

FESTOOL TS55 CIRCULAR SAW AND GUIDE RAIL

I first saw the Festool TS 55 plunge-cut saw seven years ago when I was working on a building site on the North Shore. Another builder lent me his saw and track. I fell in love with it and never looked back. I purchased one about a month later.

This machine is the best cutting machine on site and in your workshop. It does things that a normal portable saw can't do. Before I had this saw, I used a jigsaw and electric planer. Now I seldom have to use the planer because the cut with this saw is splinter-free and tearout-free. I like the precision-cutting; it can go right down to the nearest 1/2 millimeter.

GUIDE RAIL

The TS 55 system includes the TS 55 circular saw and its guide rail. The guide rail system is designed to be near frictionless and allow the saw to make accurate, chip-free and tearout-free cuts every time. The saw fits snugly into the guide rail and can be adjusted for play. The guide rail is especially effective on gloss panels and on laminates where running the saw over can cause scratches.

Because the saw rides on the guide rail there is no danger of scratching the surface. The track is very quiet and smooth as the saw runs on top, and it grips well onto almost any material you throw it at. For tricky precision work, Festool have a G clamp that cramps to your work.



MITRE WORK

I use this on all my 45° mitre work on timber, composite stone and even granite. The TS55 has a variable-speed setting for cutting dense materials. I recently had to remove a large composite island and I had to keep the mitred waterfall end without destroying it. So I used the TS 55 with the track and the G cramps plus the dust extractor. I changed the blade to a



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diamond-tipped blade for the concrete. This was a dry cut and I cut through on a 45° mitre with no chipping and without any dust.

MOTOR

My saw is 6½ years old and it's still like new. The Teflon covering on the base is very hard and doesn't wear off. The motor is amazing; the harder you push the machine, the more the motor adjusts. No matter how fast you push, you can't hurt the motor. The saw will maintain constant speed under load so you won't get burnout or binding.

It's also got a riving knife that prevents binding, but the knife very cleverly retracts for plunge-cutting. Although the blade is only 160 mm diameter it allows for a cutting of 55 mm, more than enough for most jobs.

One of things I got to appreciate early was the positive index depth setting. There is no guesswork here. The depth setting is accurate to 0.5 mm and it's very straightforward to set up. It's not done with screws or knobs and guesswork.

**10/10**

The dust extractor makes the job very easy especially with composite board. They all have hepa filters to keep out the really nasty fine dust that can get into your lungs. It keeps the work place clean and the job visible; it's a pleasure to work with this saw.



Carrying it around is also very easy as it comes with its own container or "systainer" as Festool calls it.

The TS55 isn't cheap even by top-of-the range saw standards but it's what the whole system delivers. If you value clean, precise and dust-free work with unparalleled accuracy, speed of set-up and ease of cut then this is for you. It's an investment that you will never regret. Overall, I rate the machine 10/10 in every area. That's why I own one.

Simon Sharp is half of Gemini Kitchens with his twin brother Darren.



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