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Makita XGT202SU1D1 Drill/Driver Combo Kit

by ARON JONES

Makita's XGT tools get most of their attention for raw numbers: torque, rpm, and bpm. But the real story is in the motor control system that manages how that power is delivered. The newest generation, including the GPH03 hammer drill and GDT04 impact driver, uses a redesigned controller that makes the tools feel smoother, stronger, and more predictable under load.

Makita's latest XGT drill and impact driver combo kit represents a meaningful refinement of the 40-volt platform. While the headline numbers are impressive (1,590 inch pounds of torque for the drill and 2,040 inch pounds for the impact driver), the real improvements show up in how these tools feel during daily carpentry work.

The GPH03 hammer drill is noticeably smoother than the previous GPH01. Makita reworked the motor control to deliver a more progressive soft start, which makes a difference when starting large augers, self-feed bits, or hole saws. The drill holds rpm longer under load and recovers faster when it hits knots or dense grain than its predecessor. Heat management is also improved; the tool maintains consistent power during long boring sessions instead of tapering off. It should be noted that all this torque comes with a sacrifice in speed; even with a 3-speed gear box the GPH03 is 200 rpms slower than the GPH01.

The GDT04 impact driver is ½ inch longer than its pre-

decessor the GDT01. While this may seem like a negative to some, I believe this is an improvement. That ½ inch moves the collet out farther from the base and keeps the battery from getting in the way with shorter bits. But its speed is what stands out. With 4,400 rpms and refined assist modes, the driver starts screws cleaner and reduces cam-out—especially useful with structural screws and for decking and metal roofing work. The updated controller also keeps the tool cooler during repetitive fastening, which helps maintain speed throughout the day.

Taken together, the GPH03 and GDT04 make it seem like Makita finally tuned XGT for real jobsite demands. They're smoother, stronger, and more predictable than the previous generation, and they make a compelling case for carpenters who need high-torque cordless tools that don't get beaten up in the process. The downside to all this control and power is that both tools are slightly bigger and heavier than the previous generation. If you are already on the XGT 40-volt platform and need more torque for long structural fasteners or for boring large holes on a regular basis, then upgrading may be the right choice for you. If you don't need more torque, then the GPH01 and the GDT01 will serve you well.

The combo kit (GT202SU1D1) with drill, driver, two
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PHOTOS BY ARON JONES

Makita's GPH03 hammer drill (left) and GDT04 impact drill/driver (right) are optimized for heavy-duty work, especially when paired to 4.0Ah and 5.0Ah batteries. This extra torque and speed may not be necessary for all users, but for heavy work this pair meets real jobsite demands.



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batteries, and charger retails for \$500. The cost of each bare tool separately is \$260 for the drill (GPH03) and \$230 for the impact driver (GDT04). makitatools.com

Aron Jones is co-founder and site supervisor of Big Dog Construction on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick. Follow him on Instagram: @bigdogconstruction.gm.



XGT Batteries

Makita's XGT batteries contain onboard chips that communicate with the tool in real time. This system adjusts power delivery based on battery size, temperature, and voltage, helping the tool maintain torque under load and avoid sudden thermal cut-backs. Amperages are as follows:

- 2.5Ah: Lightest-weight battery at 1.65 pounds. I use these on impact drivers and drills for most tasks. They offer the best balance with more than adequate run time in most situations.
- 4.0Ah: Best sustained torque—the GPH03 drill is specifically designed to work with the BL4040F high-power battery.
- 5.0Ah: This provides the longest run time for saws and for heavy boring with drills. This is the battery that goes on my saw for framing and sheathing. It offers the run time needed in a production setting.
- 8.0Ah: I reserve the 8s for the larger tools like the miter saw, and also for the compressor if I want it to run all day without recharging.

Their digital handshake is a major reason the new XGT tools feel more consistent and controlled in demanding carpentry applications. —A.J.

