

Not Your Grandfather's Circular Saw

I can only imagine the grin on Grandad's face if he were to use the Festool TS55EQ. It's not the ordinary circular saw with which he toiled.

This is a plunge-cut saw. The blade plunges into the work to make the cut, then retracts into the saw when finished. During the cutting process you might not fully appreciate this feature; however you'll love it when you set the saw down after cutting. It sits flat.

Features on the TS55EQ that make it stand out are numerous. First, the saw, when placed on a guide rail (more about that later), is set at a slight angle. It's toed in. This all but eliminates the blade burning as you cut. That both extends blade life and leaves a smooth cut.

Next is depth adjustment. The TS55EQ plunges from 0-55 mm in depth (nearly 2 1/4") in 1 mm increments. No more cutting into the sawhorses; simply dial in the correct setting on the depth stop. Or, how about cutting dados and grooves with this saw? It can be accomplished by setting the depth stop.

Other interesting features are the spring-loaded retractable riving knife that moves with

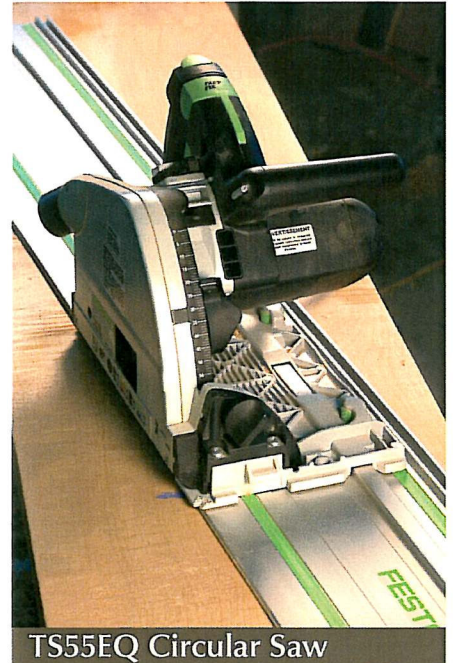
the blade (it keeps kickback at bay), a "Fast-Fix" blade-changing system that disengages the on/off switch and locks blade rotation making blade changes quick, and a rotating dust port that helps keep dust collection connected throughout the sawing process. With dust collection attached, this saw is virtually dust-free.

Cuts made with the saw alone are good, but the real beauty comes when using the saw with an aluminum guide rail (a 55" guide rail and 48-tooth carbide blade are included as part of the saw system package). This is where the real magic starts.

Setup on the saw is minimal. Pull the tool from its Systainer (a safe storage box), align it with the guide then make a small adjustment to achieve zero play as the saw travels along the rail. Now you're ready to cut straight.

After the first cut using the guide rail, you're able to align the rail with your layout lines so accuracy is a snap. You don't even have to clamp the guide rail to the work. Backing strips hold the guide in position.

—Glen D. Huey



TS55EQ Circular Saw

Tooltechnic Systems, LLC ■ 888-337-8600
or festoolusa.com

Street price ■ \$440 (package)

For more information, circle #164 on Free Information Card.

Japanese Super Stones Don't Need Soaking

The only thing better than a Japanese waterstone is a Japanese waterstone that doesn't require 10 minutes of soaking before you begin sharpening.

A new line of "Super Stones," made by Naniwa Abrasives, are priced so that the next time you need to replace a waterstone, you'll upgrade to these stones, which require just a spritz of water to begin.

The Super Stones cut as fast as premium man-made waterstones and stay fairly flat in use (be sure to flatten any new waterstone first thing out of the box, however).

The Super Stones are available in this country in five useful grits: #500 for repairing nicked edges; #1,000 for workaday edge shaping; and #5,000, #8,000 and #12,000 for getting a high polish on your tools. (A basic set would be #1,000, #5,000 and #12,000.)

The Super Stones are 3/8" thick, 2 3/4" wide and 8 1/4" long. Each stone comes on a sturdy plastic base with rubber feet.

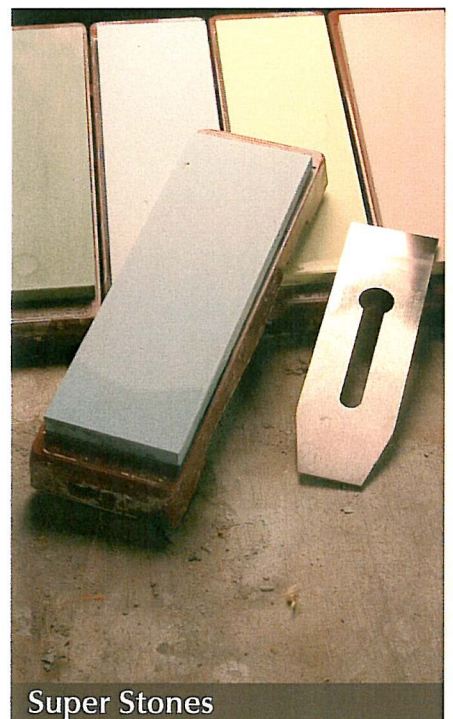
The Super Stones cut as quickly as the other brands of waterstones I've used, such as Norton, King and Shapton. And they work just fine with the modern A2 steel that is becoming prevalent in hand tools.

The Super Stones are poised to compete with the Shapton GlassStones, so some direct comparisons are warranted. The Super Stones are less expensive in every grit, from \$9 to \$25 less each, and they are about twice as thick. And I like the included plastic base on the Super Stones—with the GlassStones you need to buy or make a stone holder. Also, I liked that the Super Stones came in different colors compared to the all-white GlassStones; this helped me quickly identify which grit was next—however, I wish the #1,000 and #5,000 weren't both light blue.

However, the Shaptons are harder stones and they seemed to stay flatter when put through the same amount of use. So I don't know if the extra thickness of the Super Stones will translate to the stone lasting twice as long as the Shaptons. Also, I could gouge the Super Stones' abrasive with the corner of a narrow iron or chisel on occasion due to the softness of the abrasive.

In the end, the Super Stones are a definite improvement compared to many traditional waterstones and are serious competition for the Shaptons in my book. **PW**

—CS



Super Stones

Tools for Working Wood ■ 800-426-4613
or toolsforworkingwood.com

Street price ■ \$27.95 to \$74.95

For more information, circle #163 on Free Information Card.