better stability and mobility (2).

Photos: Nathan Rinne

Colliflower Cube for Kapex Zero-Clearance Fence

BY TOMMIE MULLANEY

When it comes to making precise cuts, a Festool Kapex KS 120 REB sliding compound miter saw does a fantastic job, but there is always room for improvement. One of my biggest complaints has been its fence, which has a very large throat that can allow the blade to fling offcuts across the room. These small pieces of wood shrapnel can be a danger to the saw, the user, and anyone standing nearby. The standard approach to combating this problem is to fit the saw with a sacrificial fence, but when you do that, you lose some depth of cut, which can be frustrating.

Jack Colliflower, a woodworker and owner/designer of Colliflower, in Cheney, Wash., has fixed both problems in one swift step with the Cube for Kapex Zero-Clearance Fence. This accessory consists of a black powder-coated fence base milled from 6061 aluminum that completely replaces the original Kapex fence base while still employing the existing mounting holes and bolts on the Kapex.

At the heart of the Colliflower system is the Cube, a 3½-inch-by-3½-inch by 2-inch-high clear PETG (thermoplastic polyester) block that occupies the once-empty space between the auxiliary fences. This block is slotted around all four sides to fit snugly within

the Colliflower replacement fence base and becomes its own sacrificial fence without sacrificing depth of cut or dust-collection capability. With the Cube in place, safety and accuracy are enhanced, and tear-out on the back of the cut is eliminated, regardless of the angle of cut.

Since the Cube is symmetrical, you can rotate it to use all four sides when making sacrificial cuts, extending its life. To replace it, you can buy new PETG cubes from Colliflower for about \$20 each, but it's easy to make your own cubes with offcuts from a 4x4. It's possible to make custom cubes taller than the PETG cubes, but you'll get better dust collection by limiting the height to about 2 inches.

The price for the U.S.-made Colliflower Cube for Kapex system—which includes the replacement fence base and a PETG cube—is \$170, which is well worth the increased safety and accuracy the system brings to the Kapex. colliflower-zci.com

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Comprising a black, powder-coated aluminum fence base and a plastic block, the Colliflower Cube system marries easily to a Festool Kapex saw using the saw's existing bolts and holes (1, 2). The Cube fits the fence's throat completely to prevent fly-aways and reduce material tear-out but doesn't impede dust collection or limit depth of cut (3). Adjustment bolts ensure that the Cube remains aligned with the front of the fence (4).

Photos: Tommie Mullaney

Powerful Cordless Arc Welder

BY JAKE LEWANDOWSKI

Not long ago, we landed a project reinforcing steel trusses in a multiuse mid-rise to accommodate a large number of new solar panels. As in many of our projects, there were a ton of hurdles.

Our first challenge was getting the leads from the welding truck up to the center of the building on the third floor. We had to hump 300 feet of welding leads up there and, from this work area, run the leads to a window and lower them down to a roof deck, then run them off the side of the roof deck down to the welding truck. This was planned.

What wasn't expected was the mystery tenant who parked in the spot provided by the owner. Unable to park the F-450 welding truck where we planned, we had to park in an alley. I also was not expecting the noise and diesel-exhaust complaints about the welder running. All of this was accompanied by incessant honking as vehicles struggled to drive around the welding rig (although we did expect this, as it's common when working in the hustle and bustle of Chicago). It's projects like this that pushed me to consider other solutions, and I landed on the ESAB Renegade Volt ES 200i, which proved to be a game changer for us.

It's no wonder *Popular Mechanics* gave the Renegade a well-deserved "best tools of 2024" award. It's the first welder to use interchangeable batteries. It comes with four DeWalt 20-volt, 12-Ah

batteries, a 230-volt plug along with an adapter for a 120-volt plug, and some nice, 10-foot leads. It can be used for TIG and stick welding; however, if you do plan on TIG welding, you will need to purchase the torch, foot pedal, and gas cylinder.

You can run the Renegade on battery-only power, or you can plug it into a 230-volt or regular 120-volt receptacle to run off AC power. Or you can plug the unit into a 120-volt outlet to run in a hybrid mode of 120-volt and battery power that ESAB calls AMP+. Doing structural work on battery-only power, we mainly run 7018 rod—both $\frac{3}{32}$ - and $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch ESAB rods—and so far the welder has run these flawlessly. Weighing in at under 60 pounds, the unit is easy to load on and off the truck and move around a jobsite. The power cord and leads wrap around the main handle at the top of the welder, and the shoulder strap cinches down the cords.

Its ability to be moved so easily around a job, its versatility in how it's powered, and its virtually maintenance-free unit compared with a small, engine-driven unit all make the ESAB Renegade a go-to welder for us on all types of jobs. It sells online for around \$4,000. For more information, go to esab.com.

Jake Lewandowski is a construction manager with Chicago-based Great Lakes Builders.



The ESAB Renegade Volt ES 200i comes with four 20-volt, 12-Ah DeWalt batteries. It can also plug into a 230- or 120-volt outlet or run in a battery-plus-120-volt power mode (1, 2).



Photos: Jake Lewandowski