Decked Truck Tool Box

by JAKE LEWANDOWSKI

Decked calls its newest model a tool box, but I have always known this style as a crossover box or saddle box. Great Lakes Builders has had a crossover box in almost every truck we have owned for more than 20 years, with one exception: an HD Ram short bed outfitted with a first-generation Decked drawer system. That system held up well for the eight years we owned the truck, so when I had the opportunity to test a pre-production model of Decked's newest tool box—right as we were buying a new work truck for the crew—I jumped on it.

Decked offers the tool box in three colors: industrial white, black, and Fender Dirt, a tan finish. I requested industrial white for two reasons. First, I had read that it is a good match for the white work-truck finishes offered by the big three manufacturers, and I thought it would look sharp. Second, I worried that a black box might get too hot in summer and negatively affect cordless-tool batteries—though, to be fair, that never happened with my previous black Decked drawer system.

Installation

The tool box arrived at my home on time, well packaged and strapped to a pallet. Unboxing was easy, and installation was straightforward. One detail I liked—and one I believe is unique



The Decked tool box provides 10 cubic feet of storage while still allowing for some material to fit underneath.

PHOTOS: ABOVE LEFT, ARON JONES; AT LEFT AND ABOVE RIGHT, JAKE LEWANDOWSKI



Here, you can also see the white of the box matches pretty well with the truck. By fitting tighter to the cab than most other boxes the unit allows more room in your truck bed. Also, the lift pistons are tucked out of the way, which protects them from the elements and from damage when accessing the box.

to Decked—is the set of thick rubber pads that index into the bottom of the box where it contacts the top rails of the bed. The pads help keep the box planted on the truck and should eliminate any chance of squeaks over the life of the box. I was also able to install the Decked box tight to the back of the bed while keeping the truck fully operational, which is not the case with an aluminum box we have on another company truck.

Construction and Durability

The biggest standout for the Decked tool box is its construction. According to Decked, the hardware is made from anti-corrosion-treated steel and aluminum, while the tub and lid are made from a glass-fiber-reinforced polyester sheet-molding compound. I am not exactly sure what that material is, but I can say it is thicker than I expected and extremely stout. Decked rates the box to carry up to 800 pounds inside and up to 300 pounds on the lid.

As someone who has damaged and had to replace a gas strut on a tool box, I appreciate that the strut that assists with opening and closing the lid is tucked tightly into the lid and protected. We work outside Chicago, so we see plenty of weather. A box that is weather-sealed, corrosion-resistant, and hard to dent is a real advantage for a construction company that can be rough on equipment.

Storage and Organization

So far, the Decked tool box has worked very well. The industrial white color is, in my opinion, a good match for our new Oxford White Ford. At 288 liters—just over 10 cubic feet—it is also a useful size for a work truck. Decked offers optional tool hooks that mount inside the box for cords,

straps, and other items you want to hang. For everything else, Decked offers cases in three sizes, along with a bin, all designed to fit in the tool box and offered in multiple colors. The company also offers a robust first-aid kit and a roadside emergency kit, and slimmer Milwaukee Packout boxes fit neatly as well. All of this makes it easier to get organized and stay organized than was the case with other crossover boxes we have used.

Everyday Use and Drawbacks

The oversized latches that open the lid work well, and I like them more the longer I use the box. The lock is only on the driver's side, and the key slides into the lock with a feel similar to a new Kwikset doorknob. My main complaint so far is glare: The tool box reflects more light than I expected. That has not been a deal breaker, but it is worth noting for anyone considering the industrial white finish.

Bottom Line

In my opinion, the Decked tool box is a solid option for anyone who is hard on equipment, values good customer service after the sale, and works in a climate where corrosion is a concern. At \$1,099, it is priced in line with—or below—many similarly sized, American-made, professional-grade crossover boxes. For our use, its durability, weather resistance, organization options, and clean installation make it a strong choice, with glare from the white finish being the only notable drawback so far. Find it at [Decked.com](https://www.decked.com).

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